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Knowledge Production by African Peace and Security Think Tanks (APSTTs)

Leipzig Research Centre Global Dynamics

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Arguably, African peace and security think tanks (APSTTs) play an important role in informing governments and other audiences about ongoing dynamics in this field as well as in providing guidance on critical policy choices. Yet, exactly what they are doing, what kind of knowledge they are producing, and how this knowledge relates to more general debates on African peace and security issues have not yet been part of academic debates. This working paper offers preliminary insights from the study about the nature of six APSTTs, their key "products", the knowledge order they are contributing to, and their relative position in this field of knowledge as compared to global knowledge production on peace and security in Africa. Finally, the working paper is interested in the political economy of knowledge production by APSTTs.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (Durban)
ACPSS	Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (Cairo)
AGA	African Governance Architecture
AISA	Africa Institute of South Africa (Pretoria)
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
APSTT	African Peace and Security Think Tank
AU	African Union
AUC	AU Commission
CCCPA	Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding
CCR	Centre for Conflict Resolution (Cape Town)
CDD	Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (Accra)
CERAP	Centre de Recherche et d'Action pour la Paix (Abidjan)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EIIPD	Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development (Addis Ababa)
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council (Pretoria)
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
IGAD	International Governmental Authority on Development
IJR	Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (Cape Town)
IPI	International Peace Institute (New York)
IPSS	Institute for Peace and Security Studies (Addis Ababa)
ISSS	International Institute for Strategic Studies (London)
ITES	Institute for Strategic Studies (Tunis)
KAIPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (Accra)
PCRD	Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development
PRIF	Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (in German: HSFK, Frankfurt/Main)
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RVI	Rift Valley Institute (Nairobi)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAIIA	South African Institute of International Affairs (Johannesburg)
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
TJ	Transitional Justice
TOC	Transnational Organized Crime
TTCSP	Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program
USIP	United States Institute for Peace (Washington DC)

1   INTRODUCTION

It is commonly assumed that academic think tanks play a significant role in the production of knowledge that is widely consumed, and often somewhat trusted, by not only politicians but also various publics and academics.[1] Think tanks are producing a particular kind of knowledge, knowledge that helps their clients – usually governments and international organizations – to deal with contemporary challenges, to plan for the future, and to legitimate specific courses of action. Arguably, this also holds true for the field of peace and security and African think tanks. However, academic reflection on African think tanks is extremely scarce[2] and almost non-existent in the field of peace and security.[3]

The "2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report" of the University of Pennsylvania's Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies lists some 8,248 think tanks worldwide – some autonomous and others independent, some government affiliated and others university or political party affiliated, and some corporate.[4] In terms of regional distribution, Europe dominates the landscape (with 2,219 think tanks [26.90% of the total]), followed by the United States (1,872, [22.70%]). In general, over the

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1   See Donald E. Abelson, Hua Xin, and Stephen Brooks (eds.), *Think Tanks, Foreign Policy and Geo-politics. Pathways to Influence.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2017 and James McGann, "Think Tanks and Global Policy Networks". In T.G. Weiss and R. Wilkinson (eds.) *International Organization and Global Governance.* London: Routledge, 2019, 3–14. For traditional powers, such as the United States, see Wenzhao Tao, *The US Policy Making Process for Post-Cold War China: The Role of US Think Tanks and Diplomacy.* Singapore: Springer, 2018; for "emerging powers", such as China or India, see Jane Hayward, "The rise of China's new-type think tanks and the internationalization of the state", in: *Pacific Affairs* 91 (2018) 1, 27–48; James McGann (ed.), *Think Tanks and the Emerging Power Policy Networks.* London: Palgrave Pivot, 2018; Lan Xue, Xufeng Zhu, and Wanqu Han, "Embracing scientific decision making: the rise of think-tank policies in China", *Pacific Affairs* 91 (2018) 1, 49–72 as well as Raphaëlle Khan and Patrick Köllner, "Foreign policy think tanks in India: new actors, divergent profiles". Hamburg: GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies, 2017. And for a comparative perspective across nations, see Diane Stone, Andrew Denham, and Mark Garnett (eds.), *Think Tanks Across Nations: A Comparative Approach.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998. Comparing Britain and Germany, see Narelle Miragliotta, "Institutional dynamics and party think tank development: Britain and Germany compared", *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 56 (2018) 2, 234–256; and on the United States v Germany, see Josef Braml, *Think Tanks vs Denkfabriken: U.S. and German Policy Research Institutes' Coping with and Influencing Their Environments.* Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2004. Recently, there has been a hype on the rise of Asian, in particular Chinese think tanks (see Pascal Abb and Alan Hao Yang, "The impact of democratization, political culture, and diplomatic isolation on think-tank development in Taiwan", in: *Pacific Affairs* 91 (2018) 1, 73–94; Sebastian Maslow, "Knowledge regimes in post-developmental states: assessing the role of think tanks in Japan's policymaking process", *Pacific Affairs* 91 (2018) 1, 95–118; Dongtao Qi, "The roles of government, businesses, universities and media in China's think tank fever: a comparison with the American think tank system", in: *China: CIJ* 16 (2018), 2, 31–50; Ou Wang and Ji Wu, "Multirole mechanism in Chinese non-governmental think tanks: comparison with the US "Revolving Door", in: *China: CIJ* 16 (2018) 2, 89–108; Lijun Yang, "China's think tank fever: Changing relations between the Communist Party of China and intellectuals", in: *China: CIJ* 16 (2018) 2, 12–30; Lan Xue, Zhu Xufeng and Han Wanqu 2018. "Embracing scientific decision making: the rise of think-tank policies in China", in: *Pacific Affairs* 91 (2018), 49–72. The "2019 Think Tank Index Report" counts 509 Indian and 507 Chinese think tanks, the second and third highest numbers respectively per country worldwide (James G. McGann, "2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report", 30 January 2020. URL: <https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1018&context=think_tanks> [accessed: 31 March 2020], 41.

2   For exceptions, see William R. Nylen, "The demand for 'critical research' in a competitive authoritarian regime: Think tanks in Mozambique", *Journal of Modern African Studies* 56 (2018) 2, 269–297 on Mozambique, Frank Louis Kwaku Ohemeng, "Getting the state right: Think tanks and the dissemination of new public management ideas in Ghana", in: *Journal of Modern African Studies* 43 (2005), 3, 443–465 on Ghana, and Vishnu Padayachee, "Progressive academic economists and the challenge of development in South Africa's decade of liberation", in: *Review of African Political Economy* 25 (1998) 77, 431–450 on South Africa. Importantly, also see Andrea Prah, "Think Tanks and South Africa's Peace Diplomacy", in: L. Masters and J.-A. van Wyk (eds.), *South African Foreign Policy Review. Volume 3: Foreign Policy, Change and the Zuma Years.* Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2019, 78–97 on South African "peace diplomacy".

3   For two rare exceptions, see Claudia Marggraf, *When Knowledge Travels. Diffusion Processes in Security Institutions of AU and ECOWAS.* Unpublished PhD, University of Göttingen, Germany, 2018, chap. 9.2 and Prah, "Think Tanks and South Africa's Peace Diplomacy".

4   McGann, "2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report", 40.

past three decades the number of think tanks in the Global South has increased substantially, especially in Asia (currently 1,829 [22.18%]). With regard to Africa, the latest "Think Tank Index Report" lists 612 institutions for sub-Saharan Africa (7.42%) and another 45 for Northern Africa (0.55%).[5] In the list of countries with the highest number of think tanks, the first African country to appear on the list is South Africa (rank 13, with 92 think tanks). This is followed by Kenya (56), Nigeria (51), Egypt (39), Ghana (38), Uganda (32), and Ethiopia (26).[6]

Generally speaking, a think tank (in German: *Denkfabrik*) is considered to be "an institute, corporation, or group organized to study a particular subject (such as a policy issue or a scientific problem) and provide information, ideas, and advice".[7] Collins Dictionary provides an alternative definition: "A think-tank is a group of experts who are gathered together by an organization, especially by a government, in order to consider various problems and try and work out ways to solve them".[8] And according to the Cambridge Dictionary, a think tank is "a group of experts brought together, usually by a government, to develop ideas on a particular subject and to make suggestions for action"[9] defines think tanks the following way:

> *Think tanks are public policy research, analysis and engagement institutions that generate policy-oriented research, analysis and advice on domestic and international issues that enable policymakers and the public to make informed decisions about public policy issues.*

For decades, dominant perceptions on questions of peace and security have been shaped by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS, established in 1958), the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO, 1959), the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI, 1966), the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF, 1970), the UN-related International Peace Institute (IPI, 1970), and the United States Institute for Peace (USIP, 1984), with headquarters in Washington, DC.[10]

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5   Ibid. However, because of the fairly wide definition of think tanks, the report lists a number of institutions that, in their societal environment, would not necessarily considered to be a "think tank". The 2019 report is based on data up until December 2018. Compared to the first "Think Tank Index Report", published using 2008 data, the number of think tanks based in the United States is the same (1,872, though then with a global share of 31.48 per cent, James G. McGann, "2008 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report", 19 January 2009. URL: <https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=think_tanks> [corrected version: 25 April 2019] (accessed: 31 March 2020), 11. According to these numbers, between 2008 and 2018 the number of think tanks in Europe has grown by 83.69 per cent (from 1,208, then with a global share of 22.10%), in Asia by 180.09 per cent (from 653, and 11.95%), and in Africa by 40.09 per cent (from 469, and 8.58%). Of the latter, 424 are based in sub-Sahara Africa (7.76%) and 45 in North Africa (0.82%). While the number of think tanks in North Africa remained at 45, sub-Saharan Africa saw an increase by 44.34 per cent. However, the extent to which this growth figures can simply be attributed to methodological improvements of the "Think Tank Index Report" remains unclear.

6   McGann, "2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report", 42, 43. A first Africa think tank summit organized by the Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies, which took stock of the political and economic situation of these bodies in Africa as well as their capacities, was held on 3–5 February 2014 in Pretoria, South Africa. Further meetings took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (6–8 April 2015); Washington, DC, United States (3–4 November 2017); Rabat, Morocco (9–11 May 2018); and Cape Town, South Africa (26–28 February 2020). The first Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP)/region think tank summit was organized in 2013 with Latin American institutions. The format is somewhat similar to the EU–East Asia Think Tank Dialogue, which is being organized since 1998 by the Manila-based Institute for Strategic and Development Studies (ISDS) and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation office in Singapore, in cooperation with the EU-Centre Singapore.
    In addition, the African Capacity Building Foundation, a specialized agency of the African Union, in 2014 started to organize annual meetings of African think tanks.

7   "Think tank". URL: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/think%20tank> (accessed: 30 December 2019).

8   "Think-tank". URL: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/de/worterbuch/englisch/think-tank> (accessed: 31 March 2020).

9   "Think tank". URL: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/de/worterbuch/englisch/think-tank> (accessed: 15 September 2019). McGann, "2008 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report", 7.

10 See Ulf Engel, "Global Challenges", in: M. Middell (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Transregional Studies.* Abingdon: Routledge, 2018, 651–658, at 653f.

But what is the situation like with regard to African peace and security think tanks (APSTTs)? Who are they? What kind of knowledge are they producing? And what is their relevance both on the African continent and in a global comparison?

The remainder of this working paper is organized as follows. After this introduction is the second section, comprising a discussion of the criteria for case study selection and an overview of the selected APSTTs, with a brief focus on their history, sources of funding, staff size, their key "products", as well as their main partners or customers. In the third section, the content of APSTTs' key products – often called policy briefs – is analysed.[11] This is followed by an examination of the nature of the knowledge regimes produced by APSTTs, with a focus on dominant epistemes and narratives as well as the main function of the major think tank products while identifying "problems" and making suggestions regarding "solutions". In the fifth section of this working paper, the placement of the knowledge produced by APSTTs vis-à-vis competing global knowledge claims is at the fore, i.e. their relative "relevance". And in the sixth section, the political economy of knowledge production on peace and security in Africa is discussed. This is followed by conclusions.

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11   Of course, APSTTs have additional, and with regard to political institutions and other clients, sometimes more efficient means to offer their advice. With regard to South African think tanks and the country's foreign policy establishment, this point is illustrated by Prah, "Think Tanks and South Africa's Peace Diplomacy". APSTTs, for example, reach out to the policy audience in very direct terms, through personal access rather than through policy briefs – which many of their clients do not have time to read, anyway (Interview with Vasu Gounden [executive director], Martin Rupiya [manager: training & innovations; co-editor of the *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*], and Senzo Ngubane [program manager]. Durban: African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, 24 February 2020).

2 CASE STUDY SELECTION AND OVERVIEW ON APSTTs

The specific cases of APSTTs under review in this working paper were, first, identified on the basis of the latest annual report of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania. Since 1989, this institution has been conducting research on influential think tanks in international and area studies as well as social and behavioural sciences worldwide, and since 2009 it has been publishing an annual "Think Tank Index Report".[12] As a second step, using the results of this survey as an initial preselection, two more criteria have guided the case study selection: the institution should be genuinely concerned with issues of peace and security in Africa[13] *and* should also enjoy a considerable degree of independence from its host government.[14] The latter criterion may need some explanation as in the Global North, too, many think tanks are depending on some form of government or political party funding. In the case of the African continent, this criterion excludes those think tanks that are mere instruments to further their government's respective regional policy agendas.[15] In the precarious fields of peace and security, independent think thanks, I claim, are the more interesting institutions to look at because the knowledge they produce is arguably less tainted by government influence. And due to this relative freedom, they are usually frequented by the usual "customers", such as Northern development agencies, African line ministries, or international organizations.

So based on these criteria, and in alphabetical order, the following six African peace and security think tanks have been identified:

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12   McGann, "2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report". For a methodological critique of the ranking, see, e.g., Martin Braml and Klaus Wohlrabe, „Neues Ranking, alte Fehler – das ‚Global Go-To Think Tank'-Ranking 2013", in: *Ifo-Schnelldienst* 67 (2014) 3, 56–59.

13   Other think tanks are not considered here because they have a different topical focus. For instance, the Centre de Recherche et d'Action pour la Paix (CERAP, Abidjan) concentrates on education, the Ghana Centre for Democratic Development (CDD, Accra) on democracy and governance, and the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD, Pretoria) or L'Institut Amadeus (Rabat) on foreign policy and geopolitics. Other centres have a narrow national focus, such as the Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (Kigali, Rwanda) or the Centre for Human Rights and Peace (at the University of Nairobi, Kenya).

14   This correlates with the first two out of seven categories defined by the TTCSP, i.e. "autonomous and independent" as well as "quasi-independent" think tanks (see McGann, "2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report", 14 and James G. McGann and Aaron Shull, "Think Tanks and Emerging Power Networks", in: J. McGann [ed.] *Think Tanks and Emerging Power Policy Networks*. Cham: Springer [for Palgrave MacMillan], 2018, 3–14, at 5).

15   This mainly holds true for the Ethiopian International Institute for Peace and Development (EIIPD, Addis Ababa), established in 1996, or the Cairo Regional Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA), established in 1994, which are very close to their respective ministries of foreign affairs. In 2019, the CCCPA has been "rechartered" as the Cairo *International* Center – "an independent public agency under the suzerainty of the Minister of Foreign Affairs" (see "History of the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding". URL: <https://www.cairopeacekeeping.org/en/about-us/history> (accessed: 31 March 2020). Between 2014 and 2016, the centre published five policy briefs, for which they commissioned highly respected African academics. But this has been discontinued since. And with regard to South Africa, the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) is a case in point. It was founded in 1960 and incorporated into the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) in 2014. Established in 1968 as the country's statutory research institution, the HSRC is mainly funded through an act of Parliament (but also receives third-stream funding). AISA has in fact produced quite a number of policy briefs – clearly aligning itself with core government policy fields. The same goes for the Tunisian Institute for Strategic Studies (ITES), founded in 1993, which is directly placed under the presidency, and the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (ACPSS), which is based in Cairo, Egypt. After the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, it was established in 1968 as a research unit within the Al-Ahram Foundation of the newspaper publisher Muhammad Hasanayn Haykal. Originally, it was named the Center for Zionist and Palestine Studies and headed by a son-in-law of then Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. The foundation is still government-controlled.

- the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD, Durban),
- the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR, Cape Town),
- the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS, Addis Ababa),
- the Institute for Security Studies (ISS, Pretoria),
- the Rift Valley Institute (RVI, Nairobi), and
- the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA, Johannesburg).[16]

Five out of the six think tanks share a particular geography: save for the IPSS, they are all based in countries where English is the official language. Francophone Africa is little represented in this list, as is lusophone Africa or the Arab north (see footnotes 14 and 16). Undoubtedly, this invites some discussion.

Research indicates that the role model for think tanks seems to be a specific one that the dominant international discourse would represent as "American" (i.e. US). However, by taking a comparative global history perspective, it soon becomes obvious that the essential function think tanks are serving – that is to say, to provide a certain type of knowledge in and for the public domain – depends on specific contingent societal, political, and financial arrangements that necessarily differ across time and space. The "American model" may have been universalized through dominant narratives, but it certainly represents only one out of many forms through which governments mobilize external, "independent" expertise or through which they are being served by this expertise. In Africa, there are only few think tanks that are formed along the lines of the American model. In some European countries, for instance in Britain or in Germany,[17] the institutional solution to the political challenge of providing governments with expertise has been financing semi-independent political party foundations – through taxpayers' money – which then serve as "think tanks".[18] Without being able at this stage to prove the following statement empirically, I nevertheless would suspect that cultural-historic differences like these also explain the variation between anglophone and francophone countries on the African continent.

In the following, an overview on the six APSTTs is offered that briefly addresses their history and activities and, where possible, also addresses the question of funding and partners (see table 1). All information is based on open sources, such as the websites of the institutes. The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes was established in 1992 at the University of Durban-Westville, South Africa, during the transition from apartheid to a democratic dispensation. The centre is led by its founding director, Vasu Gounden, a lawyer and conflict mediator. And the board of trustees is chaired by Graça Machel, former government minister in Mozambique, that country's first lady and, later, wife

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16   In the top global think tanks ranking of the "2019 Think Tank Index Report", ACCORD is listed at position 35, followed by SAIIA (84), the CCR (86), and the ISS (116). In the top sub-Sahara Africa think tanks ranking, ACCORD is the second, followed by SAIIA (7), the ISS (12), the CCR (20), the RVI (39), and the IPSS (47). However, none of these institutions appears in the top defence and national security think tanks ranking (McGann, "2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report", 65ff., 70ff. & 110ff.) – which raises a methodological question about the index.

17   See Hartwig Pautz, "Comparing the British and German Think-Tank Worlds", in: H. Pautz, *Think-Tanks, Social Democracy and Social Policy. New Perspectives in German Political Studies.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 148–159.

18   Heike Merten, *Parteinahe Stiftungen im Parteienrecht.* Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1999; Jörg Geerlings, „Die Finanzierung parteinaher Stiftungen im Lichte der vom Bundesverfassungsgericht entwickelten Wesentlichkeitstheorie", in: *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen* 34 (2003), 4, 768–777.

of the late Nelson R. Mandela. The current staff size is around 41.[19] ACCORD refers to itself as a "civil society organisation". Basically, it follows a conflict transformation agenda: "We intervene in conflicts through mediation, negotiation, training, research and conflict analysis".[20] Though this has remained the organization's focus (for instance by training observers for the South African 1994 elections or by supporting the peace talks for Burundi facilitated by President Mandela), additional activities were developed as funding increased over the years. Twice a year, the centre publishes the *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*. ACCORD has increasingly acted as a conference secretariat for specific formats in demand by the African Union Peace and Security Department (AU PSD), such as, since 2011, the annual retreats of special envoys and representatives of the chairperson of the AU Commission (AUC).

Furthermore, ACCORD has decided to develop – at least some – traits of a "proper" think tank. This is done by producing policy and practice briefs, which are meant "to inform peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding".[21] It is because of this aspiration to provide recommendations to decision-makers that, in this working paper, ACCORD is considered to be a think tank – though this ambition is not reflected *expressis verbis* in the organization's 2017–2021 strategy,[22] and ACCORD does not consider itself to be a think tank.[23] However, the think tank function seems a late addition to the organization's original portfolio. Under often precarious financial conditions in Africa, and subsequent high levels of donor dependence, a mix of activities often seems to be a more viable business model for these organizations. And in some cases, this has led to mission creep.[24] For many years, core funding for ACCORD has been provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).[25]

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19 URL: <http://www.accord.org.za> (accessed: 31 March 2020). Durban: African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, 2020. The staff size was up to 90 in 2011, of which 45 were based at the office opened in 2003 in Bujumbura, Burundi, in support of the local peace process (see "Burundi Initiative". ACCORD 2019. URL: <https://accord.org.za/country-programmes/burundi-initiative/> (accessed: 30 December 2019). In the following, all figures on human resources are based on the institution's websites (as of 29 February 2020). Figures for 2011 are based on a SIDA evaluation (Julian Brett, Lars Lyhne Stensgaard, and Niels Eilschow Olesen, *2011 Evaluation of ACCORD, SAIIA and CCR – Regional Peace and Security in Africa. Final Report.* Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency [= Sida Decentralised Evaluation], 2013, ii; see also Stefan Jansen et al., *Five Regional Institutions Based in South Africa. Working in the Field of Peace and Security in Africa. Final Report.* Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency 2008 [= Sida Evaluation, 2008, no 26]). In 2015, ACCORD had 47 staff based in the country and 12 outside (Ian Christoplos, Greg Moran, and Jesper Bjarnesen, *Review of Five South Africa Based Think Tanks Supported by Sida. Final Report.* Stockholm: Swedish International Development Agency 2015 [= Sida Decentralised Evaluation 2015, no 31], 13.

20 ULR: <http://www.accord.org.za> (accessed: 31 March 2020). Durban: African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes.

21 "Publications". URL: <http://www.accord.org.za/publications/ppb/> (accessed: 31 March 2020). Durban: African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, 2020. In addition, the institution is publishing the *African Journal of Conflict Resolution* (since 1999, one to three issues a year), the magazine *Conflict Trends* (launched in 1998, four issues a year), and various reports (a considerable number as part of contracts with the African Union).

22 See *ACCORD Strategy. Mitigating Conflict Towards Sustainable Peace, Security and Development in Africa 2017–2021.* Durban: African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, 2017.

23 Interview with Vasu Gounden, Martin Rupiya, and Senzo Ngubane, ACCORD, 24 February 2020.

24 This is somewhat similar to the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), which started operating as a government-established training centre in Accra, Ghana, in 2003 and later on also developed think tank activities by publishing "Mission Watch Quarterly" briefs and – between 2009 and 2017 – also 42 policy briefs. The KAIPTC is one of the three Training Centres of Excellence of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

25 In 2015, the Swedish embassy in Addis Ababa commissioned a review of the SIDA support to ACCORD, the CCR, and the ISS as well as the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) and SAIIA. See Christoplos et al., *Review*, who also offer comparative figures on the finances of ACCORD, the CCR and the ISS (for 2014, 48f.).

For the period 2012–2015, for instance, SIDA funding was to the tune of roughly EUR 4.7 million.[26] The financing agreement was interrupted in 2018 and then renewed.[27] In addition, ACCORD raises its own funding from activities of ACCORD Development Consulting. Before 2008, the British Department for International Development (DfID) was a major source of funding for ACCORD, and even bigger contributions to the budget came from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Norway and Finland. The current overall budget is not publicly available.[28]

The Centre for Conflict Resolution was established in 1968 in Cape Town, South Africa, but ceased to operate in 2018 after its 50th anniversary. It engaged in policy research, training, mediation, and facilitation.[29] It was originally founded as the Abe Bailey Institute of Inter-Racial Studies and a few years later renamed the Centre for Intergroup Studies (1973–1994). The institute was based at the University of Cape Town and originally led by Hendrik W. van der Merwe (1968–1992), a Quaker with a background in sociology.[30] Later Laurie Nathan (1992–2003) and Adekeye Adebajo (2003–2016), respectively, became directors. During apartheid, Nathan was the national organizer of the End Conscription Campaign; since 2018, he has been a professor of the practice of mediation with the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. The Nigerian-born scholar Adebajo now is the director of the Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation, in Johannesburg. More recently, the position of CCR director had been briefly filled by Tony Karbo and then by his deputy Kudrat Virk. But both left the institute after a short time. In 2018, the CCR ceased to operate.[31] Already before these dramatic events, the institute's human resources had been downsized to around 15 staff members (from 24 in 2015, 29 in 2011, and 38 in 2008). The CCR was predominantly funded by international donors (in FY 2016, more than 97% and in FY 2015, almost 99%).[32] In FY 2016, the last year for which an annual report was tabled,[33] grants added up to ZAR 16.9 million,[34] with core funding provided by SIDA and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (64.61% and 35.39% respectively). In FY 2015, the main donor was Norway (36.67%), followed by the Netherlands (28.38%), SIDA (26.18%), Finland (6.40%), and the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation (2.38%). Apart from many other outputs (such as conference reports), the CCR used to produce policy briefs (42 in total, with the last one in August 2018).

The Institute for Peace and Security Studies is located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Founded in 2007 – as a result of a tripartite agreement amongst Addis Ababa University, the Royal Danish Embassy in Ethiopia, and the University for Peace Africa Programme – the institute is part of the Addis Ababa

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26   "Agreement between SIDA and ACCORD on core support during the period 2012–2015". URL: <http://iati.openaid.se/docs/957831_1_0.pdf> (accessed: 30 December 2019, no longer available). Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, 2012; "SIDA Activity Fact Sheet 'ACCORD, African Centre Constructive Resolution of Disputes, 2012–2017 – RBM Training'". URL: <https://openaid.se/activity/SE-0-SE-6-5100009502-AFR-15220/> (accessed: 30 December 2019). Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, 2018. Exchange rate at the time of signing.

27   Interview with Vasu Gounden, Martin Rupiya, and Senzo Ngubane, ACCORD, 24 February 2020.

28   In 2011, it stood at ZAR 50.7 million (Brett et al., 2011 Evaluation of ACCORD, SAIIA and CCR, 9), around EUR 1.75 million, and in 2013 at ZAR 78 million (Christoplos et al., Review, 13), around EUR 5.4 million (exchange rates as of 31 December 2011).

29   See <http://www.ccr.org.za> (accessed: 30 December 2019). Cape Town: Centre for Conflict Resolution, 2018.

30   Matthew T. C. Shafer, "Between mediation and critique: Quaker nonviolence in apartheid Cape Town, 1976–1990", in: *European Journal of Political Theory* 2017, 1–21. DOI: 10.1177/1474885117721414; *African Journal of Conflict Resolution* 13 (2013) 3. Special Issue on Hendrik W. van der Merwe.

31   I owe Chris Saunders, professor emeritus of history at the University of Cape Town, for background information. According to the institute's – by now defunct – website, the last public policy dialogue event took place on 16 July 2018; the director's last tweet on the CCR dates 26 August 2018. Meanwhile the institute's property has been sold (Interview with Timothy K. Murithi, head of the Peacebuilding Interventions Programme at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town, and extraordinary professor of African Studies at the Centre for African and Gender Studies, University of the Free State, Cape Town, 2 March 2020; Interview with Christopher Saunders, Cape Town, 2 March 2020.

32   All figures *Annual Report 2015–2016*. Cape Town: Centre for Conflict Resolution, 2018, 57.

33   Ibid.

34   This equals EUR 1.3 million (exchange rate as of 31 December 2016).

University; as such, it is a borderline case in terms of the case selection criteria described above. It offers a regular master and a PhD in peace and security studies.[35] In addition, since 2012 has been offering a master and a PhD in global studies in collaboration with Leipzig University, Germany. Furthermore, and in partnership with the African Union, the institute launched in 2010 a master in African peace and security for senior executives and mid-career officers of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Presently, the institute is led by Yonas Adaye Adeto. Since 2012, the IPSS has also been organizing the annual Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa, which is modelled after the Munich Security Conference (established in 1963) and mainly funded by the German Corporation for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ). Amongst other publications, the institute is publishing the "APSA Impact Analysis", "Country Profiles" and "Situation Analyses", "The State of Peace and Security in Africa" (SPSA), and the *African Solutions Journal* (AfSol). The majority of funding for activities outside the academic programmes is provided by the GIZ (roughly 50%); further contributions are made by the governments of Austria, Canada, Denmark, Norway, and Switzerland as well as by other donors. Therefore, the think tank activities of the IPSS are in line with the above-defined selection criteria. The size of the annual budget is not stated in the annual reports;[36] yet core funding seems to be around USD 3 million per annum.[37]

The Pretoria-based Institute for Security Studies was established as the Institute for Defence Studies in 1991 and renamed in 1996.[38] It is by far the biggest think tank on peace and security in Africa; however – as with ACCORD – it does not consider itself a think tank.[39] Rather, the ISS thinks of itself as a research institute, policy organization, and training institution that is working at transforming conflicts on the continent.[40] Until 2015, the institute had been led by its founding executive director Jacobus (Jakkie) K. Cilliers, who today heads the ISS Board of Trustees. He was followed by Anton du Plessis, the former head of the ISS Transnational Threats and International Crime Programme and who is also an advocate of the High Court of South Africa. For many years, the president of the Advisory Council had been Salim Ahmed Salim, former secretary-general of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). He was recently replaced by Saïd Djinnit, a Algerian career diplomat who was AU commissioner for peace and security and since 2014 has been serving as the special envoy of the UN secretary-general for the Great Lakes region. Like many other think tanks,[41] the ISS is registered as a non-profit organization. It maintains regional offices in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Cape Town (South Africa), Dakar (Senegal), and Nairobi (Kenya). Today's staff size is around 90, or roughly 130 if one includes all consultants.[42] The institute is working on a broad range of topics, including conflict, peace, and governance; crime and justice; maritime security; migration; peace operations and peacebuilding; as well as transnational threats and international crime. An estimated 80 per cent of its activities do not relate to the dissemination of written products; instead, they are provided orally.[43] Amongst the written products the ISS is publishing are ISS Today, regular policy briefs, AU Peace and Security Council reports, as well as the journal *African Security Review*.[44] Core funding comes from the governments of Sweden, Norway, the

35 URL: <http://www.ipss-addis.org> (accessed: 31 March 2020). Addis Ababa: Institute for Peace and Security Studies, 2020.

36 See, for instance, *Review Letter. IPSS in 2015.* Addis Ababa: Institute for Peace and Security Studies, 2016.

37 Interview with Michelle Ndiaye Ntab (director African Peace and Security Programme). Addis Ababa: Institute for Peace and Security Studies, 9 March 2020.

38 URL <https://issafrica.org> (accessed: 31 March 2020). Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2020.

39 Interview with Jakkie Cilliers (f. director, chairperson of the Board of Trustees and head of African Futures & Innovation). Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 4 March 2020.

40 URL: <https://issafrica.org> (accessed: 31 March 2020). Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2020, 2.

41 See Diane Stone, "Think Tank Transnationalisation and Non-Profit Analysis, Advice and Advocacy", *Global Society* 14 (2000) 2, 153–172.

42 Interview with Antoinette Louw (director communication). Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 5 March 2020.

43 Ibid.

44 URL: <https://issafrica.org> (accessed: 31 March 2020). Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2020.

Netherlands, and Denmark. The partnership forum comprises the governments of Australia, Canada, Finland, Japan, and the United States as well as the German Hanns Seidel Foundation, which has close links to the ruling party in the federal state of Bavaria, the Christian Social Union.[45] In 2018, 94.45 per cent of the institute's ZAR 184.15 million income was provided by donors.[46]

The Rift Valley Institute was founded in 2001 in Sudan. It is currently based in Nairobi, Kenya, and since 2017, it has been led by Mark Bradbury, a social analyst.[47] The institute is an independent, non-profit organization and works in seven locations: Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Somaliland, Kenya, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). It maintains regional offices in London (United Kingdom), Hargeysa (Somaliland), and Juba (South Sudan). The staff size is 15. The RVI engages in research on electoral processes, land reform, governance, political settlements, border communities, and gender issues; it also does capacity-building in research and helps to develop archives. The RVI produces regular research reports and papers as well as briefings.[48] The institute has a wide range of funders, including private philanthropic organizations (for instance the Open Society Foundation), governments (amongst others, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States), as well as intergovernmental organizations. The overall income in 2016 was USD 2.081 million[49] – some 21% less than in 2015.

Last on the list of APSTTs, and the oldest institution amongst them, is the South African Institute of International Affairs. The institute was founded in 1934 in Cape Town, South Africa, by a group of politicians, academics, and newspaper editors.[50] In 1954, SAIIA finally moved to Johannesburg to a location on the campus of the University of the Witwatersrand, and today it has branches in Cape Town, Pietermaritzburg, and East London. It is registered as a non-profit organization. Under the directorship of Greg Mills (1996–2005, today at the helm of the Brenthurst Foundation), the institute was revived after the end of apartheid with a view to advise the country's new role in international affairs. Hence, a broad range of issues is addressed by SAIIA, from development and economic diplomacy to foreign policy, governance, and natural resources. The institute publishes the *South African Journal of International Affairs*. Since 2005, SAIIA has been led by Elizabeth Sidiropoulos. The institute's National Council is chaired by Fred Phaswana (amongst other positions, chairman of the Standard Bank of South Africa), with Moeletsi Mbeki (the brother of former President Thabo Mbeki) as deputy and also chair of the Executive Committee. The total staff size is 56, out of which 24 is research staff. In FY 2017, the revenue was ZAR 33.3 million,[51] roughly two-thirds of it coming from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and SIDA.[52]

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45   Ibid.

46   *Improving human security in Africa. Annual Review 2018.* Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2019, 39. This translates into an annual budget of EUR 11.14 million (exchange rates as of 31 December 2018).

47   URL: <http://riftvalley.net> (accessed: 31 March 2020). Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute, 2018.

48   "Rift Valley Institute General Prospectus 2016". Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute, 2016.

49   *Rift Valley Research Limited. Reports and Financial Statement. 31 December 2016.* London: Sayer and Vincent, 2017, 3.

50   Here and in the following <https://saiia.org.za> (accessed: 31 March 2020). Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2020

51   This equals EUR 2.25 million (exchange rate as of 31 December 2017).

52   See "2018 Highlights". Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2018; see also Brett et al., *2011 Evaluation of ACCORD, SAIIA and CCR*, 34–51.

**Table 1. Overview of African peace and security think tanks**

	Established	Funding	Staff (2019)	Select products	Partners
ACCORD	1992	various donors, core funding SIDA	ca. 44	policy and practice briefs	AU; AMISOM; govts of Burundi, CAR, Finland, Liberia, Norway, S. Sudan; Sudan etc.; WANEP …
CCR	1968–2018	core funding SIDA, Netherlands	ca. 15	policy briefs	N/A
IPSS	2007	Addis Ababa University, GIZ and other bilateral donors	ca. 50	peace and security briefs	govts of Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan, African Union
ISS	1991	various donors, including govts of Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, and Denmark; Hanns Seidel Foundation; F.S. Pardee Center for International Futures	ca. 90	ISS Today, policy briefs, Peace and Security Council Reports	UNODC, Interpol, African Union, govt of Ethiopia
RVI	2001	various	ca. 15	research papers, reports, briefings	amongst others the universities of Hargeisa, Puntland and South Sudan
SAIIA	1934	core funding from Norwegian govt, SIDA	ca. 56	policy briefings	govt South Africa

Sources: Websites of the institutions (accessed 31 March 2020).

Other abbreviations: African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM); Central African Republic (CAR); UN Office in Drugs and Crime (UNODC); West African Network for Peace-Building (WANEP)

3 THE CONTENT OF APSTTs' POLICY BRIEFS AND BOOKS

An analysis of the flagship products of the six APSTTs under review – mainly referred to as policy briefs – reveals some similarities as well as considerable differences (see table 2). For this analysis, 2009 is taken as a base year. This is when the CCR, ISS, and RVI started producing policy briefs. Below, diagram 1 shows when and how many policy briefs have been published.[53]

Diagram 1. Policy briefs output, 2009–2019
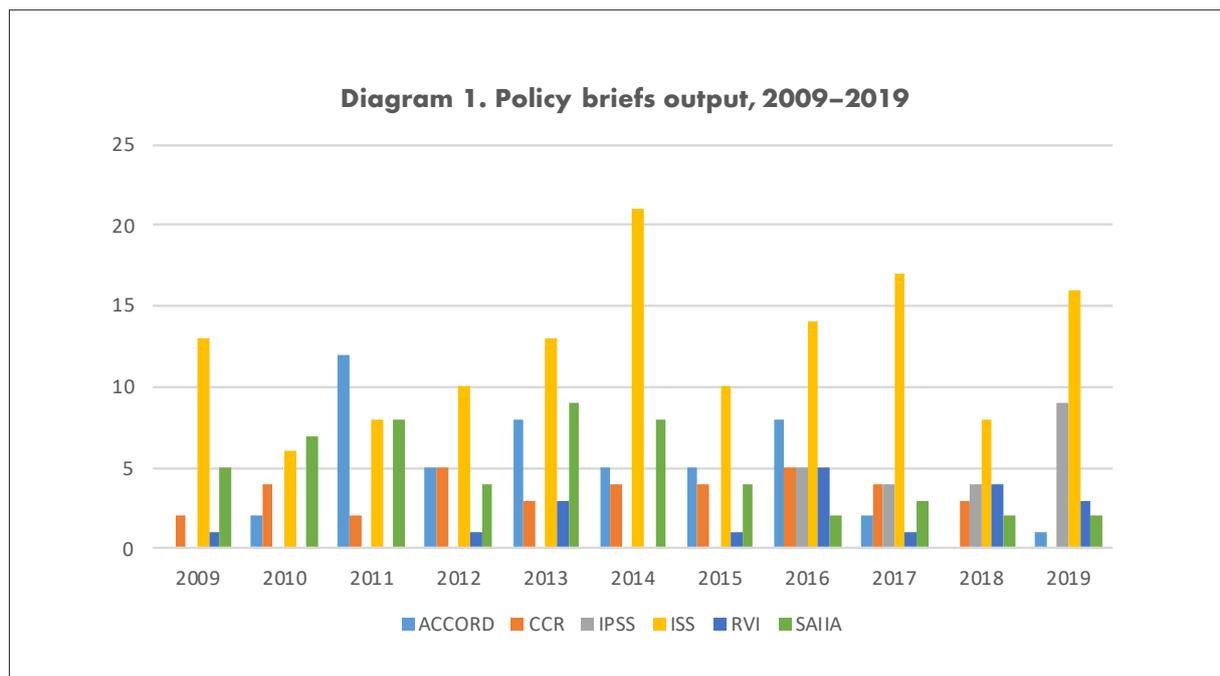
There is no common pattern, save for the fact that the output by all APSTTs is highly irregular across all years – and seemingly difficult to plan for. The relative increase in policy briefs output by the IPSS in 2019, for instance, may be related to the fact that the institution wanted to increase numbers and thereby emphasize the institution's think tank character – somehow also at the expense of quality (some of the authors are post-graduates and some of the topics are beyond the claimed thematic scope of the think tank).

In the following table, thematic foci areas of the policy briefs are recorded (see table 2). Clear geographical focus is indicated in the first part of the table, a topical focus is shown in the second part of the table. Double counts are thus possible.

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53   In the case of SAIIA, only publications from 2009 or later are analysed (one policy briefing was already published in 2008). Also, only briefings in the thematic area "foreign policy" are counted (N=54). Within this section, there are 13 outputs genuinely focusing on issues of peace and security, but also quite a number which, for instance, look at the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), or BRIC countries (N=11), and particular the role of China in Africa (N=14). For the related strategy, see "South African Institute of International Affairs. Strategic Plan 2013–2017". Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2013. With regard to the CCR, detailed data no longer is available after the website has been shut down in late 2019. At an earlier stage, I counted 42 policy briefs by the CCR. The *Africa Portal* has stored at least 36 of them (Africa Portal 2020. URL: <https://www.africaportal.org/publications/?query=&content_partners=centre-conflict-resolution-ccr&publication_type=briefing-paper&publication_type=briefing-paper-2> (accessed: 31 January 2020).

Table 2. Content analysis of APSTTS' policy briefs, 2009–2019

	ACCORD		CCR		IPSS		ISS [1]		RVI		SAIIA	
Regional	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %
AU/RECs	7	14.6	12	28.6	6	27.3	13	9.6	-	-	3	5.6
DRC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	52.6	4	7.4
Nigeria	2	4.2	-	-	1	4.4	4	2.9	-	-	1	1.9
Somalia	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	1.5	6	31.6	-	-
South Africa	1	2.1	14	33.3	-	-	33	24.3	-	-	10	18.5
Other	22	46.8	14	33.3	9	40.9	42	30.9	5	26.3	12	22.2
Sub-total	32	66.7	40	95.24	16	72.7	94	69.1	21	100	30	55.6
Thematic	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %
Climate change	1	2.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	- [2]
Elections	5	10.4	-	-	-	-	10	7.4	1	5.3	1	1.9
Maritime sec'y	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2.9	-	-	2	3.7
Mediation	3	6.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Peace building	10	20.8	6	14.3	2	9.1	4	2.9	-	-	-	-
Policing	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2.9	-	-	-	-
PCRD (incl. TJ)	4	8.4	4	9.5	-	-	4	2.9	1	5.3	1	1.9
PSOs	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2.2	2	10.5	-	-
SALW	-	-	-	-	1	4.5	2	1.5	1	5.3	-	-
Terrorism / extr.	1	2.1	-	-	1	4.5	7	5.2	4	21.1	-	-
TOC	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	5.2	-	-	-	-
Woman in PS	2	4.2	-	-	-	-	1	0.7	1	5.3	-	-
Youth	-	-	-	-	2	9.1	3	2.2	1	5.3	-	-
Sub-total	26	54.2	10	23.8	6	27.3	48	35.4	11	57.9	4	7.4
Translations	2	4.2	1	-	-	-	-	-	11 [3]	-	-	-
Total	**48**	**100**	**42**	**100**	**22**	**100**	**136**	**100**	**19**	**100**	**54**	**100**

Notes: (1) Nos. 3 and 4 not on the website; in 2011–2012 also African Futures Briefs are included. (2) There is an extra section on the website related to Policy Briefings on climate change, though not related to peace and security issues. (3) From English into French.

Sources (as of 31 January 2020):

ACCORD 2010–2019. Policy and Practice Briefs, nos. 1–48. ULR: <http://www.accord.org.za/publications/ppb/> (the latest policy and practice brief was published on 17 July 2019).

CCR 2009–2019. *Policy Briefs*, no.s 1-42. ULR: <http://www.ccr.org.za/index.php/media-release/policy-briefs> (latest policy brief: 24 August 2018).

IPSS 2016–2019. *IPSS Policy Analysis* and *IPSS Policy Briefs*, [no.s 1–13]. ULR: <http://www.ipss-addis.org/research/policy_periodicals/>. Note: Number 1 is a triple issue (latest policy brief: August 2019).

ISS 2009–2019 *Policy Briefs*, no.s 1–136. ULR: <https://issafrica.org/research/policy-brief> (latest policy brief: 6 December 2019).

RVI 2009–2019. *Briefings* (9) and *Usalama [DRC] project* (10). ULR: <http://riftvalley.net/publications/briefings-meeting-reports> (latest briefing: August 2019).

SAIIA 2009–2019. *Policy Briefings* [section: foreign policy, only] (54). ULR: <https://saiia.org.za/publication-type/policy-brief-ings/?wpv_aux_current_post_id=30911&wpv_view_count=22990-TCPID3091y1> (latest policy briefing: 31 May 2019).

On institutions and actors, most APSTTs place an emphasis on either regional or bilateral perspectives (ACCORD: 66.7%, CCR: 95.24%, IPSS: 72.7%, ISS: 69.1%, RVI: 100%, and SAIIA: 55.6%). To varying degrees, the South African APSTTs and the IPSS take an interest in the AU and some of the RECs (ACCORD: 14.6%, CCR: 28.6%, IPSS: 46.2%, ISS: 9.6%; SAIIA: 5.6%), while the RVI does not (see table 2). The Southern African Development Community (SADC) receives the most attention. Fairly isolated outliers are the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the International Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). None of the other RECs receives any consideration. As for countries, South Africa features notably in the CCR (33.3%), the ISS (24.3%), and SAIIA (18.5%) briefs, but as a key topic hardly in ACCORD's (2.1%) or any of the other briefs by the IPSS or RVI. The RVI focuses on two countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo (52.6%) and Somalia (31.6%) – in this case regional proximity and a related target audience seem to play an important role. Nigeria, as the regional hegemon in West Africa, is addressed by most of the think tanks – but often only considering the activities of Boko Haram. Usually developments in the Maghreb are not addressed;[54] the focus of the six APSTTs clearly is on sub-Saharan Africa.

Turning to thematic issues, in all the briefs the nexus between climate change and conflict, which has been discussed substantially by Northern think tanks and development assistance agencies since 2007,[55] is only addressed once – by ACCORD. Although most APSTTs take up the topic in some of their other products. In addition, ACCORD (10.0%), the ISS (7.4%), and SAIIA (1.9%) take an interest in the relation between elections and violent conflict.[56] The ISS and SAIIA are the only APSTTs with a focus on maritime security (2.9% and 3.8% respectively), an issue that some consider to be a traditional regime security – as opposed to human security – topic. Conflict mediation is an issue ACCORD is obviously closely linked with (6.4%); the same goes for peace-building (19.2%; in this case the CCR with 14.3%, and the IPSS with 7.7% also show some interest) and post-conflict reconstruction and development (ACCORD: 8.5%, CCR: 9.5%).

Generally, topics on the rise regarding the African peace and security agenda, such as women or youth in peace and conflict, are not yet properly covered by policy briefs of APSTTs. Ongoing debates at the African Union Commission over major policies to address the continent's peace and security challenges, I would argue, are not covered as frequently or substantially as one would have thought. This, for instance, goes for all activities related to preventive diplomacy and structural conflict prevention.[57] Additionally, this applies to the partnerships between the African Union and the United Nations (UN), on the one hand, and the European Union (EU), on the other. Only the CCR and ISS are discussing the African continent in its global embeddedness in terms of peace and security.[58] And this observation also holds true for the interface between the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)[59] and the complementary African Governance Architecture (AGA), which is based on the 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (AU Assembly 2007). And, finally, although given the fact that the media both in the Global South and the Global North hypes the theme of "terrorism and violent extremism" quite a bit, APSTTs have produced surprisingly few specific policy briefs on this topic (13 out of 321 policy briefs, or 4.05%).

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54   For a very rare exception, see ISS Policy Brief (2017), 112.

55   See Dan Smith and Janani Vivekananda, *A Climate of Conflict: The Links between Climate Change, Peace and War.* London: International Alert, 2007; Dan Smith and Janani Vivekananda, *Climate Change, Conflict and Fragility: Understanding the Linkages, Shaping Effective Responses.* London: International Alert, 2009.

56   See *Election-Related Disputes and Political Violence. Strengthening the Role of the African Union in Preventing, Managing, and Resolving Conflict.* New York: African Union, International Peace Institute, 2010.

57   See *Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework. Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessments (CSVRAs), and Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategies (CSVMS).* Addis Ababa: African Union, 2018.

58   For some content analysis of cross-cutting themes (gender, climate change, etc.), see Christoplos et al., Review, 43–45.

59   See *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council.* Durban: African Union, 2002.

The combined 321 policy briefs of the six APSTTs under review can be compared to a total of 1,076 registered violent and non-violent conflicts over the period 2009–2018.[60] Some of these conflicts are, undoubtedly, recurrent. If one assumes an average of 53.5 policy briefs per institute over the period 2009–2019 (the variation actually is between 19 and 136), then it becomes quite obvious that the six APSTTs can only cover a fairly limited number of the relevant peace and security issues the African continent is facing (on average roughly 1 out of 21 single conflicts).

Amongst the six APSTTs, the ISS has produced the highest number of policy briefs, and it did so over a long period of time (i.e. 11 years). In principle, the 136 policy briefs published by the ISS so far (i.e. by the end of 2019) represent a sample that can be examined with regard to the emergence of certain topics, their frequency, and possibly also some topical trends. The following diagram provides an overview of the emergence of the top five regional and topical issues the ISS has been addressing in its policy briefs (representing 45.03% of all its policy briefs; see diagram 1).
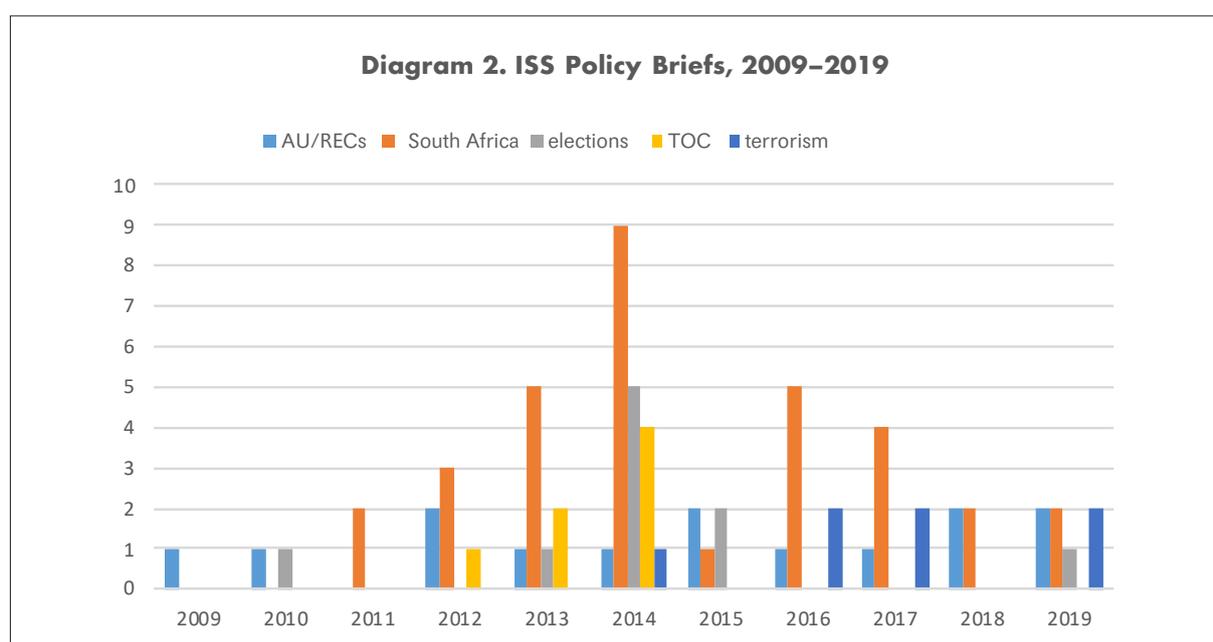
Source: ISS website (last accessed 31 January 2020).

The number of briefs per theme or topic ranges between 1 and 33; the total relevant sample of the top 5 themes is 70 (out of 136). However, the analysis only allows for a few systematic insights. Obviously, the ISS is primarily targeting a South African audience, hence the relative high number of briefs on that country (24.3%), particularly around the 2014 elections, but also on violence and crime. The AU and RECs are prevalent as well (9.6%). In terms of topics, elections – mainly in the Southern African region (including South Africa) – feature prominently (7.4%), followed by terrorism/violent extremism (5.2%) and transnational organized crime (5.2%).

However, fairly little can be said about the emergence of themes, save for the fact that transnational organized crime clearly only received consideration after 2012 and that maritime security only became an issue in 2015 (the latter is only covered by SAIIA). Regarding elections, it is basically two countries that are of interest to the ISS (apart from South Africa that is): neighbouring Zimbabwe and Kenya – that

60   As counted by the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer. See HIIK. *Conflict Barometer*. Heidelberg: Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, 2009-2019.

is to say, two countries in which considerable levels of electoral violence occurred in the past.[61] It is also interesting to note which topics are not considered to be relevant to the ISS audience: climate change and conflict, mediation, and small arms and light weapons – to name but a few.

Table 3. Content analysis of APSTTs' monographs, 2009–2019

	ACCORD		CCR		IPSS		ISS[1]		RVI		SAIIA	
Regional	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %
Africa	-	-	13	52.0	1	50.0	1	2.4	-	-	1	16.7
AU/RECs	3	23.1	4	16.0	-	-	3	7.1	-	-	-	-
Nigeria	-	-	2	8.0	-	-	4	9.5	-	-	-	-
South Africa	1	7.7	5	20.0	-	-	7	16.7	-	-	1	16.7
Other	-	-	-	-	1	50.0	12	28.6	4	100	6	100
Thematic	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %
Climate change	1	2.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-[2]
Mediation	5	10.4	-	-	-	-	10	7.4	1	5.3	1	1.9
Peace building	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2.9	-	-	2	3.7
Policing	3	6.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PSOs	10	20.8	6	14.3	2	9.1	4	2.9	-	-	-	-
Terrorism/extr.	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2.9	-	-	-	-
Thematic	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %	no.	in %
Woman in PS	4	8.4	4	9.5	-	-	4	2.9	1	5.3	1	1.9
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2.2	2	10.5	-	-
Translations[1]	-	-	-	-	1	4.5	2	1.5	1	5.3	-	-
Total	**13**	**100**	**25**	**100**	**2**	**100**	**42**	**100**	**4**	**100**	**6**	**100**

Note: (1) From English into French.

Sources (as of 31 March 2020):
ACCORD 2009–2019. *Books*, no.s 1–13. ULR:d<http://www.accord.org.za/publications/books/>.
CCR 2009–2019. *Books*, no.s 1–25. ULR: <http://www.ccr.org.za/index.php/media-release/books>.
IPSS 2016–2019. *Other publications*, no.s 1–2. ULR: <http://www.ipss-addis.org/resources/publications/>.
ISS 2009–2019. *Monographs,* no. 161–202. ULR: <https://issafrica.org/research/monographs>.
RVI 2011–2019. Books [1–4]. ULR: <http://riftvalley.net/publications/books>.
SAIIA 2009–2019. Books [1–6]. ULR: < https://saiia.org.za/publication-type/books/>.

The overall picture of the topics APSTTs address changes slightly when taking into account what would be the more saturated publications of APSTTs, which in the respective publication strategies are usually referred to as books or monographs. They represent knowledge that has been consolidated beyond bread-and-butter business, and they are considerably longer than policy briefs. The target audience of books and policy briefs may not always be the same, as it is assumed that decision-makers do not have time to regularly consume products that have the length of a monograph.[62] However, a few observations

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61 *Election-Related Disputes and Political Violence. Strengthening the Role of the African Union in Preventing, Managing, and Resolving Conflict.* New York: African Union, International Peace Institute, 2010.

62 In this case, download statistics could be as helpful as in-house publication strategy reviews.

are noteworthy (see table 3). In the period under review, that is to say the decade since 2009, the ISS has produced the highest number of books (42 out of a total of 92 APSTTs books, or 45.65%), followed by the CCR (25), ACCORD (13), SAIIA (6), the RVI (4), and the IPSS (2). SAIIA has the highest share of books published on topics outside of the list of themes discussed in tables 2 and 3 (83.3%). The CCR mainly follows a publication strategy that focuses on an African or South African perspective (52.0% and 20.0% respectively). Only the ISS places a similar focus on countries (64.3%). Both the ISS and SAIIA publish 16.5 per cent of their books on South Africa.

While 15.4 per cent of ACCORD's books concentrate on the themes of "mediation", "peace-building", and "peace support operations", respectively, the CCR's single most important topical focus is on "peace-building" (28.0%). The ISS and SAIIA follow quite a number of themes not captured in the topical list of Table 3 (31.0% and 83.3% respectively). The IPSS, it seems, has a very complex publication strategy that is trying to reach out at the same time to different audiences. There are only two commissioned monographs (2016, 2017) that can be compared to the others, but both do not reflect the profile of the institute.

Compared to the policy briefs (see table 2), the number of thematic issues in the monographs produced by APSTTs is less, and few stand out. Thus, none of the monographs of any of the six APSTTs focuses on elections, maritime security, post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD), transnational organized crime (TOC), or youth in conflict – all topics that somewhat featured in the institute's policy briefs. And many of the monographs are not written by staff, but commissioned. Other than the points made above, the sample per each APSTT is too small to develop any further arguments.

The publication strategies, in particular behind the policy briefs, differ from think tank to think tank. They range from carefully crafted strategic decisions on the selection of topics in a mid-term planning process to more arbitrary publication strategies that respond to recognized short-term demands. ACCORD links its policy and practice briefs with its strategic planning for the institute – that is to say, for the period 2017–2021 and its current six thematic lines.[63] In contrast, SAIIA defines and reviews its publication policy twice a year at regular staff meetings. Currently it is particularly geared towards the special role South Africa has recently assumed in global politics – joining the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member for the period 2019–2020 and taking over the chairmanship of the African Union for the year 2020.[64] And the ISS, it seems, is keen to be able to address all up-coming issues on short notice.[65] In general, in all cases publication strategies of APSTTs make use of different formats in which policy briefs do not necessarily play the most dominant role.

Most APSTTs are claiming that their publications focus upon either the interest of the host country (i.e. South Africa) or the African Union's key policy aims. In the latter case, reference is commonly made to "Agenda 2063. The Africa We Want"[66] and the AU's policy on "Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020".[67] Some publications are associated with specific projects. Thus, in the future, ACCORD hopes to publish more on "Silencing the Guns" as it has become involved in drafting a strategy for the African Union post-2020, which will replace the existing APSA roadmaps.[68]

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63   Interview with Vasu Gounden, Martin Rupiya, and Senzo Ngubane, ACCORD, 24 February 2020.

64   Interview with Elizabeth Sidiropoulos (chief executive) and Neuma Grobbelaar (director of research). Cape Town: South African Institute of International Affairs, 28 February 2020.

65   Interview with Jakkie Cilliers, ISS, 4 March 2020.

66   Based on a "Solemn Declaration" adopted by the African Heads of State and Government on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the OAU/AU on 25 May 2013.

67   See *Agenda 2063. The Africa We Want*. 2nd ed., Addis Ababa: AU Commission, 2014; *African Peace and Security Architecture. The APSA Roadmap 2016–2020*. Addis Ababa: African Union, 2016.

68   Interview with Vasu Gounden, Martin Rupiya, and Senzo Ngubane, ACCORD, 24 February 2020. See *African Peace and Security Architecture. The APSA Roadmap 2016–2020*. Addis Ababa: African Union, 2016; *African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by* [sic!] *Year 2020*. Lusaka: African Union, 2016.

The level of delegation of decisions by the institute's directors on what to publish also varies, from collective theme finding and collective assessment of past publications to – once a strategic decision has been taken – rather delegated ways of defining the institution's topical foci.[69] In some cases, policy briefs are the result of short-term "policy windows",[70] or they accompany "special projects" outside of the strategic planning areas.[71] None of the APSTTs interviewed indicated that the funding partners have tried, or are trying, to influence their publication strategies.[72]

Sometimes the publication of policy briefs is irregular. For instance, at one point in time ACCORD did not publish its policy and practice briefs for almost two years (issue 47 came out in August 2017 and issue 48 only followed in July 2019). The reason behind this seems to relate to human capacity constraints.[73]

Do APSTTs assess the impact of their products, and how do they asses? Far too little, it seems and hardly guided by sound methodological considerations. Some keep track of website traffic and the number of downloads of policy briefs or conduct irregular needs assessments (for instance, ACCORD); others primarily relate impact not to publications per se but to access to decision-makers at the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) or members of parliament (in this case, SAIIA). The relationship assumed between publishing policy briefs and the impact on the target audience often is an indirect one, with little direct causality. Furthermore, the notion of target audience sometimes seems blurred. ACCORD Director Gounden admits that his think tank is comparatively bad at selling its findings to a larger public, while the ISS is said to be extremely good at communication.[74] The ISS has a very clear managerial view on the production cycle and the extent to which the institute has direct control over influencing a certain audience.[75]

Interestingly, there is very little exchange amongst the think tanks regarding their respective work and strategies. There are no structured formats for discussing lessons learned or best practices.[76] And relating to global debates remains a challenge that some master better than others. For instance, SAIIA is part of the T20 Standing Africa Group, which was launched in May 2017 to relate to the G20 and its debates, but most others are not.[77]

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69 Interview with Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, SAIIA, 28 February 2020; ACCORD 2020; Interview with Michelle Ndiaye Ntab, IPSS, 9 March 2020; Interview with Jakkie Cilliers, ISS, 4 March 2020; Interview with Antoinette Louw, ISS, 5 March 2020.

70 Interview with Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, SAIIA, 28 February 2020.

71 Interview with Vasu Gounden, Martin Rupiya, and Senzo Ngubane, ACCORD, 24 February 2020.

72 Interview with Vasu Gounden, Martin Rupiya, and Senzo Ngubane, ACCORD, 24 February 2020; Interview with Michelle Ndiaye Ntab, IPSS, 9 March 2020; Interview with Jakkie Cilliers, ISS, 4 March 2020; Interview with Antoinette Louw, ISS, 5 March 2020; Interview with Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, SAIIA, 28 February 2020.

73 Interview with Vasu Gounden, Martin Rupiya, and Senzo Ngubane, ACCORD, 24 February 2020.

74 Interview with Vasu Gounden, Martin Rupiya, and Senzo Ngubane, ACCORD, 24 February 2020.

75 Interview with Jakkie Cilliers, ISS, 4 March 2020; Interview with Antoinette Louw, ISS, 5 March 2020.

76 Interview with Vasu Gounden, Martin Rupiya, and Senzo Ngubane, ACCORD, 24 February 2020; Interview with Michelle Ndiaye Ntab, IPSS, 9 March 2020; Interview with Jakkie Cilliers, ISS, 4 March 2020; Interview with Antoinette Louw, ISS, 5 March 2020; Interview with Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, SAIIA, 28 February 2020.

77 Personal observation at the Africa 2020 Think Tank Summit held on 26–28 February 2020 in Cape Town, South Africa. The meeting was hosted by the Africa Think Tank Summit Programme, ACCORD SAIIA.

4   THE NATURE OF APSTTs' KNOWLEDGE CLAIMS

The following overview concentrates on contemporary epistemes and narratives (understood in the tradition of Foucault)[78] and how they are employed and disseminated by APSTTs. Through their combination and parallel existence under conditions of global or at least transregional co-production, these knowledge claims constitute a *discursive order*, or a specific *knowledge regime*.

The first observation on the knowledge regime of APSTTs is that by now they share a common point of departure – thus, over the years there has been some form of convergence. Despite developing from very contingent and initially different knowledge claims, today all six APSTTs are adhering to a broad understanding of *human* security. This has replaced older, and narrower, notions of *regime* security (when founded, some think tanks indeed came from this understanding, such as the ISS[79]). Notions of human security strongly emerged in the mid-1990s,[80] though the debate had started far earlier.[81] Human security thinking stresses the interconnectivity of various aspects of social life and the overall relevance of people-centred development. In principle, it is also at the heart of the African Union's African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

Originally, the work of APSTTs developed against the background of different theoretical and disciplinary traditions that have informed their choice of topics as well as their strategic or political leaning. In this respect, on the one hand, the ISS and IPSS are coming from a tradition of empirical "international security studies", as historically coined in the United States (SAIIA comes from a tradition of international relations [IR], a field in which in the early to mid-twentieth century South Africans played quite an important role). They are often fairly positivist and broadly relate to variations of the IR realist school of thought. On the other hand, the CCR and ACCORD are based on the tradition of transformative peace studies – with different origins emerging in the United States as well as Scandinavia – which also tends to be somewhat normative. The RVI is an outlier in this group of APSTTs as it approaches the field of peace and security through an anthropological perspective. For instance, it asserts that "[f]ield-based, action-oriented research is at the core of the RVI's work".[82] In any case, when it comes to the epistemological foundations of APSTTs, wherever they are based, they generally do not invite anything like post-structuralist, constructivist, or post-colonial reasoning. Arguably, this self-imposed restriction may make their work less relevant or interesting – depending on one's own positionality.

The second observation relates to Cristoplos et al. and the authors' reminder that at the beginning of the 1990s especially South African think tanks were "pondering the need to build on their South African identity and experience again".[83] Against this background, ACCORD, the CCR, the ISS, and SAIIA, but also the IPSS, seem to share a joint understanding of how they relate to issues of peace and security in Africa. For these think tanks, violent conflict constitutes a "problem" that can be neatly identified, sometimes even measured. And by the same token, certain courses of action for key actors, such as the AU Commission, AU member states, the RECs, or specific governments, can be devised that would help interested international partners to "solve" this problem. Obviously, APSTTs believe in the virtues of social engineering. Thus, they share a conviction that Alexander Austin has problematized for

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78   Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1970 [1966], and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London, New York: Routledge, 2002 [1969].

79   Also see Cheryl Hendricks (ed.), *From State Security to Human Security in Southern Africa.* Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies 2012 (= ISS monograph; 122).

80   UNDP (ed.), *Human Development Report 1994*. New York NY: Oxford University Press, 1994.

81   See Lester R. Brown, "Human needs and the security of nations", in: *Headline Series* (1978) 2, 3–63.

82   "Rift Valley Institute General Prospectus 2016". Nairobi: Rift Valley Institute, 2016, 2.

83   Christoplos et al., *Review*, 56.

the Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management (Berlin, Germany)[84] with regard to the field of early warning and conflict prevention. This kind of belief and analysis, he holds, is based on two "lurking assumptions: (a) that conflict can be mitigated in the first instance, and (b) that one knows how to mitigate it – both are highly contentious".[85] Indeed, there is a strong conviction amongst APSTTs that violent conflict in Africa can be addressed successfully through the concerted efforts of a range of actors and a related array of policy interventions.

In terms of the underlying scientific meta-approaches, *methodological nationalism*[86] and *conceptual Eurocentrism*[87] prevail throughout most of the APSTTs' work. What does this mean? First, APSTTs' authors, African or otherwise, primarily frame conflict on the continent as occurring within the containers of nation-states ("Burundi", "CAR", "Mali", "Somalia", etc.). "Nations", or AU member states, are still the dominant unit of analysis. Social change is happening within these containers. In most cases, APSTTs do not emphasize the impacts of transnational, or even transregional, entanglements and interconnectivities of violent conflict in Africa.[88] And rarely do they *systematically* put emphasis on the complex, interwoven intervention networks that usually involve various African actors, including the AU and the RECs, as well as foreign interveners, ranging from the United Nations to the European Union to single nation-states (including France, the United States, and China, to name but a few), together with numerous non-state African actors, such as civil societies, private military companies, or other private sector entities.

In addition, the very terms referred to, either in conflict analysis or in sketching out policy interventions, are based on a universalized spectrum of options that has its intellectual roots in the Global North – despite the complaisant talk of "African solutions to African problems".[89] This holds true not only for analytical descriptions such as "electoral violence", "terrorism", and "violent extremism", but also for prescriptive ideas about "peace-building", "power-sharing arrangements", "restoring constitutional order", "restorative justice", and the like. Informed by a post-colonial perspective, the practical implications of such a dominant framing could at least be reflected upon more systematically.[90] It seems that the debate on decolonizing (peace and security) academia still has to reach APSTTs. Of course, this would imply a fundamental reconceptualization of the relations between APSTTs, donors, and end users and a reconsideration of the positioning of this particular way of knowledge production in global politics (see below).

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84 The centre has been renamed Berghof Conflict Research, which is one of the three independent institutions unified under the Berghof Foundation.

85 Alexander Austin, *Early Warning and The Field: A Cargo Cult Science?* Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management; 2004, 15.

86 See John Agnew, "The Territorial Trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory", *Review of International Political Economy* 1 (1994) 1, 53–80.

87 See Gareth Austin, "Reciprocal Comparison and African History: Tackling Conceptual Eurocentrism in the Study of Africa's Economic Past", *African Studies Review* 50 (2007) 3, 1–28.

88 On related empirical trends, see, e.g., *Report of the Peace and Security Council on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa.* 33rd AU Assembly, held on 9–10 February 2020 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [AU/Assembly/5 (XXXIII)] or Ulf Engel (ed.), "Africa's Transregional Conflicts" (=*Comparativ* special issue 28 [2018] 6), Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2019, 7–92.

89 See the detailed breakdown by Dawit Yohannes and Fana Gebresenbet, who discuss how little contributors to the IPSS journal *African Solutions to African Problems* relate to proclaimed Afro-centric norms and practices in the analysis of the African peace and security architecture. Dawit Yohannes and Fana Gebresenbet, "How African is the ideal of 'African Solution to African Problems': A methodological critique". Paper presented at a panel on "The inner life of African organizations: Innovative methods and approaches", organized by Linnéa Gelot (Folke Bernadotte Academy, Stockholm) and Ulf Engel (University of Leipzig). European Conference on African Studies, Edinburgh, 12 June 2019 (mimeo).

90 Cf. Rita Abrahamsen, "Africa and international relations: assembling Africa, studying the world", in: *African Affairs* 116 (2017) 462, 125–139; Ulf Engel et al., "Africa in the Globalizing World – A research agenda", in: *Comparativ* 27 (2017) 1, 107–119.

Future detailed research on this issue could take advantage of advances in the digital humanities (DH). A systematic analysis of dominant epistemes and their changes over time could, for instance, be carried out on the basis of creating a text corpus of all the policy briefs and monographs of the six APSTTs under review in this working paper. In this case, clustered text mining and analysis certainly will bring out more detailed and nuanced conclusions than discussed here.

5 APSTTs AS CO-PRODUCERS OF KNOWLEDGE

In the fifth section of this working paper, the relative place of the knowledge produced on peace and security issues by APSTTs is discussed vis-à-vis competing global knowledge claims. Certainly, it would be interesting to trace the change of the knowledge regimes of APSTTs over time, especially when looking at APSTTs that already were established some time ago, such as SAIIA (1934), the CCR (1968), the ISS (1991), and ACCORD (1992), thereby having had a chance to live through a number of intellectual or donor cycles on "peace and security in Africa". However, this can only be done in a more substantial and much longer study that still has to be written. In this respect, only very few first steps have been undertaken thus far.

In 2012, Okere and Fasae published an analysis of 20 years of contributions to the *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* (edited by ACCORD), amongst others highlighting the most frequently cited journals and authors.[91] And more recently the African Leadership Centre (ALC) at King's College London has produced a survey on "Knowledge Production on Peace and Security in Africa: Mapping the Epistemic Terrain of Peace and Security in Africa".[92] It is based on an analysis of bibliometric data for the years 1960 to 2018, taken from articles published in English in peer-reviewed journals by scholars affiliated with Africa-based institutions, as referenced mainly in the SCOPUS database.[93] Though the ALC survey offers a number of interesting results,[94] it also has a number of gaps.[95] To put it simply, methodologically speaking the ALC survey cannot be a substitute for in-depth data mining in scanned peer-reviewed journals (see above, on DH research strategies).

In any case, it may not be far-fetched to assume that, on the one hand, APSTTs follow trends in international peace and security studies (which by no means constitute a consolidated or homogenous field), and they contribute to the emergence of new insights into the field, on the other hand. APSTTs are consumers and recipients as well as co-producers of knowledge related to peace and security.[96] And given the nature of their topic – Africa – it can be reasonably assumed that in fact APSTTs are commanding a very unique knowledge on the nature and dynamics of violent conflict on the continent. In principle, this should allow them to produce and claim specific knowledge regimes. In the following, this argument will be illustrated by two examples.

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91 Oluchi O. Okere and Joseph Kehinde Fasae, "Citation Patterns in Peace Conflict Studies: A case study of the African Journal on Conflict Resolution", in: *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 12 (2012) 3, 131–145, at 140–143. On international security studies, an interesting network analysis has been tabled by Bruce Russett and Arnold Taylor, "Who Talks, and Who's Listening? Networks of International Security Studies", in: *Security Dialogue* 41 (2010) 6, 589–598.

92 *Knowledge Production on Peace and security in Africa: Mapping the epistemic terrain of peace and security in Africa.* London: African Leadership Centre, 2018.

93 The report also offers an analysis of "Media Representation and Engagement of Experts on Topical Peace and Security Issues in Africa" (*Knowledge Production on Peace and security in Africa*, 76–98).

94 As to be expected, regional knowledge production by authors based in either South Africa or Nigeria dominates the research landscape by far (*Knowledge Production on Peace and security in Africa*, 39, 41). Also, there is an obvious gender bias – the field is predominantly male (ibid., 38).

95 For instance, certain authors are under-represented. One also wonders what would have happened to the top 20 keywords (*Knowledge Production on Peace and security in Africa*, 27) when country names would have been excluded from the list (would "conflict prevention", "mediation", or "post-conflict reconstruction" have become more prominent); how come that in the top-40 list of the author's institutional affiliation, the ISS is listed only at place 26 – and that none of the other APSTTs have made it to this list (ibid., 29); also how come that *African Security* is only ranked 17 in the list of journals by article (ibid., 43; with only 22 articles – given the fact that the journal, which has been published since 2008, produces four issues per year; with an average of maybe four articles per volume, one would expect a figure closer to 160); etc. Basically, it seems that the way the search in databases has been organized has resulted in a framing of the field "peace and security" that is somewhat flawed. However, the brief co-word analysis (ibid., 74) is an interesting read.

96 In more general terms on the production of knowledge on and by "Africa", see Abrahamsen, "Africa and international relations"; Engel et al., "Africa in the Globalizing World".

Historically, and when it comes to meta-trends in, for instance, the formation of an international discourse and subsequently emerging practices on "early warning" and "conflict prevention", international dynamics of co-production have been manifold.[97] Though largely inspired by African experiences, mainly the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the often parallel, and not yet connected, framing processes on "early warning" and "conflict prevention" have mainly taken place at various sites *outside* the African continent. This is, I would suggest, because in the past (i.e. prior to the late 1990s) African actors were rarely allowed and/or accepted globally to act as norm or discourse entrepreneurs on peace and security issues.[98] However, since then the situation of being African norm receivers rather than norm producers in their own right has fundamentally changed, in particular because of the transformation from 1999 to 2002 of the Organisation of African Unity into the African Union and the resulting focus of international development assistance actors on the field of peace and security.[99] For instance, contemporary debates on structural conflict prevention in Africa are actually spearheaded by African organizations, academic institutions, and consultants.[100]

The dual role of APSTTs of receiving *and* producing knowledge on peace and security in Africa concurrently is reproduced by the way all these think tanks are operating. Their output is often based on the work of African and international consultants who, together, form a network, or community, of experts along whose networked lines knowledge travels and methods are shared. The places of knowledge production are closely interlinked. Often they centre around the sites of important continental and regional organizations, such as the AU (that is to say, Addis Ababa) and the RECs (for instance Abuja, Arusha, or Gaborone) as well as the United Nations (New York) or the European Union (Brussels) – sites where many of the contributing intellectuals in one way or the other relate to. Here my main argument is that it is no longer possible to differentiate actors and sites of knowledge production between "Africa" and the rest – rather, we are dealing with globally, or transregionally, positioned actors who are both personally and discursively interwoven in "portals" of knowledge production.[101]

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97 Cf. Ulf Engel, "Early Warning and Conflict Prevention", in: M. Middell (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Transregional Studies*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2018, 573–581.

98 On the notion, see Martha Finnemore and Kathrin Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change", in: *International Organization* 52 (1998) 4, 887–917; Amitav Acharya, "How Ideas Spread: Whose Norms Matter? Norm Localization and Institutional Change in Asian Regionalism", in: *International Organization* 58 (2004), 2, 239–275.

99 See Sören Stapel and Fredrik Söderbaum, "Mapping and problematizing external funding to the AU and the RECs". Paper for the GCGD conference, 6–7 November 2017: Theme 3: Aid and migration. Gothenburg: School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg [up-date published in 2019 in U. Engel and F. Mattheis (eds.), *The Finances of Regional peace Organisations in the Global South: Follow the money*. London, New York NY: Routledge, 2017, 112–125.

100 See Ulf Engel, "Knowledge production at the African Union on conflict early warning", in: *South African Journal of International Affairs* 25 (2018) 1, 117–132.

101 Ulf Engel, "Headquarters of International Organizations as Portals of Globalization: The African Union Commission and its Peace and Security Policies", in: C. Baumann, M. Campbell and A. Dietze (eds.) *Portals of Globalization in Africa, Asia and Latin America*. Special issues of *Comparative* 27 (2018) 4, 151–170.

6   THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION OF APSTTs

Finally, with regard to the underlying political economy of the field of "peace and security in Africa", the more recent focus amongst practitioners and academics – something that has really thrived over the past ten years – has led to the establishment of a unique intellectual market place and related industry.[102] It is characterized by uneven demand and supply structures. These in turn are driven by international development assistance organizations as suppliers of funds, on the one hand, and continental and regional African organizations that articulate knowledge demand, on the other hand. These two strata are connected by a myriad of African and non-African academics that are often moonlighting as consultants. The empirical increase in violent conflict in Africa post-2005, the various securitization discourses that have developed after the attacks on 11 September 2001 in the United States as well as the fallout after the toppling of Gaddafi in Libya in 2011 constitute the real-life backdrop to this dynamic.[103]

APSTTs are important actors in the peace and security knowledge market place: (1) as clients (i.e. recipients of large amounts of donor funds), (2) as intermediaries or knowledge brokers, and (3) as knowledge producers in their own right. This situation is as well fuelled by donor interests: from the perspective of donors, bringing in Africa-based (or diasporic) expertise increases the legitimacy of process and outputs vis-à-vis development partners, domestic constituencies, as well as fellow donors. While in the 1990s and early 2000s the majority of consultancies on peace and security–related issues in Africa (and many other fields) had been carried out by people and companies originating from the Global North, this has fundamentally changed over the past 15 years or so. As Christoplos et al. declare: "[these think tanks] have a comparative advantage over Northern think tanks due to their Southern base that generates a degree of trust, ownership and automatic credibility".[104]

However, the very fact that APSTTs are operating in and from Africa in more than one sense does not necessarily mean that they are "on the ground", or that the knowledge order they are commanding, living in, or contributing to is any "better" or different from that of Northern-based think tanks and academics. First, knowledge production on continental and regional African policy interventions in violent conflict in Africa has been rightfully criticized for its predominance of top-down approaches – as opposed to views "from below", that is to say on the actual practices of intervention and how they play out locally.[105] Undoubtedly, for a long time anthropological and sociological research has already worked from this perspective, but it still has to find firm ground in mainstream research on policy interventions in peace and security contexts (in this respect, the RVI may be different from the other five APSTTs reviewed here).

And, second, policy briefs or monographs published by African think tanks do not necessarily originate from the staff of these think tanks. In fact, in many cases APSTT staff is not involved – either because "prominent" African experts are invited to contribute or because the publications are written by non-Africans. Indeed, a closer look at the output of APSTTs shows that any essentializing perspective

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102   On security sector reform and conflict mediation, see Laurie Nathan, "Supply and Demand in the Policy Research Market". Paper presented at a panel on "The inner life of African organizations: Innovative methods and approaches", organized by Linnéa Gelot (Folke Bernadotte Academy, Stockholm) and Ulf Engel (University of Leipzig). European Conference n African Studies, Edinburgh, 12 June 2019 (mimeo).

103   See Claire Metelits, *Security in Africa: A Critical Approach to Western Indicators of Threat.* Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

104   Christoplos et al., *Review*, 57.

105   Antonia Witt, "Studying African interventions 'from below': Exploring practices, knowledges and perceptions", *South African Journal of International Affairs* 25 (2018) 1, 1–19. See also Andrea Ó Súilleabháin (ed.), *Leveraging Local Knowledge for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding in Africa.* New York: International Peace Institute, 2015.

on knowledge production is not particularly helpful. So, for instance, exactly half of the policy briefs published by the IPSS have been written by persons outside the organization (and the trend seems increasingly to go this direction). And, with regard to 136 policy briefs by the ISS, roughly 70 per cent are authored by ISS staff or consultants, another 20 per cent by other African scholars, and the remaining 10 per cent by "Western" scholars.

In any case, these dynamics have resulted in a very ambivalent role of APSTTs in a field that is shaped by uneven power relations[106] and high levels of dependence on external donors[107]. At the same time, and as to be expected in a truly post-colonial situation, APSTTs command agency and account for legitimacy that their foreign international partners are lacking. At least for the field of peace and security, I would argue that for this very reason traditional North-South hierarchies in knowledge production have changed and, as a consequence, today African experts on peace and security on the continent are substantially more valued than 10 or 15 years ago.[108] Accordingly, the essentializing difference of what is "African" and what is not is becoming blurred more and more.[109]

In addition, there is a domestic terrain in which a particular political economy plays out, at least in South Africa where four of the six APSTTs under review are based. Initially, competition for attention and funding amongst these think tanks was a serious issue – especially in the second half of 1990s after the end of apartheid – as they are all operating in the same marketplace. Yet, meanwhile all remaining three South Africa-based APSTTs have managed to develop their respective niches, so that today's working relations are described as fairly cooperative.[110]

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106 Cf. Henning Melber, "Knowledge is power and power affects knowledge: challenges for research collaboration in and with Africa", *Africa Development* 40 (2015) 4, 21–42.

107 For the African Union, see Ulf Engel, "Revisiting the African Union's Finances post-Kigali 2016", in: U. Engel and F. Mattheis (eds.) *The Finances of Regional Organisations in the Global South: Follow the money*. London, New York NY: Routledge, 2019, 19–34.

108 This is speaking to a claim Koch and Weingart make in their excellent analysis on the production of development assistance's "expert advice" and the failure to transfer it to the health and education sectors in Tanzania and South Africa. Susanne Koch and Peter Weingart, *The Delusion of Knowledge Transfer. The Impact of Foreign Aid Experts on Policy-making in South Africa and Tanzania.* Cape Town: African Minds, 2016

109 For instance, if you think of an African-born, Western-trained academic who is teaching at a university in, let us say, Canada, as opposed to a European-born academic-cum-consultant who has spent many years working with and for African RECs.

110 Interview with Vasu Gounden, Martin Rupiya, and Senzo Ngubane, ACCORD, 24 February 2020; Interview with Jakkie Cilliers, ISS, 4 March 2020; Interview with Antoinette Louw, ISS, 5 March 2020; Interview with Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, SAIIA, 28 February 2020.

7 CONCLUSIONS

This working paper addresses African think tanks that are working in the field of peace and security. It discusses the nature and relative place of their knowledge production. This contribution focuses on six APSTTs: the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, in Durban; the Centre for Conflict Resolution, in Cape Town; the Institute for Peace and Security Studies, in Addis Ababa; the Institute for Security Studies, in Pretoria; the Rift Valley Institute, in Nairobi; and the South African Institute of International Affairs, in Johannesburg.

With regard to APSTTs' knowledge claims, four observations can be summarized. First, there has been convergence amongst APSTTs in terms of their reference to a shared notion of *human s*ecurity, as opposed to regime security. Second, from an epistemological point of view all of the publications by APSTTs are more or less based on positivist and realist reasoning. Third, APSTTs, save for the RVI, seem to share a joint understanding of the need and feasibility of social engineering. In principle, "violent conflict" is a human condition that can be fixed by the right institutions and an already known mix of policy interventions. And fourth, in terms of the underlying scientific meta-approaches, methodological nationalism and conceptual Eurocentrism prevails. Conflicts are still mainly occurring in nation-state containers (though references to transnational implications and effects of conflict are on the rise); and the analytical categories still mirror very closely the Eurocentric knowledge order of the extended West: "liberal peace", "constitutional order", and "the fight against violent extremism" are dominant. The relevance of the "local" is only rarely admitted and methodologically reflected upon.

There is stiff competition over the relevant peace and security knowledge order with regard to the existing market of knowledge transfer. This competition is not only between African think tanks, but also between them and independent African consultant companies. And, without a doubt, all of them are competing with companies, think tanks, and consultant companies based in the Global North. Within Africa, there is a clear dominance of South African thinks tanks: ACCORD, the ISS, SAIIA, and – until recently – the CCR. Increasingly, non-independent think tanks play a prominent role in continental affairs, as evidenced by the role of the Cairo International Centre for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA) in the organization of the 2019 Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development – an event competing with the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa, which is organized since 2012 by the IPSS.[111] With regard to global competition, relevant African institutional actors at the level of the African Union and the RECs (but also their "international partners", i.e. Western donors) increasingly favour both African think tanks as well as private African consultants (or companies) over Western competitors.

To conclude, knowledge production on peace and security in Africa is co-produced in a global environment in which APSTTs are both receiving and producing relevant knowledge. It is driven not only by the obvious needs of African societies and organizations, but also by donor aspirations. Furthermore, it is an expression of Africa's dependence in the field of peace and security on external finances. In any case, the practices of APSTTs, African policy institutions, and their international partners seem to lend some credit to the French political scientist's Jean-François Bayart's reflections on the art of extraversion:[112] at times, dependency on donor funding can help to develop an often rather sustainable niche business.

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111 See "Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development". URL: <https://www.aswanforum.org> (accessed: 31 March 2020).

112 Jean-François Bayart, "Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion", in: *African Affairs* 99 (2000) 396, 217–267.

But to do justice to the many dynamics of the past decades, at the same time APSTTs have established themselves as important producers, translators, and brokers of knowledge relevant to the African continent's manifold peace and security challenges. In any case, many questions touched upon in this working paper call for far deeper reflection and research. The general question of African knowledge production on peace and security issues and how this relates to both African peace and security practices as well as the theme of emerging knowledge societies on the continent will certainly remain on the agenda – especially if the quest for "decolonizing knowledge" is taken seriously.

Biographical Note

Trained as a political scientist and historian, Ulf Engel is professor of "Politics in Africa" at the Institute of African Studies, Leipzig University. He is director of the graduate programme of the DFG-funded Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) 1199: "Processes of Spatializations under the Global Condition" (since 2016). Engel is also a visiting professor at the Institute for Peace and Security Studies at Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia, and a professor extraordinary in the Department of Political Science at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. Since 2006, Engel has been advising the AU Peace and Security Department in the fields of conflict prevention, early warning systems, and preventive diplomacy.