Towards the African School of Security? The African Union Peace and Security Council's Construction of a Norm-driven Cooperative Security Discourse

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This paper will assert that a major revolution *and* evolution is transpiring in the African continent's security discourse. The more extensive study and appraisal of the heavily norm-laden discourse, through which the African continent is currently constructing and expressing its particular conception and understanding of security, is growing in salience and prominence.The paper will also further attempt to illustrate that the African Union, most notably through one of its most important institutions, the AU Peace and Security Council is attempting to construct a new, more robust *norm-driven* cooperative security discourse. The study will further attempt to argue that the AU Peace and Security Council is emerging as one of the most important norm-generating and diffusing institutions within the African continent's evolving Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The importance of the norm-generating behaviour of African institutions have not been critically analysed or appraised, especially the construction and diffusion of norms in support of Africa's evolving Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The paper will further attempt to show that the AU Peace and Security Council, through its construction, diffusion, consumption and enforcement of new peace and security norms is en route towards the construction of a mature security community. In this context therefore it appears as if a norm-driven cooperative security culture is emerging on the African continent towards the construction of a fully-fledged security community under the stewardship of the AU Peace and Security Council. The newly-established African Union (AU) has from the very outset placed a high premium on the advancement of peace, security and stability by attempting to construct *not only* a structurally, but *especially* normatively sound collective security architecture based on 'dependable expectations' of peaceful inter- and intra-state relations. The AU's new peace and security architecture's most critical potential contribution and most salient value is situated within the construction, diffusion *and* enforcement of new, robust norms. The emergence of a common security culture on the African continent is an extremely important development, warranting closer analysis and evaluation.