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Strategic Governance to “Silence the Guns” in Africa: Urban Sub-Saharan African Perceptions on War's Root Causes.

Peter Tresor Miyalou
Central South University,China, laverdad710@outlook.fr

Chun Yan Hu
Central South University,China, huchunyan@csu.edu.cn

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Strategic Governance to “Silence the Guns” in Africa: Urban Sub-Saharan African Perceptions on War’s Root Causes.

Abstract

Despite the African Union’s campaign to silence the guns in Africa by 2020 (STGIA 2020), many African countries are suffering from wars and political instability, the primary causes of underdevelopment in Africa. This paper examines the roots causes of wars in Africa and provide a strategic governance to silence the guns beyond 2020. To accomplish this, we gathered data from 169 questionnaire responses administered across 25 African countries, to capture African people’s perceptions on the root causes of wars and whether employing strategic governance would help silence the guns in these countries. The results showed that political power struggle (47.9%), ethnic conflict (17.8%), religious discrimination (10.7 %), land disputes (8.3 %) and chieftaincy disputes (7.1 %) were considered the biggest driving forces of wars in the Africa, whereas no understanding causes of wars, poverty, hunger and poverty, corruption, terrorism, Western influence, instigations by Western powers, ignorance and poor leadership have a relatively lower influence. Half the participants proposed poverty alleviation measures as a significant strategy to silence the guns. Finally, most participants believed that good governance and social accountability could contribute toward silencing of the guns in Africa.

Keywords

Silencing the guns, wars, good governance, peace, Africa

Cover Page Footnote

I would like to appreciate all the participants for their contribution to the study by sharing their opinion. I would like to acknowledge the constructive comments and guidance of my supervisor Hu Chun Yan during the writing of this study. If there will be any errors and misrepresentations, they are mine. Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge the unfailing support and encouragement of my wife Michelle L. Miyalou to keep up with this study.

INTRODUCTION

A secure society benefits both the society as a whole and individual members (Wulf, 2005). Wars in Africa pose a serious threat to development, human security, as well as community, both at regional and national levels (Bankale, 2016; Dorsouma, 2022; Fomba Kanga et al., 2022; George et al., 2022; Katsina et al., 2021; Martin & Miller, 2022). Socioeconomic inequalities, authoritarian rule, exclusion of minorities from governance and weak institutions are among the factors that contributed to recent wars in Africa (Kalu; Lindemann, 2008; Lisakafu, 2017; Lwanda, 2022; Müller-Crepon et al., 2021; Nathan, 2001). African socio-economic and political crises are largely attributed to poor governance (Abdulhamid, 2021; Ifeoma, 2011; V. H. Mlambo, 2021; Ylönen, 2009). Many scholars argue that the influence of external factors and conflicts over the ownership and control of resources cannot be underestimated (Brooks & Kurtz, 2016; Collier & Hoeffler, 2002, 2004; Fearon, 2005; Lujala et al., 2005; Ron, 2005).

Several African states have made considerable strides over the past fifty years in building institutions of governance, which have laid the foundation for mechanisms to promote participatory and inclusive development, diversity management, and participation. Following 50 years of independence and nation-building, as well as the postcolonial attempts to build good governance, these states have gained some momentum for silencing the guns (Khadiagala, 2015). Bankale (2016) argued that wars in Africa are very intense as both state actors and civilians have access to small armed weapons. These non-state actors access these arms through the inflow from conflict-prone areas. It is believed that police, soldiers, and security agents sell weapons provided by governments to criminals. In Africa, many countries have implemented mechanisms to silence guns, and due to the failure of the 2020 goal, the African Union (AU) has now adopted this project as a lifetime agenda. However, these efforts have not led to a reduction in wars thus far, because, as mentioned earlier, most African countries have witnessed instabilities and conflict in the last decade.

As part of its Agenda 2063, in May 2013, for peaceful coexistence and development on the continent, the African Union committed to silence the guns in Africa (STGIA) by 2020. This effort aimed to curb and eliminate the proliferation and illegal trafficking of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in Africa, which are a key cause of conflicts in the region (Ehiane & Uwizeyimana, 2018; Ilesanmi, 2021; JOSEPH, 2013; Lung'ung'u, 2021; V. H. Mlambo, 2021; Mules, 2019; Tamir, 2020). Even though STGIA 2020 has been launched, several countries

have experienced armed conflict in recent years (Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Mozambique, Central African Republic (CAR), Nigeria, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Libya, Mali, Kenya, Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Somalia, and Tunisia), resulting in massive destruction of property, livelihoods, and lives (Okumu et al., 2020). The growth of every society or nation depends on the peaceful coexistence of its people. Moreover, human security is an important aspect of poverty reduction and development in challenging environments, such as countries emerging from conflict (Biswas, 2016). Thus, Musau (2019) argues that investing in economic development could stop the youth from taking up arms. Many development institutions, especially government civil servants, choose to avoid areas that are prone to conflict. The impact of these armed conflicts is effectively encapsulated in the statements made by the former secretary of the United Nations, Kofi Annan:

“In recent years, Africa has achieved economic and political development. Nevertheless, violence continues to pose a significant danger and hinder progress in several regions of the continent. The ramifications of these conflicts have significantly eroded Africa's endeavours to establish enduring stability, wealth, and peace for its populace (Annan, 2004)”.

The pledge to STGIA was mainly focus to reduce and stop the proliferation and illegal trafficking of SALW in Africa. Literature and policies on this topic lack research inquiring about the causes of wars in Africa by inquiring about the opinions of African citizens who are mostly affected by violence and crises. This study intends to close that gap. Having some African citizen participate in an investigation is in line with Okumu et al. (2020) who propose strengthening coordination across African Union Commission (AUC) departments, and ensuring citizens' involvement and buy-in in the implementation of STGIA. Therefore, the researchers decided to investigate by using an online survey through Google Drive, in which participants' opinions were asked to assess the root causes of wars within the African continent. Furthermore, many authors argue that peacekeeping missions fail to address conflict's core causes (Genugten, 2008; V. H. Mlambo, 2021; Okumu et al., 2020). These authors further argue that these issues must be addressed in order for peacekeeping missions to be successful. It is expedient to know the average African citizen's opinion on the root causes of wars in Africa, because they are the ones who are mostly concern. They are in the field where all the violence is happening and are victims of it. The African citizens hear and see what government and international donors cannot

see or sometimes overlook. Furthermore, in the knowledge of the researchers, there is not a literature on the major use of the guns under the topic silencing the guns in Africa. Therefore, to close the gaps, this study aims to answer some pertinent questions related to this issue such as whether: 1) Africans are aware of AU'S campaign for silencing the guns; 2) African heads of state have devised any measures to achieve the campaign's goals, and 3) good governance and leadership can help silence the guns in Africa. In order to answer the paper questions, the paper examines the methodology, some of the study's important concepts, review the literature on the roots causes of wars in Africa, present the results and discussion as well as the conclusion.

METHODOLOGY

Structured and open questionnaires were used to gather data for this research. The questions were uploaded online on google drive and responses were also recorded online. Due to the time and cost constraints of the research, the researchers decide to use a snowball sampling approach to conduct the research. According to Parker et al. (2019), snowball sampling is a popular means of recruiting research participants when seeking access to hard-to-reach populations and desire anonymity. Furthermore, Woodley and Lockard (2016) conducted a study on Black women educators, in which they emphasized the importance of social networking as a means to share counter-narratives. Therefore, we established the initial sample using our own contacts who hail from English and French speaking countries. However, the snowball sample approach was more crucial when accessing participants from other community. Participants were asked to share the link with others. We also sent the questionnaires link privately to our individual Facebook friends and posted it on our Facebook page to promote the survey and reach more respondents.

All study participants were informed about the purpose of the questionnaire survey and the confidentiality of their information, and proceeding with the survey was considered as giving consent. Also, no material was given to them to induce their responses to the questionnaire, thus allowing them to choose either to respond or not to respond to the questions. The survey was conducted online from October 17th 2020 to November 20th 2020. We initially had two links for the survey: one for French speakers and another for English speakers. The link shared to French speakers had 125 respondents from 11 Africans nations (Sub-Saharan Africa), two (2) Francophones African living in France, two (2) in the

United States of America, two (2) in China, one (1) in Canada, one (1) in Italy. The link shared to English and bilingual(English and French) speakers had 169 respondents from 25 African nations: Forty-nine (49) hail from Ghana, twenty-seven (27) hail from Nigeria, eleven (11) hail from Cameroon, eleven (11) hail from South-Africa, nine (9) hail from Zambia, nine (9) hail from Liberia, eight (8) from Rwanda, six (6) hail from Republic of Congo, five (5) hail from Kenya, five (5) decided to remain anonymous, four (4) hail from Zimbabwe, four (4) hail from Senegal, three (3) hail from Tanzania, two (2) hail from Togo, two (2) hail from Ethiopia, two (2) hail from Burundi, two (2) hail from Sierra-Leonne, two (2) hail from Namibia, one (1) hail from Guinea-Bissau, one (1) hail from Democratic Republic of Congo, one (1) hail from Malawi, one (1) hail from Mozambique, one (1) from Botswana, one (1) from Gabon, one (1) from Cote d'Ivoire and one (1) from Uganda.

Due to time constraint, we decided to use only the English version link which had 169 respondents. This is how the sample size was determined. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and results presented that. So, we described that way and comparing the results to other researches as indicated by the reference. This method was used by gathering Urban Sub-Saharan African citizen perspectives on the matter in order to broaden understanding of the root causes of African wars and to propose a strategic plan to silence the weapons in Africa beyond 2020 through good governance and social accountability. To support the findings of this paper, literature, debates and arguments were consulted and serve as backbone. Therefore, the researcher decided to investigate by asking the opinion of African citizen from different background living in the African continent and from the diaspora including African students living in China. One limitation of the research was that most of the research participants were students (58.6%), whereas 41.4% were not, yet all were located in urban areas during the research period. Another point was that I didn't conduct a one-on-one interview to be able to quote some of the participants opinions on the subject.

A series of questions were prepared. Among the questions, participants' opinions were asked to assess the root causes of wars within the African continent. It is expedient to know the average African citizen's opinion on the root causes of wars in Africa, because they are the ones who are mostly concern. They are in the field where all the violence is happening and are victims of it. The African citizens hear and see what government and international donors cannot see or sometimes overlook. Similarly, Ayissi and Sall (2005) argue that establishing peace requires the participation of populations and civil society.

Instead of enforcing peace upon a society or community, it is imperative to cultivate peace organically and from the grassroots level. Therefore, it was expedient to collect the African population opinion.

A majority of the participants were male, with 61.5% males and 38.5% females. A range of 18 to 46 years of age was represented: 17.2% was between 18-24 years old; 48.5% was between 25-31 years old; 25.4% was between 32-38 years old; 5.3% was between 39-45 years old; 3.6% was between 46 years old and above. There were three main religious denominations: 87.5% for Christianity, 5.9% for Islam, 3.6% for Catholicism, 1.8% for Hinduism and 1.2% for participants without any religion. The education status of participants was as follows: 3.67% hold a high school degree; 51.5 % hold a Bachelor degree; 36.0% hold a Master degree; and finally, 8.9% hold a Ph.D. 50.3 % of the participants were employed, 48.5% were unemployed, 0.6% were in business and finally 0.6% were self-employed. Furthermore, 29.6% of participants were employed in the public sector; 45.0% were employed in the private sector; 10.0% were students and 15.4% were non-employed.

SILENCING THE GUNS, CONFLICTS AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE

Concept of Silencing the Guns

Even while the overall situation in Africa has improved greatly during the 1990s, numerous countries have experienced varied levels of violence since (Okumu et al., 2020). As a consequence of the numerous violent conflicts on the African continent, the concept of silencing the guns has been developed to facilitate the desired economic and political integration of the continent (V. H. Mlambo, 2021). Violence in Africa is largely influenced by the widespread use of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) that were manufactured by African governments, foreign suppliers, as well as and those manufactured by local craftsmen (Okumu et al., 2020). Considering the importance of small arms and light weapons (SALW) proliferation and the serious threat it poses to the peace and stability of its peoples, the African Union (AU) has assumed the lead role in fighting illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons over the years (Bankale, 2016). He also claims that the AU's role in peace and security is founded on the member states' sincere concern and their public declaration of the critical nature of promptly implementing measures to effectively regulate the illicit transfer of arms (Bankale, 2016:2). As part of efforts to promote an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa, AU heads of state and government gathered in Addis Ababa in 2013 affirmed the commitment to silence guns and end all wars by 2020 as part of

the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration(Union, 2014)¹. In addition to achieving the goals of the African Agenda 2063 and the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the peaceful resolution of wars will also significantly contribute to these goals, both of which aim to reclaim Africa's leadership role in its own development trajectory and reactivate the spirit of Pan-Africanism and the African Renaissance which have inspired Africa's political development and integration to date(Khadiagala, 2015; Musau, 2019; Union, 2014).

Concept of Conflicts

Conflict is viewed by Boulding (1962: 5) and Coser (1956: 8) as a struggle over values and limited resources, and the conflicting parties aim to injure or eliminate one another. There will be conflict in all social settings and all types of human relations (Fisher, 2000).It is important to note, however, that most conflicts, due to the physical altercation, or a psychological battle, and according to unfolding events in world history, are violent, uncontrollable, dominant, recessive, resolvable or insolvable, and can inflict lifelong injuries on their victims irrespective of the specific circumstances and tragic deaths in addition(Aremu, 2010; Imhabekhai, 2000). According to Omotosho (2004: 4), conflict does not necessarily require violence, but rather violence might manifest as one of its possible expressions. Conflict can arise among individuals, groups, institutions, or nations due to society's denial of behavioral norms and when there is an apparent disagreement of interests, divergent beliefs, ideas, backgrounds, attitudes, and perspectives on various aspects of life (Adelue & Komolafe, 2000; John, 2000; Ntunde & Ugwu, 2005: 637; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986: 4; Uwa & Iloh, 2022)²³ . According to Hogan (2005: 76-77), conflict can be described as follow: “Individuals or groups engage in a conscious fight for the same objective. In order to achieve the goal, defeating the adversary is vital. Unlike struggle or competition, rivals are more concerned with each other during conflict than with

¹ African Union, “50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration,” Addis Ababa, May 2013. See also “Towards Effective Implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance,” press statement by H.E. Dr. Aisha L. Abdullahi, Commissioner for Political Affairs, June 23, 2014.

² Faleti, S. A., Olaniyi, R. O., Yesufu, A. R. & Durojaye, O. B. (2010). Education for peace II. *Lagos: National Open University of Nigeria*.

³ Akinwunmi, O. O. (2005). Conflict and conflict resolution in schools: Implications for educational administration. *Aspects of Educational Administration for Colleges and Universities*, 64-76.

the object they pursue. In light of this, the development of strong feelings of hostility may be taken into consideration, and achieving the goal may therefore be considered secondary to defeating the opponent”. According to Akpuru-Aja (2007: 15) conflict can be defined as a scenario in which several parties encounter fears and pressures while attempting to achieve goals that are incompatible with one another. When parties are in conflict, he believes they see or perceive one another as obstacles that will hinder or frustrate the party involved or others' goals. Ntunde and Ugwu (2005) distinguished traditional conflict from contemporary conflict:

“Traditionally, conflict is defined as conflict between opposing interests, resulting in a disagreement over goals, and frustrations resulting from the pursuit of those goals. More modern views of conflict propose that conflicts should not be defined primarily by aggressive behavior or resentful attitudes, but rather by inharmonious positions. “Furthermore, new threats of conflicts in Africa have prompted both factual and imaginative recollections of political humiliation, political oppression, and economic marginalization(Azar & Moon, 1986; Brown, 1993; Deutsch, 1991; Ross, 1993). Although conflict has devastating effects, it can also be beneficial (Uwa & Iloh, 2022). Conflict, for example, may lead people to develop new ideas and plans to address their social, economic, and political challenges(Coser, 1967: 65). Conflict is inevitable in any society, but how it is managed and resolved determines whether it will be constructive or destructive (Osimen, 2017)⁴. As a result of societal competition, human goals and aspirations will always clash (Uwa & Iloh, 2022). Thus, conflict always occurs when there are multiple people or groups involved (Albert, 2001: 3). On this note, Coser (1967: 8) describes conflict as follows:

“The fight over beliefs or assertions/right to position, authority, and limited means to meet human needs, in which the parties aim to achieve their goals and harm or kill their opponents”.

From the above definitions, Uwa and Iloh (2022) assert that all living things, including humans, have a basic instinct for conflict, which can be applied both individually and collectively to resolve conflicts. On the basis of these definitions, two distinct types of conflicts can be identified. The term "internal conflict" refers to an attempt by a group within a nation to overthrow the government of that state through violence(Eminue, 2004: 15). In addition, internal

⁴ Osimen, G. U. (2017). Principle of Conflict Management, Memphis Multimedia Publisher, Ibadan

conflict can be characterized as a situation when armed hostilities predominantly take place within the territorial boundaries of a single nation-state (David, 1997). In contrast, international war or interstate conflict arises when multiple states are engaged, and the armed forces of more than one state are involved (Puchala, 1971). Despite the fact that the Organization of African Unity (OAU) charter states that borders are permanent, almost all interstate conflicts are a consequence of claims over colonial-era borders (Shir & Nnome, 2021). Africa has experienced various forms of warfare throughout its history, including both internal and internationalized internal armed conflicts. Notable examples of the latter include the civil wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Angola, and Sierra Leone, which have exhibited varying levels of external participation (Aremu, 2010). The length of the conflict will depend on the way it is handle.⁵

Concept of Peace/Sustainable Peace

It is essential to understand the fundamental causes of conflict beyond what is immediately apparent (Uwa & Iloh, 2022). Given that the mere lack of conflict does not inherently indicate that a society is operating within a state of optimal peacefulness, it becomes crucial to distinguish between the concepts of "absence of conflict" and "long-lasting peace" (Igbuzor, 2006). As a result, conflict assessment must go beyond opposition to fragility and consider other proportions of fragility that could occur in countries supposedly not at risk (Programme, 2016). While most scholars define peace as the absence of war, danger, fear, threat, conflict, anxiety, travail, and violence, this does not reflect the presence of justice, which is a core value of peace (Francis, 2006; Igbuzor, 2006).

By linking peace directly to sustainable development, Galtung (2011) attempted to offer a complete and universal concept of peace. In his view, peace is a practice that involves actions to limit conflict situations in an exact society or global community, which are related to aggregate development. Similarly, Ibeanu (2003) notes that peace is the absence of conflict; conflict is the absence or lack of peace. Nevertheless, Ibeanu further assert that the simplistic understanding of peace is keen, and requires additional understandings from instrumentalists, functionalists, sociologists and other scholars. Thus, peace and security refer to the importance of protecting both lives and property and protecting the sacredness of life. It also indicates that there is no danger to life, property, or the overall socioeconomic wellbeing of society (Ukadike & Arisi, 2013). Likewise, peace is the lack of social conflict, which enables people and groups to achieve their basic

⁵ Ibid

needs, goals, and aspirations without interruption(Uwa & Iloh, 2022). They further say:

“Peace is traditionally perceived as the absence of conflict or war, which may not be sufficient to achieve sustainable peace in any society. Because, peace is not achieved by delivering a ceasefire without tackling the fundamental factors or root causes of conflict, which may subsequently disrupting commercial activities and aggravating inequality, injustice, suffering, poverty and hunger, which can then hinder growth and development”(Uwa & Iloh, 2022: 5).

According to Galtung (2011), peace can be classified into two types: positive (progressive) peace and negative (harmful) peace. His conceptualization of peace can be characterized as the state or condition in which war, conflict, or violence is not present. Furthermore, Galtung delineated a set of eight components pertaining to constructive peace, commonly referred to as the Galtung Eight Pillars of Peace:

“There should be an active and performing government; a comprehensive business environment; a rightful sharing of power and resources; recognition of everyone's rights; decent dealings with neighbors; open dissemination of ideas, knowledge, and useful information; high levels of human and capital development; high levels of accountability and transparency; an absence of corruption”(Galtung, 2011).

According to Uwa and Iloh (2022), many African countries have consistently lacked the aforementioned elements since independence. Additionally, the authors explain that African leaders have not shown any interest in integrating these principles into their governance practices in the near future to foster and advance peace on the continent⁶. Furthermore, Galtung (2011) stressed that human welfare must be integrated into governance, including preventing and eliminating all forms of violence. Therefore, in order to prevent violence, whether direct or indirect, social structures and social norms need to be improved (Uwa & Iloh, 2022). Moreover, the authors assert that by cultivating upright societies and supporting initiatives requiring socio-political and economic advancement and development, the eight pillars of positive peace prevent a state from collapsing or failing.

⁶ Osimen G. U., Aisedion, R., & Adi, I. (2022). Rethinking Peace, Security, and Sustainable development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Education Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 5, (1). Pp. 88-103

GOOD GOVERNANCE, STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Good Governance

Africa is characterized by conflict, whether sectarian or ethnic, as a result of poor governance, leading to state fragility (V. H. Mlambo, 2021). Adeto (2019) defines state fragility as weak governmental legitimacy, political instability, and increased arms trafficking, which drives violence. A fragile state is defined by Cilliers (2013)⁷ as one where armed conflict and violence pose a threat to inhabitants' lives and prevent them from generating a comfortable standard of living, despite the abundance of natural resources. Poor governance mechanisms and a lack of essential services characterize a fragile state (Adeto, 2019). What is then good governance? As far as good governance is concerned, there is no consensus on its definition. The World Bank has provided a definition (Holmberg et al., 2009) that is one of the more commonly used definitions. In accordance with this definition, governance consists of three components: the process of selecting, monitoring, and replacing a government, the ability of the government to formulate and implement effective policies, and the respect that citizens and the state show for the institutions governing their economic and social interactions (Kaufmann et al., 2011, p. 4). Despite its broad coverage of politics, this definition has been criticized as unable to distinguish between good governance and liberal democracies (Holmberg et al., 2009; Rothstein & Teorell, 2008). Conversely, Hegre and Nygård (2015) assert that good governance encompasses the entire “chain of seven elements”: bureaucratic quality, the rule of law, the eradication of corruption, the establishment and implementation of sound economic policies, the non-involvement of the military in politics, the elimination of political exclusion and repression, and the establishment of formal political institutions to represent the people's will. In regard of the above, we can conclude that in fragile state, good governance is necessary for the establishment of sustainable peace. Further evidence can be found from studies conducted by Hegre (2001), Fearon and Laitin (2003), Moss and Young (2009), Cederman et al. (2010), Moss (2011), Moss et al. (2015); Namazi and Mohammadi (2018) and Schouten (2011) that nations with effective governance, trust, strong institutions and investment policies have a greater capacity to prevent armed conflict and avoid the resource curse.

⁷ Cilliers, J. (2013). Africa's fragile states need extra help. Institute for Security Studies. <https://issafrica.org/amp/iss-today/africas-fragile-states-need-extra-help>

Strategic Governance

There are a number of challenges facing the African continent, including the rise of coups d'état (both military and constitutional), corruption, abuse of state power, civil wars, and silencing of dissent (Wiebusch et al., 2019: 96). It is therefore necessary to develop a strategic governance system in order to silence the guns in Africa. In the context of this paper, we define strategic governance as the implementation of good governance, transparency, and social accountability in any given government to silence the guns and provide a sustainable peace and security.

Social Accountability

“Across the world, we find citizens are mobilizing, often locally, to demand better services. Not by shouting, but by counting. Making sure their governments spend effectively, and keep their promises” (World Bank, 2004a: 2)⁸. The concept of accountability refers to the ability to hold public officials accountable for their actions, , thus forcing them to justify decisions and inform the public about them, with the potential of being sanctioned for those decisions (Schedler et al., 1999). As per Mwakagenda (2010), there are two types of accountabilities: horizontal and vertical. The horizontal accountability measures how well state entities can prevent public institutions from exploiting others through administrative, budgetary, political, and legal means. The vertical accountability is the means whereby ordinary citizens, mass media, and civil society actors seek to ensure that public officials and service providers behave ethically and perform to the highest standard.

Conversely, the concept of social accountability is defined as a way to exercise citizen control over public authority in circumstances where traditional mechanisms of political accountability have generally been ineffective (Joshi & Houtzager, 2012). They conclude that strengthening 'social accountability' is becoming a crucial strategy for enhancing public services and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. According to Norman (2014), social accountability is a new initiative that emerged from the World Bank's poverty

⁸ World Bank (2004a) “From Shouting to Counting: A New Frontier in Social Development,” Washington: The World Bank.

reduction framework to promote good governance and citizen empowerment. Others restrict social accountability to public authority monitoring (Peruzzotti & Smulovitz, 2006). As per Baez Camargo and Jacobs (2013), social accountability includes at least three fundamental elements: voice, enforceability, and answerability. Voice refers to formal and informal ways people express their preferences, opinions, and beliefs and demand accountability from those in authority (UNDP 2010, 11). Those consequences that result from not fulfilling a mandate are known as enforceability. This is a key factor influencing service providers' responsiveness (Baez Camargo & Jacobs, 2013). According to UNDP (2010), answerability means providing an account as well as the right to obtain a response from the service provider. It directly engages citizens and service providers, making it vital. Furthermore, as per Bruen et al. (2014), politicians, policymakers, and providers must justify their acts to be accountable. In conclusion, Baez Camargo and Jacobs (2013) assert that for social accountability to achieve a meaningful and sustainable impact on public services, all three elements (voice, enforceability, and answerability) must be present to some extent. Furthermore, they contend that as a result of the inadequacy of formal governance structures, social accountability initiatives are often used in areas of unstable environment.

In war zones and fragile states, donors encourage social accountability. Schouten (2011) says peace and political stability increase societal accountability. Social accountability flourishes when government has the will, ability, and channels to communicate with communities and their representatives. By fostering collaborative skills building, intrastate and cross-country learning, and peer assistance, international partners can help state and non-state actors. Building on the above, we can conclude that to avoid insurrection, violence and armed conflicts caused by the discontentment of the population, African leaders must be establishing a social accountability mechanism which will allow the population to keep them accountable. Moreover, Essoungou (2010) asserts that individuals and institutions abused power due to the deficiency in public oversight over their decisions, as also evidenced by the implementation of oppressive despotic regimes and the spread of corruption (Essoungou, 2010). Likewise, Baez Camargo and Jacobs (2013) assert that social accountability is a bottom-up approach designed to strengthen governance and more efficient provision of goods (Booth, 2011)

ROOT CAUSES OF WARS IN AFRICA

There are several characteristics that describe African wars, including causal factors and dynamics, spatial scale, location, military equipment deployed, impacts on military and civilian populations, as well as consequences for politics, economics, society, the environment, cultural structures, and mental health (Nhema & Zeleza, 2008:3; Uwa & Iloh, 2022). There are many factors that determine how intense and long the conflict is, as well as the involved country⁹. It is often the case that conflicts in Africa result from arbitrary borders that are caused by conflicts over resources or unequal distributions, marginalization, corruption, the unnecessary manipulation of information, ethnic diversity in African states, external debt burden, poverty, inept political leadership and political stalemates, and emotional needs (Albert, 2001: 4-5; Aremu, 2010; Brown, 1997; Josephine et al., 2019; V. H. Mlambo, 2021; Okumu et al., 2020; Saeed, 2015).

Colonialism

The crisis and violent conflicts on the continent were caused by Colonialism and Imperialism (Zartman, 2000).¹⁰ It impacted both social and political life in Africa, despite its relatively brief duration (Uwa & Iloh, 2022). Zartman (2000) further stated:

“The exploration and colonization of Africa during the nineteenth century exerted a profound impact on the formation of the continent, leading to significant transformations in security structures and patterns of good governance. The ongoing separation between the French colonies and the British colonies in Africa may be the best way to understand the persistent and permanent colonial inheritance”.

Colonial governments in Africa did not intend to foster democracy but rather to impose authoritarian control (Berman, 1998). A colonial legacy does more than contribute to Africa's conflicts; it also influences the politics and

⁹ Osimen, G. U. (2017). *Principle of Conflict Management*, Memphis Multimedia Publisher, Ibadan

¹⁰ Thomson, A. (2004). *An introduction to African politics* (2nd ed). *Abingdon: Routledge*, 11.

governance of the continent, causing those conflicts to escalate (V. H. Mlambo, 2021). Throughout the colonial era, colonial administrators and political elites exploited African resources by creating an undemocratic system of administration as well as making decisions without consulting indigenous populations, which benefited the colonial exploitation of resources (Kura, 2008; Merry, 2003; V. H. Mlambo, 2021)¹¹. Even after the colonial era, this practice continued in the African continent, causing conflict, violence, and war. As long as the former colonists will have a direct or indirect involvement in the governance of African states, it will be challenging to silence the guns in Africa. In the same way, V. H. Mlambo (2021) asserts that the legacy of colonialism must be addressed if African issues are to be resolved in an African way. Because many African countries failed to break free from colonialism and their leaders are corrupt and unethical, colonialism's legacies continue to influence African politics and governance today, resulting in autocracy, corruption, election violence, ethnic and religious divisions, and military coups (Bayeh, 2015; V. H. Mlambo, 2021).

Creation of arbitrary borders by colonial powers and territorial group conflicts

It was during the 19th century that European powers colonized Africa, creating governing bodies that in some cases divided communities and in others united them regardless of their ethnic origin or culture (Aladi, 2002; Cammack et al., 1993; Dersso, 2016; Okumu et al., 2020; Shir & Nnome, 2021; Yakubu, 2017).¹² As a result (Yakubu, 2017), ethnoreligious and sectarian conflicts have increased in a postcolonial Africa. Among the factors contributing to violent conflicts in Africa, Okumu et al. (2020), emphasize disputes over borders (primarily internal), ethnicity, extremist ideologies, stalemate in politics, and disputes over resources. In most African countries, these borders had negative effects, though to varying degrees (Shir & Nnome, 2021). For example, it has been observed that the Akan ethnic group is geographically divided between the nations of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. Similarly, Togo and Ghana with the Ewe ethnic group, while a significant number of Yorubas can be found residing in Benin (Aremu, 2010). In the Kajiado West Sub County, there exists a persistent struggle between the Illoodokilani Maasai and Ilkeekonyokie territorial groups and the Ilpuirko. Kahiro (2014) attributes this rivalry to their competing interests in securing more control over the area's natural resources. In South Western Kenya, the Kuria-Maasai conflict resulted in the procurement and usage of small arms due to commercial

¹¹ Thomson, A. (2004). *An introduction to African politics* (2nd ed). Abingdon: Routledge, 11.

¹² Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, New York: Mariner Books, 1998.

livestock raids and land disputes(Maisori, 2019). Natural resources discovered in borderlands or on borders within Eastern Africa may exacerbate these interstate conflicts (Mendenhall et al., 2020). However, as Brunet-Jailly (2022) points out, cross-border disputes are still affecting interstate relations due to poorly matched or poorly defined borders often inherited from colonialism. Griffiths notes few boundary disputes arising from cultural differences in post-colonial Africa.¹³ Somalis, however, see their dispute primarily as a nomadic issue, not a land dispute, as Drysdale noted.¹⁴ In contrast, due to Somalia's refusal to accept these pre-independence boundaries, border disputes occurred between Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia's Northern Frontier District(Khadiagala, 2015). Border disputes have happened throughout history on the continent (terrorism, military skirmishes, irredentism, cattle rustling, secession movements, smuggling, human trafficking, ethnic violence, and agrarian revolts)(Amupanda, 2021). The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has accused Angola of relocating monuments along their shared border as of 2020 (Langa, 2020). Algeria and Morocco both accuse the other of harboring extremists and transporting weapons. The Congo River divides two Central African nations, the Republic of Congo (RC) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The DRC and Uganda are at odds over Rukwanzi Island in Lake Albert, as well as other Semliki River hydrocarbon-producing areas(Amupanda, 2021). The DRC claims Rwanda for aiding M23, an armed rebel group in the East. Rwanda claims DRC soldiers attacked an army border post. As mineral resources are discovered or exploited along border regions, disagreements over land claims, delimitation issues, anarchy, security warnings, and acrimonious political exchanges are more frequent (Hassan, 2021).

Poor post-colonial governance

Developing Africa in the postcolonial era presents many challenges (Dimkpa, 2015). The presence of inadequate governance in Africa has been noted to coincide with a distinctive occurrence, specifically, the emergence of violent non-state actors who pose a challenge to both the advancement of the continent and the authority of the state(Diatta et al., 2021). As a result, there has been a large displacement of population. According to a report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), it has been estimated that by the conclusion of 2021, around 44 million individuals have been displaced within the

¹³ Griffiths, “Permeable Boundaries in Africa,” 76

¹⁴ Drysdale, The Somali Dispute, 17.

Sub-Saharan African region.¹⁵ One of the primary challenges pertaining to governance in the continent is in the inadequate management of economies, diversities, and political inclusion by several leaders (Diatta et al., 2021). As a result, the deterioration of state institutions hinders the efficient provision of services, thereby heightening societal dissatisfaction and ultimately giving rise to the emergence of violent non-state actors (VNSAs) who recruit marginalized people to challenge state legitimacy, resulting in riots and protests (Mlambo, 2023; Raeymaekers et al., 2008). Similarly, Okumu et al. (2020) assert that political violence can be used to seek retribution when states are badly governed, citizens are denied their rights, corruption is institutionalized, and states neglect their core duty of delivering public goods and services. Violence in African countries grew after independence and then decreased again in the 2000s, but in recent years, more countries in Africa were involved in armed conflicts due to the disputed legitimacy of postcolonial governance structures (Obasanjo, 2015).

Likewise, many scholars argue that poor governance leads to power struggles among various political and non-political actors and is a major contributor to Africa's wars (Adeto, 2019; Chigumira et al.; Essoungou, 2010; Mathews & Tadesse, 2022; V. H. Mlambo, 2021; Mwangi, 2017, 2021; Ramalepe, 2021; ROSENJE et al., 2020; Shaw & Reitano, 2019; Ylönen, 2009). Managing the transition from war to peace and establishing participatory institutions of good governance are essential for institutionalizing and consolidating a culture of peace (Ekpang, 2005). The governance process in Zimbabwe, for example, does not appear to incorporate elements of good governance; public participation does not inform public policy, and a combination of repressive legislation and government heavy handedness in handling dissenting voices has adversely affected citizens' freedom of expression (Sachikonye et al., 2007). Following independence, a military dictatorship emerged as a result of discontent as regimes failed to improve living conditions. Three coups d'états took place in 1963, overthrowing three governments: Benin, Togo and Republic of Congo (Collier & Hoeffler, 2002; Huff & Lutz, 1974). By 1975, a majority of African countries were governed whether by the civilian or military (Essoungou, 2010). Observations have shown that several African countries have developed political elite networks that interact with their former colonizers (V. H. Mlambo, 2021). Moreover, individuals and

¹⁵ Mbiyozo, A. (2023, February 15). Record numbers of dis-placed Africans face worsening prospects. [https:// issafrica.org/iss-today/record-numbers-of-displaced- africans-face-worsening-prospects#:~:text= According%20to%20the%20United%20Nations,at%20the%20end%20of%202021.](https://issafrica.org/iss-today/record-numbers-of-displaced-africans-face-worsening-prospects#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20United%20Nations,at%20the%20end%20of%202021.)

institutions abused power due to the deficiency in public oversight over their decisions, as also evidenced by the implementation of oppressive despotic regimes and the spread of corruption(Essoungou, 2010).

Ethnic-conflicts

Although ethnicity threatens the existence of several African states (Nigeria, with at least 250 ethnic groups, Rwanda, Somalia, Liberia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, etc.), states generally pay little attention to inter-group (and inter-ethnic) communication mechanisms and may actively oppose ethnic groups' aspirations or impose the values of the politically powerful class(Ekpong, 2005; Gurr & Moore, 1997). Only a small proportion of the 180 countries are ethnically homogeneous(Carment, 1993:137)¹⁶. Thus, ethnic conflicts will remain an important aspect of international politics and will affect not only the African continent, but also the rest of the world(Ryan, 1990:10)¹⁷. Although ethno-political conflicts have increased in Africa during the past century, one cannot deny the fact that they have been increasing due to the fact that most African states are ethnically diverse resulting in the problem of ethnicity(Aremu, 2010). Similarly, multi-ethnicity is the factor most closely linked to conflict(Osaghae, 1992:214; Osinubi & Osinubi, 2006).Osha (2020:10), for example, asserts in his book that the Nigerian civil war between 1967 and 1970 was caused by a combination of militarism, ethnicity, and religion. Since Africa has deep ethnic divides and inequality in political representation, ethnicity has bred suspicion, hatred, and distrust among ethnic groups, which has hampered political integration in Africa (Aremu, 2010). It is therefore not surprising to see that ethnic animosities have served as the primary catalyst for internal strife in various African nations, including Congo, Burundi, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda, Sudan, Nigeria, and numerous others, as evidenced by the occurrence of significant conflicts such as the 1967-1970 civil war and the 1993-1999 tensions(Alabi, 2002; Aremu, 2010; Cammack et al., 1993)¹⁸¹⁹ Furthermore, divisions based on ethnic and religious affiliations have also infiltrated into politics, bringing about hatred, greed, and consequently, conflicts (Bencherif et

¹⁶ United Nations University (1981), *Report on Ethnicity and Development*, Tokyo

¹⁷ Instituto Del Tercer Mundo (1977). *The World Guide, 1997/98*, Oxford, New Internationalist Publications Ltd.

¹⁸ Alabi, D. T. (2006:57). Emerging trends and dimensions of the Rwandan crisis. *African Journal of International Affairs and Development*, 7(1), 40-65.

<https://www.africabib.org/rec.php?RID=P00001828>

¹⁹ Cammack, P., Pool, D., & Tordoff, W. (1988:13). *Third world politics: A comparative introduction*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

al., 2020; Botha & Graham, 2021; Cilliers & Cilliers, 2015; Loisel, 2004; V. H. Mlambo, 2021; Okunade et al., 2021; Villa-Vicencio et al., 2016; Yakubu, 2017; Yusuf, 2019).

Inept political leadership and political stalemates

Leadership plays a crucial role in any society's governance. Thus, the choice of leaders who will advance collective interests is the priority of any society (Walker, 2017, 2020). Schoeller (2017: 3) describes leadership as "a means of overcoming collective action problems when there are no adequate institutions for regulating collective action". Therefore, political leadership could be described as "an institution which aim to direct and to fulfill the collective goods of the people". In almost all African states, political harmony and cohesion have been steadily stymied by weak leadership (Aremu, 2010:4). He also asserts:

"Considering the heterogeneous composition of most African states, administrative tact, political tolerance, and social justice may be the most important virtues. Providing these ingredients is the responsibility of the continent's leaders. Yet, in most African countries, the reality reveals that the majority of leaders are unpatriotic, corrupt, and weak. Their attitudes have not only retarded national integration and socioeconomic development, but have also sparked widespread violence. As a result of the Sudanese, Nigerian, Algerian, and Liberian civil wars, African leaders have failed to achieve national unity in their countries."

According to Fagbadebo (2019b:18), African leaders usually convert state property to their personal possessions, especially those who are in power for long periods of time, making political power a family legacy. Based on the above observation, it is difficult to disagree with Adedeji (1999:11) that: "African countries have lacked leaders who are unifiers for the majority of their independence, chiefs in the true sense, who bind wounds, unite everything and everyone, mobilize and motivate their people, pursue a policy of inclusion rather than exclusion, and are seen to be of the highest integrity and beyond suspicion by all. In order to ensure integration does not stall, African leaders need to be accepted by all sections of their communities. In the meanwhile, recurrence of conflicts in Africa may remain common".

Corruption

The practice of corruption can distort resource allocation, reducing its productivity, and thus impeding economic growth (Sodré, 2014). In addition to weakening all government functions, corruption is also a global problem that can cause structural problems (such as unemployment and uneven income distribution) to deepen, slow economic growth, weaken human development, and cause social and political unrest (Betül et al., 2019). In spite of this, what exactly is corruption? Chetwynd et al. (2003) define it as the misuse of public office for private gain, which includes, but is not limited to, nepotism, bribery, extortion, influence peddling, and fraud. In a more general sense, it may be defined as the misuse of power to advance one's own interests²⁰. The mismanagement of the abundance of natural resources in many African countries often lead to corruption. There is evidence that natural resources are more likely to lead to corruption in autocracies than in democracies (Andersen et al., 2013; Arezki & Gylfason, 2013; Bhattacharyya & Hodler, 2010). Corruption impairs good governance in developing countries, especially African states, triggering crises of poor public service delivery (Fagbadebo & Dorasamy, 2021). As a result of poor public service delivery, a series of crises led to conflicts, violence, and wars. Africa's internal conflicts are largely caused by corruption which weakens the political and socio-economic stability of African states (Aremu, 2010).

Poverty

In a violent, unstable, and insecure environment such as the one that exists on the African continent, political tensions, wars, and conflicts continue to negatively affect his socioeconomic development (Conteh, 1998:20). Among the world's poorest continents is Africa. The reasons for this are corruption, environmental conditions, neglect and substantial foreign debt (Iliffe, 1987:253; Louw-Vaudran, 2021). On the same vein, V. H. Mlambo (2021) assert that poverty leads to corruption and corruption leads to poverty and creates a vicious cycle. Famines have occurred in a number of African countries, such as Ethiopia and Mali, as a result of desertification (Cook & Killingray, 1983). Due to this, Sub-Saharan Africa is still experiencing a high number of poor people even though poverty rates have declined from 56% in 1990 to 40% in 2018 (Schoch & Lakner, 2020).

²⁰ United States Agency for International Development. (2009). Anticorruption assessment Handbook. Final Report. Washington: Management Systems International accessed on 23/05/2020, retrieved from https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00jp37.pdf

Given the widespread poverty across Africa, and the old adage that "a hungry man is an angry man" (Aremu, 2010), war may be with Africa for a very long time. In the same vein, marginalization, inequality, and poverty serve as root causes of conflicts and wars in most societies, exacerbate them, and hamper peacekeeping missions (Bankale, 2016; Genugten, 2008). Wong (2022a) study reveal that income inequality and violent behavior are positively correlated. Furthermore, Okunade et al. (2021) assert that Africa has become a prominent site for insurgencies, which are generally linked to marginalization, poverty, and inequality with strong religious base and links. Similarly, Ekpang (2005) assert that economic well-being, resource distribution, and poverty are all factors that might lead to conflict and instability. He further argues that advanced the government should be more sensitive to national concerns such as poverty, social justice, responsibility, equity, minority rights, the welfare of children, and the rights of women. As a result of its abundance of natural resources and lack of industrial development, some scholars claim that Africa is experiencing a developmental curse (Brown, 2011; Hilson, 2020; Ibrahim & Bala, 2018; Idemudia, 2012; Obi, 2010; Phillips et al., 2016). A number of factors contribute to poverty and inequality, including a decline in agriculture and industry, weak institutions and corruption, environmental degradation and violent(Sachs & Warner, 2001; Siakwah, 2017, 2018). In a study conducted by Collier and Hoeffler (2005), countries with a wealth of natural resources are generally not able to grow their income substantially and are faced with a low standard of living. Due to these, rebellion becomes more likely to happen and civil war occurs more frequently. Natural resources are critical for raising living standards and societal development, and their sustainable management is critical for economic progress(Bansal et al., 2021; Chopra et al., 2022)²¹. Resource curse theory explains why certain countries perform poorly economically despite having abundant natural resources and how natural resources affect other internal factors(Namazi & Mohammadi, 2018). In contrast, some scholars maintain that the resource curse is also a controversial issue, as countries such as the US, Australia, and Norway have relied on technological advantages to stimulate industrialization with their oil revenues (Brunnschweiler, 2008; Humphreys et al., 2007; Papyrakis & Gerlagh, 2007; Wright & Czelusta, 2004).

²¹ World Bank, 2011. *The Changing Wealth of Nations: Measuring Sustainable Development in the New Millennium*. The World Bank, Washington, DC.

Control over natural resources

The concept of a 'resource curse' has been widely debated since the 1980s, asserting that a country's economic, political, and social outcomes are more likely to be negatively affected by natural resource abundance (or at least particular types of natural resources) (Rosser, 2006:7). Natural resource-rich nations often experience power struggles, which are characterized by equipping kleptocratic tyrants with resources to bribe opponents, by coups d'etats or other forms of forced leadership changes (Acemoglu et al., 2004; Caselli, 2006; Heibach, 2020; Paroma & Iwuoha, 2018; Roessler, 2011; Tull & Mehler, 2005). Interstate conflicts in Africa are on the rise due to growing discoveries, and rumors about natural resources (Amupanda, 2021; Baloyi, 2018; Brunet-Jailly, 2022; Irobi, 2005; Khadiagala, 2010; Langa, 2020; Lentz, 2003; Macha, 2019; Moyo & Nshimbi, 2019; Mulindwa, 2020; Obi, 2010; Ojambo, 2021; Okumu, 2010; Onguny, 2020; Sinthumule, 2021; Sone, 2017). Natural resource-rich nations often experience power struggles, which are characterized by coups d'etats or other forms of forced leadership changes (Caselli, 2006).

Mineral discoveries or explorations in borders between countries are resulting in more disputes over land claims, delimitation issues, anarchy, security warnings, and acrimonious political exchanges (Hassan, 2021). In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, resource-related conflicts accounted for 35% of all conflicts from 2010 to 2019 (Uwa & Iloh, 2022). Moreover, they assert that resource-related conflicts have occurred throughout history, such as the Niger-Delta conflict in Nigeria, the Abyei conflict in Sudan, the Congo-Brazzaville conflict in 2007; the Senegal/Mauritania conflict in 1989; and the conflict in Eastern Congo resulting from resources. The majority of wars in the developing world today are about controlling resources whose possession grants power to those who possess them (Tshitereke, 2003). Moreover, he claims that when the government in power lacked the military capability to deal effectively with the rebels, natural resources attracted foreign assistance, regardless of ideological differences. Nowadays, such approach has been taken by countries like Central African Republic (CAR), Mali... who were former French colonies and were under their protectorate but now are under the Russia protectorate since 2017 for CAR and around November 2022 after the withdrawal of the French army from Mali. It has been shown that warlords are able to arm themselves and aggravate the already intolerable

situation by exploiting natural resources, such as oil, diamonds, and timber, and channeling them to international markets, without accountability to the people of the country or peace-makers (Gamba & Cornwell, 2000; Limiri, 2022; Orogun, 2010; Ruei, 2018; Tsamenyi, 2014; Tshitereke, 2003).

Greed and grievance

Studies have identified the rapacity or greed of armed actors in obtaining natural resource revenue as a crucial factor contributing to the onset and perpetuation of armed conflict and weakening institutional quality (Asiamah et al., 2022; Berdal & Malone, 2000; Collier & Hoeffler, 2005; Le Billon, 2001). As Paul Collier, considered the father of this research line, states, "economic opportunities are much more likely to trigger conflicts than grievances" (Collier, 2000: 91). In his early work, he developed the so-called 'opportunity hypothesis' in conjunction with Anke Hoeffler, which suggests that violent insurgencies are triggered by opportunities to loot. In his later work, Collier modified his model and proposed a 'feasibility hypothesis,' which holds that rebellion occurs when it is considered materially feasible from both a financial and military perspective (Collier et al., 2009). Collier's hypothesis is supported in many studies (Berman et al., 2017; Mildner et al., 2011: 162-163). The feasibility hypothesis of Collier, as outlined by Winslow and Woost (2004), is highly reductionist since only economic considerations are taken into account by belligerents: Culture, ideology, and power struggles are supplanted by simple financial feasibility. Whenever rebel leaders gain sufficient popularity and finance, they are transformed into a perverted version of the logically calculating generic guy who can sway practically anyone to support their cause (Winslow & Woost, 2004: 16). In the same vein, Cramer (2002) criticizes rational choice theories of conflict as oblivious to the complexity of individual motivation, and as reducing individuals to monolithic maximizing agents (Cramer, 2002: 1846). There is an assumption in the 'greed' literature that all rebels share two characteristics: they maximize profit and seek power (Cuvelier et al., 2014). Based on the same literature, the grievances they cite as the official cause for their insurgency appear to be a means by which they attempt to justify their actions to the international community. Likewise, Tshitereke (2003) asserts that when the government deviated from fulfilling its responsibilities in accordance with the general will, it triggered grievances among the affected groups like in Angola-Cabinda and southern Sudan. Furthermore, Collier (2000) found that successive South African governments deliberately allocated resources in favor of the white minority. As a result of blacks' resentment of this reality, diplomatic resistance structures were formed. The

government was accused of oppressing, unfairly treating, and victimizing the majority of the population, which led to a litany of grievances. The result was that political movements supporting the poor emerged, which gradually evolved to the point where revolutionary armed struggle became an option to contest power with the state through violence (Tshitereke, 2003). There is a similar grievance case in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique's poorest province. This forgotten province has high unemployment, low literacy rates, and few if any services, which makes it a fertile ground for radicalization (Matsinhe & Valoi, 2019). It is reported that young people are complaining that there are few jobs in the oil and natural gas extraction industry being offered to people from other provinces, particularly Maputo men.

External actors

The contemporary global system is shaped by external actors and events in many ways (Union, 2014). It is therefore important to recognize that although violent conflicts occur in Africa, those involved in these conflicts originate outside the continent, and they have ideological, economic, or geopolitical motivations for hoping for Africa's failure (V. H. Mlambo, 2021; Rahaman et al., 2017). French forces in Mali under the pretext of preventing terrorist attacks, US and Chinese outposts in Djibouti under the guise of security at the sea, and the Russian presence in the Central African Republic and the impending construction of a naval facility in Sudan are just a few instances (Carmody, 2017; Vine, 2021). Heibach (2020) further contend, in addition to permanent United Nations Security Council (UNSC) members, Middle Eastern governments are becoming regional military players. Egypt, Iran, Israel, and Qatar have a stake in these developments, while Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are building military bases from Sudan to Somalia to become Greater Horn players. Russians continue to be a major arms supplier in Africa with 37.6% of the continent's arms market, so their presence contributes greatly to the indirect flow of weapons and the internationalization of internal armed conflicts. China with 9%, followed by the US at 16%, and France with 14% (Kondratenko, 2020; V. H. Mlambo, 2021). Besides nation-states, multinational corporations also contribute to political instability through their exploitative business practices (Aremu, 2010; Generoso, 2022; Gruzd et al., 2022; Kondratenko, 2020; V. H. Mlambo, 2021; Mohammedi, 2020, 2022; Parachini et al., 2021). Researchers believe that these outside actors are interested in Africa because of their pursuit of diplomatic ties, counterinsurgency politics, fighting terrorism, maintaining political stability, and developing countries with which they have a security partnership (Charbonneau, 2019; de Sécurité, 2011; Eguegu, 2022; Medushevskiy & Shishkina, 2021; Yates,

2018). During dictatorship, Libya was in a state of economic and political peace, but NATO operations led by the US (in order to protect civilians) led to Libya's destabilization, and the concept's assumptions cannot be holistically applied to the understanding of African political instability and governance issues because it ignores the role of external forces in causing state fragility (Kersten, 2015). Moreover, some EU companies sell weapons to the Middle East and Africa, adversely affecting Africa's stability^{22, 23}

Religious diversities

Several countries around the world face a significant threat from religious terrorism (Saiya, 2018). Among these countries are African countries. The African borders face many challenges, including religious and terrorist activities, human trafficking, cattle rustling, and military conflicts (Matsinhe & Valoi, 2019; Okonkwo, 2017). In several countries, religious beliefs are so intertwined with other social domains that it is difficult to separate religion from other social domains such as government, employment, politics, marriage, or even health (Ekpang, 2005). He further asserts that religion can contribute to social harmony, peace, and unity. According to Tshitereke (2003), civilizational disunity and religious divergence have fueled some of the world's bloodiest conflicts over the past century. *The Clash of Civilizations* by Samuel (1993) attempts to capture some of the cases during this period. While his analysis has been criticized as an attack on Islam, he is still correct in his analysis of religiously-motivated wars. Among Huntington's key themes is the conflict between the West and 'other' civilizations. The line separating Croatia from Serbia is extensively detailed, as well as the differences between Catholics, Orthodox, and Muslims, but Africa is barely mentioned. As a matter of fact, Samuel Huntington is uncertain whether African civilization even exists. Religious wars seem to represent the clash of civilizations, whether between Buddhists and Hindus, Arabs and Israelis or Indians and Pakistanis or Lebanese Shiites and Maronites. Although the civilizational aspect of this is highly contested, Africa has also experienced its share of wars and conflicts. As an example, Christian-Muslim wars have been particularly bloody in Sudan. Often, religious skirmishes break out between Muslim north and Christian south in Nigeria. Other African countries with diverse

²² Palet, L. (2018). The lucrative business of fending off migrants. Ozy Media. <https://www.ozy.com/the-new-and-the-next/the-lucrative-business-of-fending-off-migrants/83430/>

²³ John, P. (2016). Arms dealers emerge big winners in Europe's refugee crisis. Transnational Institute. <https://thewire.in/world/arms-dealers-emerge-big-winners-in-europes-refugee-crisis>

religious practices, such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Chad, Mozambique and others, have also been affected by this type of conflict(Aja, 2023; Juma & Sabala, 2024; Matsinhe & Valoi, 2019; Morier-Genoud, 2020; Okunade et al., 2021; Tshitereke, 2003; Vhumbunu, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The participants were questioned about their awareness of the AU's initiative to achieve gun silence in Africa by 2020. The questionnaire results showed that respectively, most Africans (81.7 %) were not aware of the AU’s campaign to silence guns in Africa by 2020, whereas only 18.3 % acknowledged their awareness of such campaign, as indicated in Figure 1.

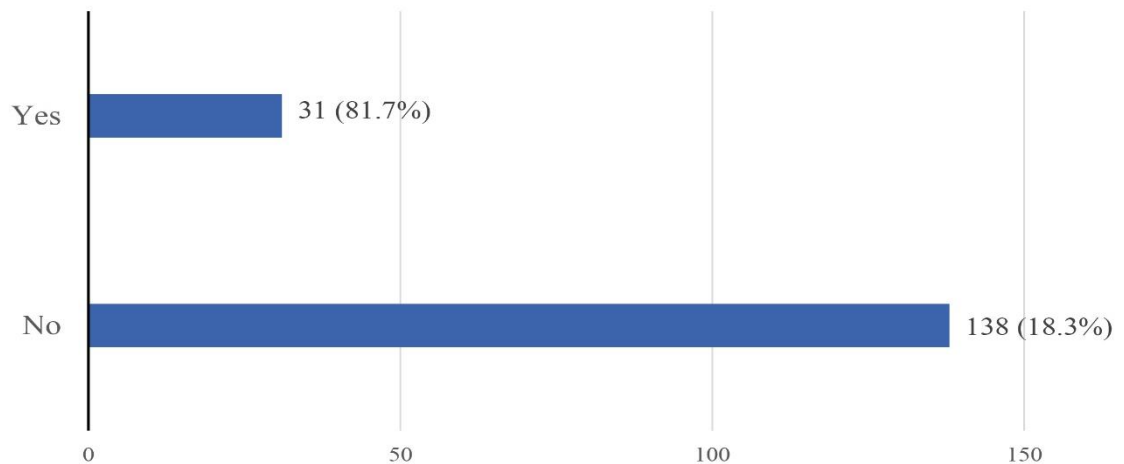


Figure 1: Indicating awareness of Silencing the Guns in Africa

Participants were asked about their perception regarding whether African leaders have taken sufficient action to end violence or silence the guns. The findings presented in Figure 2 indicate that 30.8 %, 26.6 % and 18.9 % of the participants respectively expressed disagreement, strong disagreement and somewhat disagreement regarding whether African heads of states have made adequate efforts to silence the guns whereas 9.5 % somewhat agreed ,3.0 % strongly agreed ,2.4% agreed, believed the opposite. Lastly, 8.9% neither agree nor disagreed that African leaders have done enough to end violence or silence the guns.

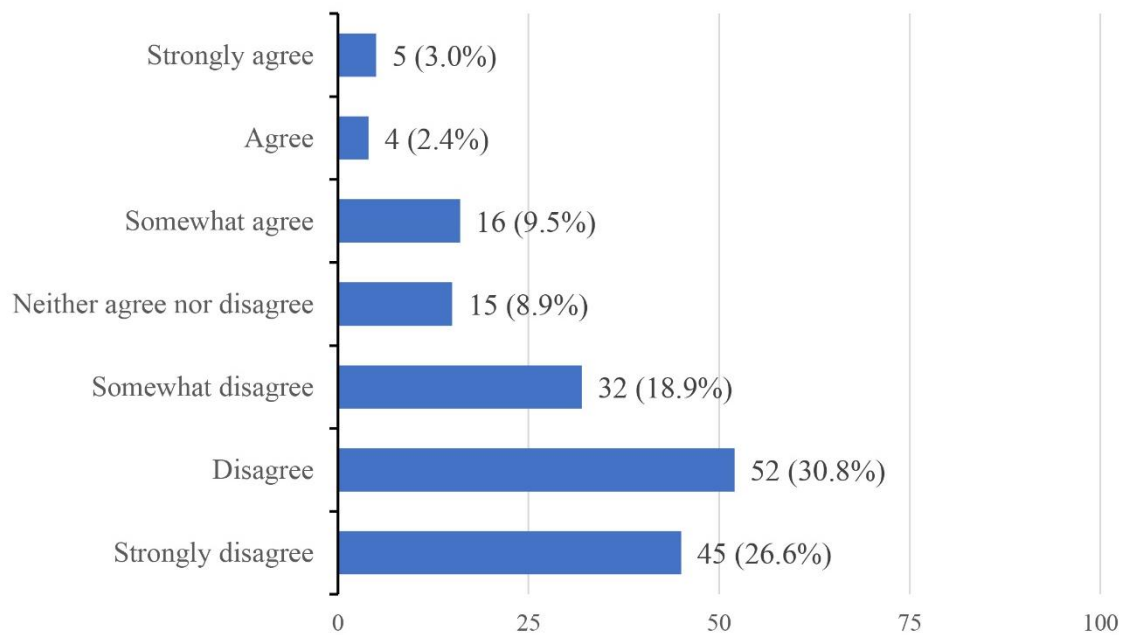


Figure 2: Participants' response to whether African leaders have done enough to end violence or silence the guns

Participants were asked about the role of poverty alleviation measures in silencing the guns. The results in Figure 3 suggest that respectively, 29.0 %, 26.0 % and 17.8 % of the participants agreed, strongly agreed and somewhat agreed that poverty alleviation measures will contribute to silence the guns whereas 10.1% neither agreed nor disagreed, 8.9% (disagreed), 5.9 % (strongly disagreed) and 2.4 % (somewhat disagreed), believed the opposite. Our findings reveal that most of the participants believed that when poverty is alleviated, conflicts will be mitigated in Africa. Further evidence can be found from studies conducted by Bankale (2016); Ekpang (2005); Genugten (2008); Okunade et al. (2021) and Wong (2022b) on poverty as being one of the cause of wars in Africa.

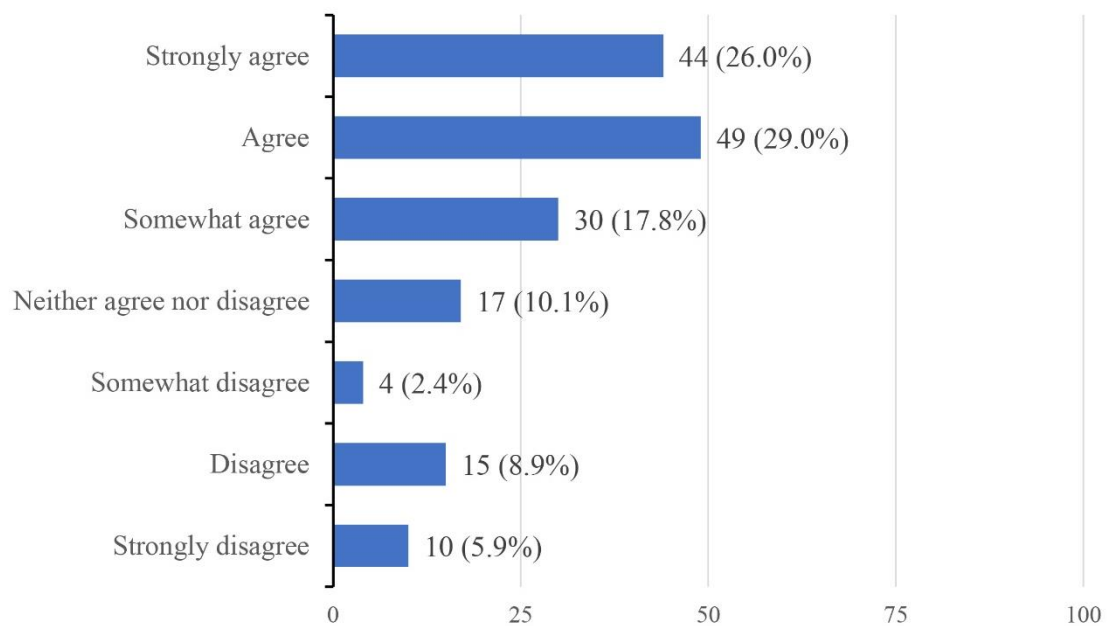


Figure 3: Participants' perception of the role of poverty alleviation measures in silencing the guns

During the survey, the participants were asked what are the root causes of wars in Africa? For the participants, political power struggle, ethnic conflicts, religion discrimination, land dispute and chieftaincy disputes were among the high scoring factors that cause war in Africa (Figure 4). The results indicate that political power struggle is a major cause of wars in Africa, representing approximately 47.9% among all factors. Power struggle whether over natural resources, lands, ethnicity, governance, political ideology, religiosity and other states contribute to the occurrence of wars in Africa. Further evidence can be found from studies conducted by Acemoglu et al. (2004); Amupanda (2021); Caselli (2006); Fagbadebo (2019); Fagbadebo and Dorasamy (2021); Hassan (2021); Heibach (2020); Khadiagala (2015); Matsinhe and Valoi (2019); Paroma and Iwuoha (2018); Roessler (2011); Tull and Mehler (2005).

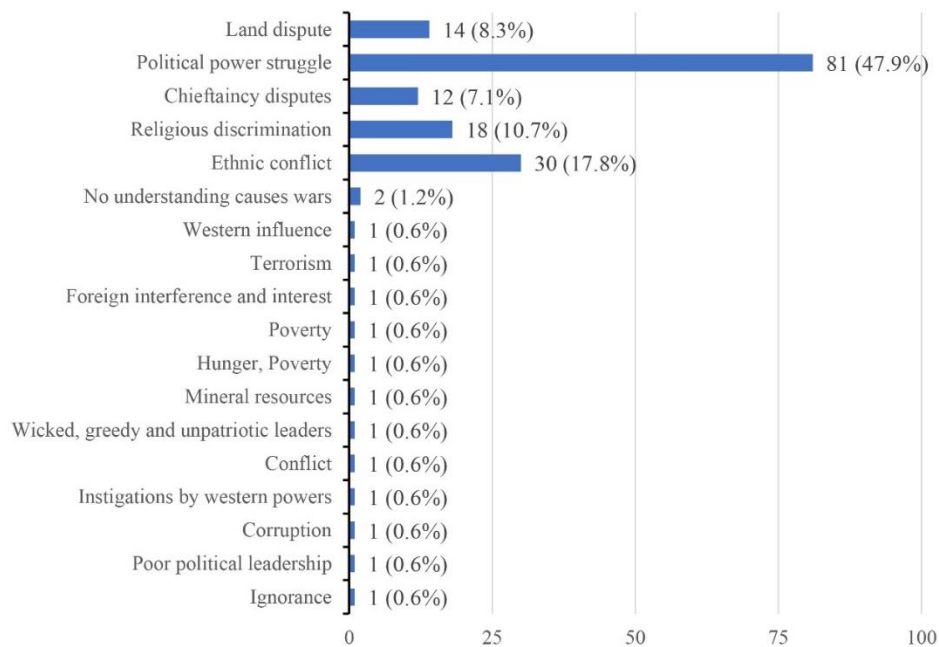


Figure 4: Major causes of wars in Africa

Our study findings reveal that ethnic conflicts constitute 17.8% of the root causes of wars in Africa. Ethnicity diversity mishandled threatens the peace of many African countries and will lead to ethnic conflicts. Further evidence can be found from studies conducted by Alabi (2002), Aremu (2010), Bencherif et al. (2020), Botha and Graham (2021), Cammack et al. (1993), Cilliers and Cilliers (2015), Loisel (2004), V. H. Mlambo (2021), Osaghae (1992), Osinubi and Osinubi (2006) Osha (2020:10), Ryan (1990), Yakubu (2017) and Yusuf (2019) of the role played by ethnicity in threatening peace and the existence of many nations .

Our studies reveal that religion discrimination constitute 10.7 % of the root causes of wars in Africa. Religious divergence threatens the peace of many African countries. Further evidence can be found from studies conducted by Okonkwo (2017), Okunade et al. (2021); Samuel (1993), Saiya (2018) and Tshitereke (2003).

Our study reveals that land dispute constitute 8.3 % of the root causes of wars in Africa. The arbitrary borders legacy left by colonial powers and the abundance of natural resources in some lands plays a role in violent conflicts and wars in Africa. Further evidence can be found from studies conducted by Amupanda (2021); Aremu (2010); Brunet-Jailly (2022); Hassan (2021); Kahiro (2014); Khadiagala (2015); Langa (2020); Maisori (2019); Mendenhall et al. (2020); Okumu et al. (2020), Shir and Nnome (2021). It is important to observe that land disputes scores 8.3 % because most of our respondents are educated and live in urban area. Probably if the research was conducted in rural area, lands disputes could score higher than what our research revealed.

Our study reveals that chieftaincy disputes constitute 7.1% of the root causes of wars in Africa. For the sake of order in any society or organization, it is important to assign leadership roles and for everyone to follow the guidance of their top leader. Chieftaincy disputes are due to the desire for others to be at the head of the organization and when people are fighting to control lands, mineral resources at their disposition or to defend the interest of a certain group. Further evidence can be found from studies conducted by Adedeji (1999); Fagbadebo (2019); Fagbadebo and Dorasamy (2021); Hedlund (2019); D. Mlambo (2021).

For the participants of this study, no understanding causes of wars (1.2%), western influence (0.6%), terrorism (0.6%), foreign interference and interest (0.6%), poverty (0.6%), hunger , poverty (0.6%), mineral resources (0.6%), wicked, greedy and unpatriotic leaders (0.6%), conflict (0.6%), instigations by western powers(0.6%), corruption(0.6%), poor political leadership(0.6%) and

ignorance(0.6%) are considered to play an insignificant role as far as wars are concerned (see Figure 4). On no understanding causes of wars, the participants are expressing the complexity of the root causes of wars which are diverse. African wars are described by several characteristics such as causal and dynamics factors. Our findings on no understanding causes of wars are supported by many scholars(Albert, 2001: 4-5 ; Aremu, 2010; Brown, 1997; Josephine et al., 2019; V. H. Mlambo, 2021; Nhema & Zeleza, 2008; Okumu et al., 2020; Saeed, 2015; Uwa & Iloh, 2022). On western influence, it plays a role which threaten peace and the existence of nations. There are external actors which are western countries, multinational corporations and nation-states. Our findings on western influence as cause of wars in Africa are supported by many scholars (Adusei, 2009; Aremu, 2010; Carmody, 2017; Generoso, 2022; Gruzd et al., 2022; Kondratenko, 2020; V. H. Mlambo, 2021; Mohammedi, 2020, 2022; Parachini et al., 2021; Rahaman et al., 2017; Vine, 2021). On terrorist activities in Africa, it plays a role in political instability and massive population destruction and relocation. Our findings on terrorism are supported by many scholars (Aja, 2023; Juma & Sabala, 2024; Matsinhe & Valoi, 2019; Morier-Genoud, 2020; Okonkwo, 2017; Saiya, 2018; Tshitereke, 2003). On foreign interference and interest, it plays a similar role with western influence. Because most of the time, western countries, multinational corporations and nations states get involved or interfere in the affairs of countries to defend their interests on the ground. Our findings on foreign interference are supported by many scholars(Adusei, 2009; Aremu, 2010; Carmody, 2017; Generoso, 2022; Gruzd et al., 2022; Kondratenko, 2020; V. H. Mlambo, 2021; Mohammedi, 2020, 2022; Parachini et al., 2021; Rahaman et al., 2017; Vine, 2021). On poverty and hunger, it plays a role in political tensions, wars and violent conflicts. Income inequality leads to poverty as well as to grievance. Grievance leads to insurrection and insurrection to violence conflicts and wars. Our findings on poverty and hunger are supported by many scholars (Aremu, 2010; Ekpang, 2005; Genugten, 2008; Louw-Vaudran, 2021; Wong, 2022b).On mineral resources, most of the African countries are facing the “resource curse”. Interstate and intra state conflicts in Africa are mostly due to the discoveries of natural resources and the desire to control it. Our findings on mineral resources as a root of wars in Africa are supported by many scholars (Amupanda, 2021; Baloyi, 2018; Brunet-Jailly, 2022; Hassan, 2021; Irobi, 2005; Khadiagala, 2010; Langa, 2020; Lentz, 2003; Macha, 2019; Moyo & Nshimbi, 2019; Mulindwa, 2020; Obi, 2010; Ojambo, 2021; Okumu, 2010; Onguny, 2020; Sinthumule, 2021; Sone, 2017; Uwa & Iloh, 2022). On wicked, greedy and unpatriotic leaders, the government and political actors’ greediness, insensitiveness on the suffering of the

population lead to population frustration and insurrection to claim for fair resource distribution and their well-being. Our society only need leaders who are seeking for the common good of their citizens. Our findings on wicked, greedy and unpatriotic leaders are supported by many scholars (Adedeji, 1999; Fagbadebo, 2019). On conflict, it contributes to the political instability and threaten wellness of the population and the peace in any given society. Most of the conflicts are violent, destructive and causes wars. Our findings on conflict are supported by many scholars (Abrams et al., 2021; Aremu, 2010; Azar & Moon, 1986; Brown, 1993; Coser, 1967; Deutsch, 1991; Eminue, 2004; Ross, 1993). On instigations by western powers, it plays a similar role with western influence and foreign interference and interest. It is believed that western powers always instigate insurgency, conflicts and wars in order to keep exploiting natural resources behind the scene. A peaceful environment hinders western powers to keep stealing secretly natural resources. Therefore, the instigation of those insurgencies, violences, conflicts and wars. Our findings on instigations by western powers are supported by many scholars (Carmody, 2017; V. H. Mlambo, 2021; Rahaman et al., 2017; Vine, 2021). On corruption, it contributes to political instability and poverty. The population mistrust on political leaders can lead to mass insurrection and insurrection can lead to violent conflicts and wars. The population grievance on the government poor public services delivery can also lead to mass insurrection as well as to violent conflicts and wars. Our findings on corruption are supported by many scholars (Aremu, 2010; Fagbadebo & Dorasamy, 2021; Sodr , 2014). On poor political leadership, it plays a crucial role in the occurrence of wars in the African continent. This cause is similar to the unpatriotic leaders who are not selflessness. Political leaders are elected to represent the interest of their constituent. When they don't do so, it means they are not competent or are greedy and seeking for their own interests. It is a sign of bad governance. Bad governance fragilize more and more political stability which will lead to violent conflicts and wars. Our findings on poor political leadership are supported by many scholars (Adeto, 2019; Cilliers & Schunemann, 2013; Cilliers & Sisk, 2013; D. Mlambo, 2021; V. H. Mlambo, 2021). On ignorance, it plays a role in the occurrence of wars. Ignorance can be defined as lack of knowledge. The Holy scriptures (bible) say that “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge....” Hosea 4 verse 6 a ²⁴.

²⁴ [Hosea 4 KJV - Hear the word of the LORD, ye children - Bible Gateway](#)

During the survey, the participants were asked what is the role of good governance in silencing the guns in Africa. According to the participants responses, good governance would have a positive impact to silence the guns. The results in Figure 5 suggest that respectively, 50.9% (strongly agree), 34.3% (agree) and 7.1% (somewhat agree) that good governance contribute to silence the guns in Africa, whereas 4.1% (neither agree nor disagree), 1.2% (somewhat disagree), 1.2% (disagree) and 1.2% (strongly disagree). Further evidence can be found from studies conducted by Fearon and Laitin (2003); Hegre (2001); Moss (2011); Moss et al. (2015) and Namazi and Mohammadi (2018).

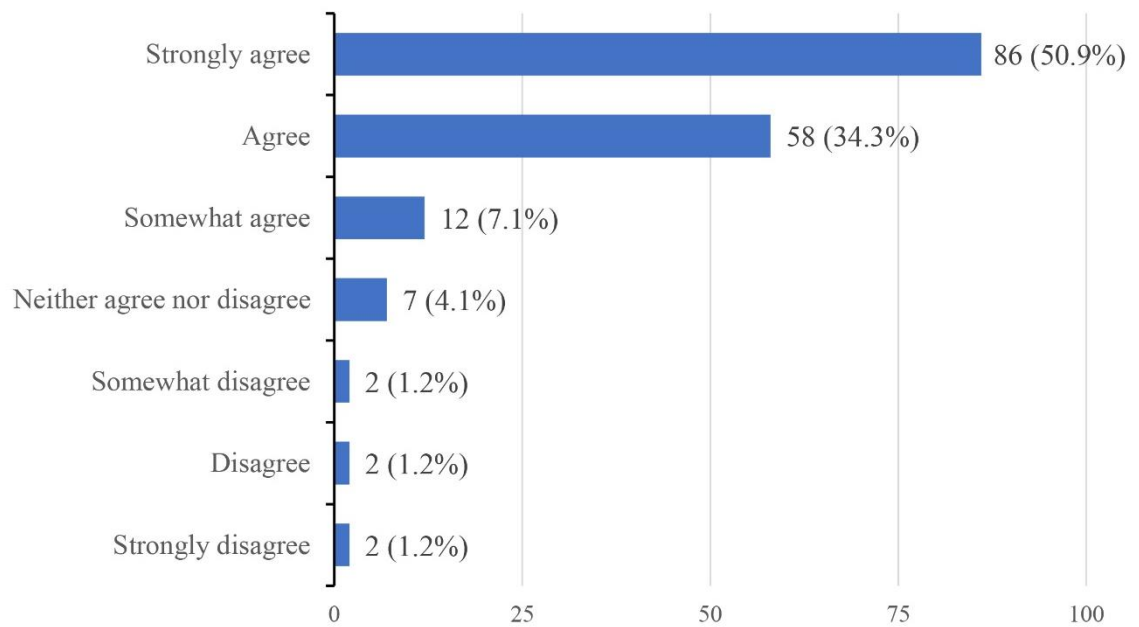


Figure 5: The Role of Good Governance in Silencing the Guns in Africa beyond 2020

During the survey, the participants were asked what is the role of social accountability in silencing the guns in Africa beyond 2020. Regarding the role of social accountability in silencing the guns in Africa beyond 2020, the responses indicate that social accountability can play a vital role in silencing guns in Africa, as depicted in Figure 6. The results in Figure 6 suggest that respectively, 39.1 % (agree), 33.7 % (strongly agree) and 18.3 % (somewhat agree) that social accountability will contribute to silence the guns in Africa beyond 2020, whereas 5.3 % (neither agree nor disagree), 1.8 % (somewhat disagree) and 1.8 % (disagree). Government in any society should be submitted to a social accountability system to enhance good governance and mitigate the risk of insurrection, conflicts and wars. Further evidence can be found from studies conducted by Baez Camargo and Jacobs (2013); Booth (2011); Joshi and Houtzager (2012); Norman (2014) and Schouten (2011). In regard to our findings, we can conclude that with a social accountability approach, African states can establish a sustainable peace and contribute to the wellbeing of their citizens.

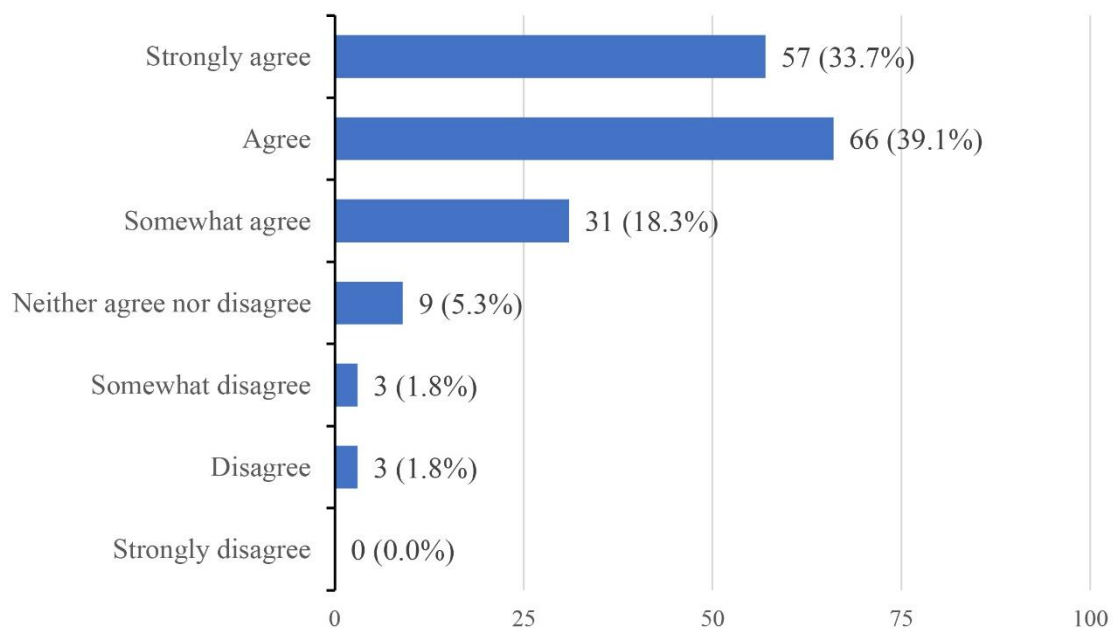


Figure 6: The role of social accountability in Silencing the Guns in Africa beyond 2020

During the survey, the participants were asked what was the overall rating of the African Union's campaign. Regarding the overall rating of the African Union's campaign and strides towards ceasing the use of firearms in Africa by 2020, Figure 7 shows: 51.5% of the participants were indifferent, whereas 26.6 % agreed that the campaign was successful, and 21.9 % believed that the campaign has failed. Thus, based on the results, the campaign was neither a success or a complete failure. Nevertheless, regardless of the results, many African countries, such as the Central African Republic, Burkina Faso, Mali, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Nigeria, continue to experience political unrest and war.

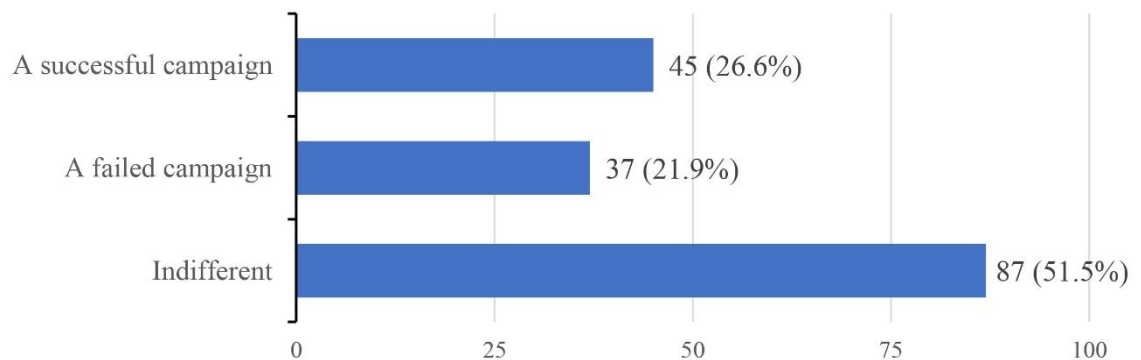


Figure 7: Overall rating of “Silencing Guns” by 2020 Campaign

CONCLUSION

Our survey results showed that most of the participants were not aware of AU’s STGIA 2020 campaign. Therefore, they perceived that the AU’s efforts were inadequate for silencing the guns. Primarily, guns and other weapons are mostly used in wars, political power struggles, and other disputes, concerning ethnic disputes, land and chieftaincy. This study has revealed that most of respondents agreed that when poverty is alleviated from a community, conflicts can be mitigated in Africa. For the root causes of wars in Africa, most of the respondents assert that political power struggles were the main root causes of war in Africa. Nonetheless, good governance, transparency, and social accountability could play a crucial role in silencing the guns in Africa. Only if African governments, stakeholders, and international organizations willingly chose to resolve the root causes of crisis in Africa revealed by this study and the African governments are

willing to resolve the fragmentation of the African Union would STGA beyond 2020 become a reality. It is for this reason that the African Governance Architecture (AGA) platform was created. According to Akech (2020: 145), the African Governance Architecture (AGA) platform aims to strengthen the ratification, domestication, and implementation of AU norms related to governance, democracy, and popular participation, while also promoting peace, security, and stability, as well as promoting democracy, governance, and people's rights²⁵. The AGA is hampered by a fragmented, diverse and dispersed set of AU institutions mandated to promote governance in the continent (Sabelo, 2011:2)²⁶. It is imperative that the fragmentation of the African Union be resolved in order to ensure a sustainable peace and security environment on the continent (Adula, 2022). On the matter of establishing a sustainable peaceful environment on the continent, a study by Hegre and Nygård (2015) indicates that governing countries with good governance are less likely to be involved in conflicts after a conflict has ended or after independence. Poor governance slows down this process. Enhancing governance has the potential to mitigate the occurrence of conflicts.

A 16th extraordinary summit of the African Union was held on May 28, 2022, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, on unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) and terrorism in Africa, at which heads of state discussed trends and threats related to UCGs in Africa, as well as specific actions and measures to be taken to address them, and governments reaffirmed their commitment to promoting human rights, democracy, and good governance in Africa.²⁷ Likewise, Adula (2022) assert that for democracy to be strengthened, good governance fostered, and human rights to be protected in Africa, norms, instruments, and institutions must be adopted as well as empowered in order to fulfil their mandate effectively (financial and institutional). Firstly, It is imperative that the AGA be

²⁵ Sabelo, Gumedze (2011:3): The Challenges Facing Africa's Emerging Governance Architecture. Accessed through: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/the-challenges-facing-africasemerging-governance-architecture>.

²⁶ Sabelo, Gumedze (2011:2): The Challenges Facing Africa's Emerging Governance Architecture. Accessed through: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/the-challenges-facing-africasemerging-governance-architecture>.

²⁷ Declaration on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa “Robust Response, Deepening Democracy and Collective Security. Declaration on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government During the 16th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Change of Government in Africa, 28 May, 2022, Malabo, Republic of Equatorial Guinea (AU Assembly, 2022).

institutionalized as an AU organ with decision-making power, so that it can make binding decisions which consolidate democracy, human rights, good governance and strong power to respond to governance challenges including unconstitutional government changes (Adula, 2022). Akech (2020: 144) recommended that the AGA be established as an institutionalized section of the AU tasked with consolidating democracy, human rights, and good governance and taking action when governance challenges arise, including unconstitutional changes to government. Secondly, it is vital that all AU institutions and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) work together in a clear division of labor between themselves to avoid duplication and overlaps of duties in order to achieve human rights, good governance, and democracy in Africa (Adula, 2022). Simultaneously, member states of the AU should reaffirm their commitment to democracy, disassociate themselves from the OAU's ideals, embrace and domesticate democratic ideals, and fulfill their financial duties. As a solution to provide AGA with sufficient and stable finance, Kariseb and Okoloise (2020: 60) advocated the establishment of the Democracy and Governance Fund (DGF) and requiring AU members to contribute annually to it. Last but not least, the AGA should coordinate with the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the and the PSC subcommittee on UCGs in Africa (Adula, 2022).

The results of this study can contribute to provide a tailor-made policy by considering the African citizens opinion in STGA beyond 2020. States members should adopt a strategic governance by resolving from the root causes the issue of wars in Africa and by monitoring it progress. In addition, further research may be conducted by interviewing key policymakers involved in the implementation of the Master Roadmap, independent analysts of Africa's peace and security trends and civil society actors working on various aspects of the STGA.

Declaration of interests

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, [P.T.M], upon reasonable request. The authors use google document form to design the questionnaire and share it to the participants.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s)

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