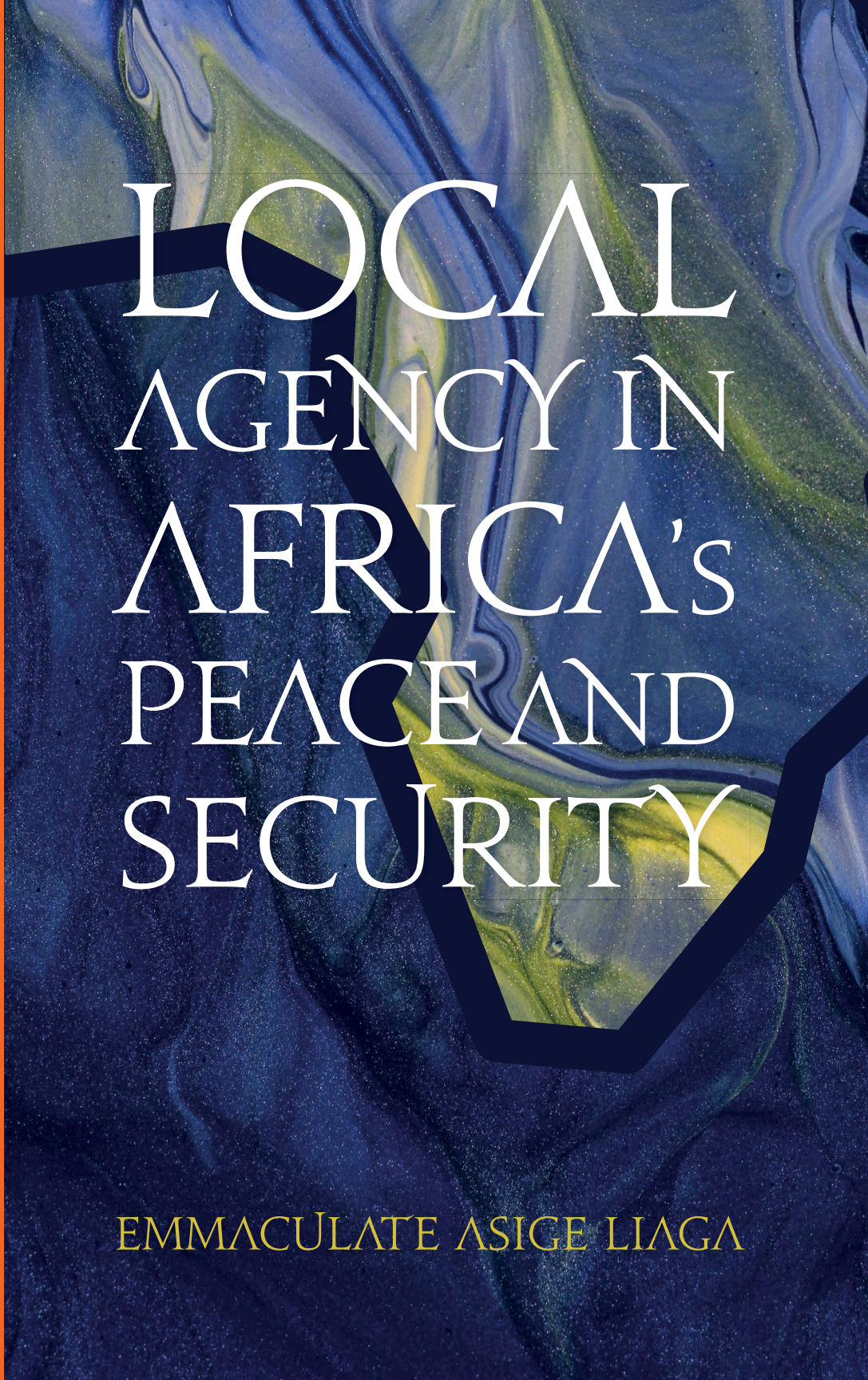

LOCAL
AGENCY IN
AFRICA's
PEACE AND
SECURITY
EMMACULATE ASIGE LIAGA



Local Agency in Africa's Peace and Security

Emmaculate Asige Liaga (Ed)



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We are especially grateful to the peer reviewers whose constructive critiques and suggestions sharpened the intellectual coherence and rigour of this volume. Your time and thoughtful engagement have been instrumental in guiding the revision process and elevating the quality of this work.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to Professor Siphamandla Zondi and Professor Oye Akinola for their guidance, encouragement, and belief in the value of this work. Your intellectual mentorship has been a beacon throughout this process. Our thanks also go to the Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation (IPATC) at the University of Johannesburg, whose institutional support provided a critical academic home for this volume. We hope that this book contributes meaningfully to the Institute's broader vision of advancing African-centred scholarship.

This volume is also indebted to the lived experiences and tireless efforts of local communities across various African countries, whose agency, innovations, and resilience form the basis of many of the case studies in this book.

To the men and women who first inspired my personal journey into understanding the power of local voices in peacebuilding, thank you. Your courage, wisdom, and commitment to building peace within your communities remain a foundational influence on this work. It is in their stories that we find both the complexity and the hope of peace from below.

Finally, we dedicate this book to all local peacebuilders across the continent, elders, youth, women, traditional leaders, and activists, whose everyday acts of resistance, negotiation, and care animate the spirit of peace from below. This book is for you.

List of Acronyms

ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
AIKS	African indigenous knowledge systems
AISA	Africa Institute of South Africa
AMIB	African Mission in Burundi
AMIS	African Mission in Sudan
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
APs	assembly points
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ARCSS	Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUC	Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia
CEE	Civics and Ethics Education
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism
CIVIC	Center for Civilians in Conflict
CJTF	Civilian Joint Task Force
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
CORDEX	Coordinated Regional Downscaling Experiment
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CPES	Civic and Peace Education Studies
CRF	Continental Results Framework
CRF	Crisis Response Fund
CSRF	Community Security and Resilience Fund
CSO	civil society organisation
CSS	critical security studies
CSS	Centre for Security Studies
CWGs	community watch groups
DAC	Development Assistance Committee

DDR	disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EIP	Ethiopian Institute of Peace
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defence Force
EPaRDA	Ethiopian Pastoralists Research and Development Association
EPON	Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network
EPRaDA	Ethiopian Pastoralists Research and Development Association
EU	European Union
FGD	Focused Group Discussions
FGE	Federal Government of Ethiopia
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FONGA	Forum of Angolan Non-Governmental Organizations
FSG	Federal Security Group
GENIDA	Gender and Inclusive Development in Africa
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
GO	government organisation
GOSS	Government of South Sudan
GPPAC	Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict
GRSS	Government of the Republic of South Sudan
HLP	housing, land and property
HoF	House of Federation
HRC	Human Rights Council
HSBA	Human Security Baseline Assessment
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICTJ	International Center for Transitional Justice
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IDA	Institute for Agricultural Development
IDA	International Development Association
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	internally displaced person
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party

IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority to Development
IGO	intergovernmental organisation
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPATC	Institute for Pan-African Thought and Conversation
IPI	International Peace Institute
JHC	Joint High Command
JMC	Joint Military Command
KZNCC	KZN Christian Council
LPCs	Local Peace Committees
MA	Memorandum of Agreement
MAAPSS	Mapping Actors and Alliances Project in South Sudan
MoFA	Ministry of Federal Affairs
MoP	Ministry of Peace
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
MRG	Minority Rights Group
NAS	National Salvation Front
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NISA	National Intelligence and Security Agency (Somalia)
NITEL	Nigerian Telecommunications Limited
NSS	National Security Service (South Sudan)
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PoC	protection of civilians
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSO	peace support operations
R-ARCSS	Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RF	Rhodesian Front
RSDSRB	Revitalised Strategic Defence and Security Review Board
RUSI	Royal United Services Institute
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SNA	Somali National Army
SNSF	Somali National Security Forces
SPF	Somali Police Force
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLM/A	South Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army
SPLM/A-IO	South Sudan People Liberation Movement/ Army—In Opposition
SSNPS	South Sudan National Police Service
SSOA	South Sudan Opposition Alliance
SSPNS	South Sudan Prisons and National Security
SSR	security sector reform
SWOT	strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
TCAP	Transformative Cosmopolitan Approach to Peace-building
TCC	Troop Contributing Country
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TGoNU	Transitional Government of National Unity
TOC	Theories of Change
UDF	United Democratic Front

UN	United Nations
UNACA	United Nations Angola Verification Mission
UNACA	the Confederation of Farmer Associations and Agricultural Cooperatives of Angola
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDPO	United Nations Department of Peace Operations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNPoE	United Nations Panel of Experts on South Sudan
UNPOL	United Nations Police
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSG	United Nations Secretariat General
UNSWG	United Nations Security Working Group
UPA	Uganda People's Army
USC	United Somali Congress
USI	United States Institute
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZDF	Zimbabwe Defence Forces
ZIPA	Zimbabwe People's Army
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZNA	Zimbabwe National Army
ZNLWVA	Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association

Foreword

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University of South Africa
Co-Series Editor: African Political Science and International Relations in Focus
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Emmaculate Asige's edited volume, *Local Agency in Africa's Peace and Security*, is a timely contribution to the University of Johannesburg Press' *African Political Science and International Relations* series. The editor and contributors position themselves within debates on the so-called local turn in peace and security scholarship, while also analysing the challenges, tensions, contradictions, and possible synergy between liberal peacebuilding frameworks and locally grounded peace practices across African settings.

One of the volume's strengths is its focus on the significance of local actors in peacebuilding initiatives, rather than on state-centric, technocratic, and conventional scholarly approaches in the peacebuilding literature. Hence, the volume not only questions whether local agency matters, but also engages with why and how it matters, the conditions that enable or constrain it, and how it intersects with national, regional, and international efforts to achieve sustainable peace and security.

The volume is structured into four substantive parts. Part I focuses on the volume's conceptual and theoretical foundation. It challenges universalist and state-centred models of African peace and security by providing African-centred theories of peacebuilding, context-specific approaches, and transformative peace education. The chapters in Part I call for a critical epistemological shift, requiring recognition of indigenous philosophies, grassroots ethics, and non-Western approaches to peace to understand and achieve sustainable conflict transformation in Africa and the Global South.

Part II extends the volume's analytical lens by engaging questions of gender, migration governance, and racialised violence. Here, chapter contributors demonstrate that local agency cannot be reduced to a romanticised communitarian ideal. Instead,

local agency is mediated by hierarchy, exclusion, institutional weakness, and contested belonging. These chapters show that what is constituted as local is a contested political terrain, in which representation, legitimacy, and social justice are questioned and negotiated. Particularly noteworthy is this part of the volume, which emphasises inclusion as both a normative aspiration and a practical, contested process grounded in lived realities.

Part III shifts attention to security governance and localised responses. It engages critically with the relation between formal security frameworks and community-based protection practices. This is illustrated, for example, in the chapters on South Sudan, Somalia, and Nigeria. These chapters highlight the uneven effects of state and international interventions, while also indicating how local actors navigate, contest, and repurpose these frameworks in fragile and vulnerable social settings. The discussion of security sector reform, the politics of arming civilians, and the complexity of hybrid security orders is especially important. It reminds us that the local is not simply a site of moral authenticity, but also one of risk, ambiguity, and political contestation.

The final part of the collection, Part IV, ventures into emerging terrains of peacebuilding, including borderland governance, climate-related insecurity, livelihoods, and the blue economy. Here, authors expand the meaning and substance of peace and security beyond narrow conceptions of peace and armed conflict. The chapters on cross-border conflict in the Horn of Africa, farmer conflicts in Angola, and African ports as sites of ecological and economic transformation highlight these emerging terrains and the spatial, environmental, and developmental dimensions of peacebuilding. This widened scope is one of the collection's main contributions.

The volume makes a compelling case for reconsidering peacebuilding from the level of Africa's local realities and intellectual traditions. It shows that local agency is neither a residual category nor a rhetorical gesture, but a foundational analytic for understanding how peace is made, sustained, unmade, and remade. Hence, the volume offers conceptual depth, empirical scope, and practical policy relevance. Durable peace cannot be externally imposed through formulaic intervention, but it must be cultivated through institutions, relationships, and forms of legitimacy that resonate with the local social context in which conflict is experienced.

Part I

Theoretical Reflections and Conceptual Grounding

Chapter 1

Framing Peace from Below and Local Agency in Peacebuilding

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Introduction

In contemporary discussions about peace and conflict, the importance of local agency and peace from below has become a key factor that challenges traditional ideas of universality. Peacebuilding finds itself at a crossroads. After the Cold War ended, peace research was influenced by state-centric discourses of liberal institutionalism (Sabaratnam, 2013:14). As peace has evolved over the last two decades, it has been characterised by a renewed interest in "local" actors and institutions (Hirblinger & Simons, 2015). Whether it is referenced in debates about local ownership, "traditional" institutions, hybridity, or resistance to international intervention, the "local"[1] continues to influence peacebuilding and remains central to peacebuilding studies. However, self-reflection and a critical evaluation of peace strategies are essential (Schmelzle & Fischer, 2009).

In recent years, there has been a realisation of growing interest in the "local" within both research and practice approaches to peace (Jabri, 2013). This body of research considers sub-national dynamics, which include what Kalyvas (2008:399) discusses in relation to the "micro-theoretic turn"; what Mac Ginty

[1] The "local" is put in inverted commas to emphasise the floating significations and ambiguity of the term in scholarly and practical use. In the following, the local will be defined according to the constraints and use of the chapter.

and Richmond (2013) explore regarding the "local turn"; what Tim Murithi (2006) examines in relation to "African Peacebuilding"; and what Siphamandla Zondi (2017) addresses concerning "decolonial peace". These references are not synonyms – although they are often mistaken for such – they, instead, represent an approach sharing similar characteristics. Researchers recognising that local dynamics or, at least, approaches beyond those offered by mainstream theories of security, conflict, and peace, are diverse across territories and more influential than previously believed, motivate the focus of this book. These strands of literature aim to analyse and challenge the liberal paradigm (Krause & Jütersonke, 2005:454; Paris, 2010:341; Richmond, 2009:559). Although peacebuilding carried out by various state and non-state actors, as well as by the international community, may differ and has gradually evolved, the broadly criticised liberal peacebuilding model remains dominant (Joshi *et al*, 2014). The criticisms principally centre on the implications of political reordering and power reallocation, with the state and its institutions maintaining a central role in liberalism.

Along these lines, numerous peacebuilding projects have emerged in post-conflict societies and conflict-affected areas worldwide to secure sustainable peace within these contexts. However, such positive developments seem elusive, as the majority of these societies continue to experience war-like conditions characterised by low socio-economic development, high levels of group animosities, political tensions, and communal violence, not to mention cases where full-scale civil wars have resumed (Öjendal *et al*, 2017). The general question is, then, has international peacebuilding failed?

Several authors have analysed the successes and failures of international peacebuilding (Ottaway, 2003; Sambanis, 2006; Paris, 2004; Omeje, 2018) with a focus on unintended consequences, constraints, and culture of peacebuilding (Hellmüller, 2018:4). Autesserre (2014) argues that although some peacebuilding mechanisms by international actors are supposed to bring positive results, they can yield unintended failures that come from the use of international tools such as elections, which can result in unhelpful political rivalry. Tull (2009) has drawn attention to constraints such as limited resources and to the

ill-adapted mandates of international actors. On the other hand, Paris (2003) argues that a "global culture" influences the way in which international actors respond to conflict. The consequence of the wave of global culture in peacebuilding is problematised by scholars such as Murithi (2006) and Hilhorst and Van Leeuwen (2005), who argue that current peacebuilding policy is based on analyses that are far removed from the "everyday" practices of the actors engaged in peacebuilding.

Against this background, an increasing number of scholars and practitioners have come together in a forceful critique of conventional peacebuilding practices embedded in the notion of "liberal peace". This critical scholarship has become known as "the local turn of peacebuilding" (Öjendal *et al*, 2017). This critique focuses on the "local level of analysis", where the "local" is generally understood as the place where bottom-up or grassroots peace is developed, contrasting with the liberal peace advocated by external international actors.

Wielenga (2018) argues that societies within Africa reflect the complex realities of the twenty-first century. In her examination of Rwanda, for instance, she contends that many micro-interventions exist at the community level. In numerous countries, these *micro*-occurrences have been overlooked, dismissed, or poorly understood (Wielenga, 2018). Wielenga further notes that a lot of "lip service" is paid to the ideas of local "ownership" and "agency" in interventions related to peacebuilding and transitional justice; however, little is known about how the "local" is embedded within its systems of norms and values, which may differ significantly from those supporting international interventions and national reforms. An analysis of the level and quality of local involvement in the peace process is needed.

At this stage, it must be noted that no normative value is placed on either local turn approaches or liberal peacebuilding approaches. An emphasis on the local can be both constructive (Richmond & Mac Ginty, 2013) and destructive (Hirblinger & Simons, 2015), and leads to either peace or conflict. The local turn approaches and assumptions are, therefore, not viewed as a specific goal or ideal but rather as a process that leads to various outcomes. It is these various outcomes that the research

will use to provide recommendations in the concluding chapter. The research enquiry, therefore, moves beyond the present argument of whether or not there is a need to promote integration of micro-level intervention for peacebuilding, as this has been conducted by many scholars (Zondi, 2017; Omeje, 2018; Wielenga, 2018; Richmond, 2009, 2015; Murithi, 2006). The book seeks to question, understand and interrogate how the micro-level is being executed at present in society and its resultant impact on peace in South Sudan.

Broadening of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding development needed to expand beyond what is outlined in, *An Agenda for Peace*. Haugerudbraaten (1998:6) critiqued the measures in the *Agenda for Peace*, noting that they don't necessarily promote sustained efforts that target the root causes of conflicts. Haugerudbraaten, along with strategic peacebuilding theorist Lisa Schirch (2008), emphasises the importance of a broader definition and understanding of peacebuilding to reflect its complex nature. Schirch (2008) states that peacebuilding is strategic when resources, actors, and methods are coordinated to achieve multiple long-term goals and address various issues (Moses, 2014).

While Lewer (1999:12) and Llamazares (2005:2–4) are concerned about the inclusion of so many activities, levels, and actors under the umbrella term "peacebuilding", thereby rendering its definition so broad that it is in danger of becoming meaningless, Haugerudbraaten (1998:7) warns against using too narrow a definition. Haugerudbraaten (1998) calls for an expansive view and identifies in the literature the dimensions of peacebuilding that can be used for expansion. These dimensions are intended to shift conceptual ambiguities from the back of the mind to conscious awareness and scrutiny by Shannon (2004). Towards this, Haugerudbraaten (1998) argues that peacebuilding can be broadened in the following aspects: the aim of peacebuilding, the means of peacebuilding, the temporal aspect of peacebuilding, and the organisational capacity of peacebuilding.

The Aim of Peacebuilding

Most peace scholars disagree on whether peacebuilding is about addressing the root causes of conflict or about finding peaceful ways to resolve both old and new disputes. Post-Cold War UN (United Nations) and intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) were expected to intervene to establish lasting peace, but because of the socio-economic decline caused by prolonged conflicts, economic development was limited (Neethling, 2005:34). Resources that could support economic growth were diverted to communities in urgent need instead of focusing on long-term development (Stremlau, 2013:1). This limited the success of peace missions, which led to a re-evaluation of the fundamental peacekeeping principles that were followed during the immediate post-Cold War period. It prompted an expansion of what was traditionally understood as human security and peacebuilding, leading Hendricks and Lucey (2013:1) to argue that contemporary armed conflicts require sustained efforts addressing not only military aspects but also the political, humanitarian, economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Drawing from Boutros-Ghali's (1992) emphasis, peacebuilding should be a process that helps to establish durable peace. The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict[2] states that the goal should go beyond conflict resolution to conflict transformation, recognising that structural injustice and violence cannot be ignored. The need for appropriate measures is grounded in an ethic of interdependence, partnership, and reducing violence to attain sustainable peace. As Johan Galtung (1976) adds, this expansion ensures that peacebuilding mechanisms are integrated into systems that the system can rely upon - comparing this to a healthy body that produces its own antibodies.

Peacebuilding should, therefore, endeavour to address the proximate and root causes of contemporary conflicts, which include structural, political, socio-cultural, economic, and environmental factors (Olivier *et al* 2009).

[2] The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) is a global network led by civil society organisations (CSOs) actively working to prevent violent conflict and build more peaceful societies (GPPAC, 2005).

The Means of Peacebuilding

The means of peacebuilding is concerned with what the efforts of peacebuilding should primarily entail. According to Gueli *et al* (2007), it has become clear that the use of military force to dismantle war economies will be insufficient if applied independently of other crucial peace mission activities. Tschirgi (2003:9) argues that ongoing dilemmas regarding security situations in weak, failing, or vulnerable states have prompted both development and security agencies to initiate processes that guide cultural, structural, economic, and political issues. According to Clover (2005:104), all aspects are equally important.

Therefore, there is a need to integrate all issues through the provision of technical assistance, capacity support, transparency, and anti-corruption initiatives, as well as conflict resolution projects (Neethling, 2005:44). Against this background, Tschirgi (2003:1) argues that there is a gradual expansion of peacebuilding to integrated approaches to address violent conflict at different phases of the conflict cycle. That is before (prevention), during, and after conflict (see the application in chapter 5). Thus, the creation of such an environment has three central dimensions: addressing the underlying causes of conflict, repairing damaged relationships, and dealing with psychosocial trauma at the individual level.

The International Crisis Group (2015) reports a result that confirms violence in South Sudan was made up of a combination of various historical, current, political, socio-economic, cultural, and politico-economic factors. This included factors beyond marginalisation, political sidelining, the fragility of the state, weak justice systems, and poor distribution of wealth and natural resources. These, they argue, were the main priorities of the United Mission in South Sudan (International Crisis Group (ICG), 2011). The failure to uphold peace in South Sudan during its transition period is supported by Maiese's (2003) argument that the creation of positive peace should be the central task of peacebuilding. Here, Maiese argues that when a "stable social equilibrium" is achieved, the surfacing of new disputes does not escalate into violence and war.

The Temporal Aspect of Peacebuilding

Beyond the surface definition, the timing of peacebuilding also plays a part in how it is practised. One school of thought believes that peacebuilding is a comprehensive operation. Others tend to see the relevance of peacebuilding only as a process in post-conflict situations that occurs at the end of a conflict's "life cycle". For instance, in Michael Lund's (1996) stages of conflict (Figure 1), peacebuilding occurs as the very last stage after all other stages of diplomacy, peacemaking, peace enforcement, and peacekeeping are successful (Lund, 1996). This position of peacebuilding seems to have dominated the UN (until recently), often termed as "post-conflict peacebuilding" (Bryden *et al*, 2005).

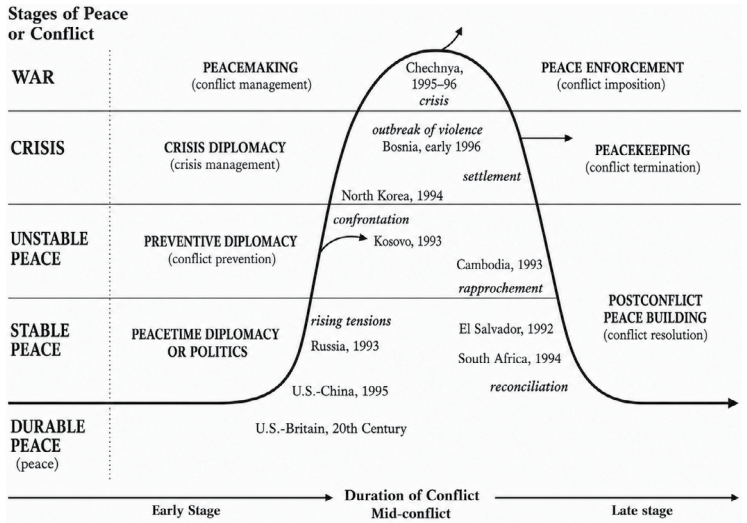


Figure 1: Preventing violent conflicts. A strategy for preventive diplomacy
Source: Michael Lund (1996: 38)

The term "post-conflict peacebuilding", also used in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) documents, is intended to prevent the resurgence of armed conflict, reflects a concept of peacebuilding that is narrow (Hänggi, 2005). According to

the UN structure, peacebuilding comes after peacemaking and peacekeeping, implying that peacebuilding is a separate entity which occurs after conflict and consists of various activities including capacity-building, reconciliation, and societal transformation. Indeed, the Brahimi report (UN, 2000), defines peacebuilding as:

> "Activities [that] are undertaken on the far side of the conflict" (Durch *et al*, 2003).

This definition positions peacebuilding as a phase of the peace process that only takes place after violent conflict. There is a need for long-term peacebuilding techniques that are designed to fill this gap by addressing the underlying substantive issues that brought about the conflict. Hänggi (2005) argues that there is a need for a broader concept of peacebuilding that does not solely aim at avoiding the recurrence of war, but also at strengthening the fabric of peace. Woocher (2009) argues that this kind of peacebuilding should not be limited to averting a relapse into conflict in post-conflict scenarios, especially given the non-linearity (see Chapter 2) of the "cycle of conflict", which does not provide a perfect timing for peacebuilding to start, thus, showing a less smooth process to the one demonstrated in Figure 1. Lederach perceives these peace-building techniques as a long-term perspective crucial to future violence prevention, and the promotion of a more peaceful future. Understanding of peacebuilding has recently taken on a broader meaning (Lederach, 1997). In this book, peacebuilding is understood as a combination of what is described by Lederach as "a comprehensive concept that sustains a full array of processes and approaches within its various stages to transform conflict towards more sustainable peace." This reduces the chances of relapse into conflict (Peacebuilding Initiative, 2019). From this trajectory, this book understands peacebuilding not as separate from other peace processes, but as an umbrella concept that encompasses long-term transformative efforts that is a combination of classical peacebuilding strategies, peacemaking, and peacekeeping. The temporal definition of peacebuilding is framed under what Michelle Maiese (2006) argues, should encompass the activities of peacebuilding, and includes:

> "Early warning and response efforts, violence prevention, advocacy work, civilian and military peacekeeping, military intervention, humanitarian assistance, ceasefire agreements, and the establishment of peace zones."

The Organisational Capacity of Peacebuilding

The general organisation of peacebuilding has shown the overall growth of peace missions. A shift has occurred from peace interventions that are only concerned with overseeing ceasefires towards peace intervention operations that moved towards inclusion, capacity-building, and promotion of measures meant to pave the way for the local population to own and build sustainable peace.

This leads to the question of "who plays what role" in peacebuilding. Fetherston and Nordstrom (1995) argue that the position of peace interveners allows them to interact extensively with communities in conflict. It is, thus, necessary to integrate macro- and micro-level activity aimed at long-term transformation. Thus, the need for third-party interventions to be "guided by a broader definition of success that is not only deduced from the top but also articulated from local frameworks of peacebuilding" (Fetherston & Nordstrom, 1995).

However, Olivier *et al* (2009) disagree that peacebuilding discourse should revolve around the discussion of actors, primarily focusing on the roles of international and national actors in peace. Others view the debate about the role of international actors as important. It is especially for the purpose of efforts to avoid a return to conflict that they argue that in some cases, peacebuilding may require ambitious long-term nation-building efforts by international actors (Fetherston & Nordstrom, 1995).

Tschirgi, therefore, provides a middle ground by calling for a re-definition of peacebuilding from a macro (international) perspective. He emphasises that the doctrines and institutions that had been developed during the Cold War to deal with issues regarding global peace and security should be regarded as inadequate in dealing with conflicts in the new era (Tschirgi, 2003:1). The denominator is a holistic, transformative, and long-term perspective with the emphasis on a peace built

on internal, domestic and local traditions as well as cultural practices . The UN (2001) *No Exit Without Strategy* report of the Secretary-General further documents that outside actors can lend valuable support and can act as bystanders in decisions, where domestic peace would be achieved through "reformed systems of governance that are responsive to people's basic needs at the local, regional and national levels". This call contributed to the early 1990s shift from the liberal peacekeeping approaches, to an understanding of peacebuilding that entails much more than the contributions of the military component of a peace mission, and active participation of local groups. It is on this call for a broadening agenda of peacebuilding and the subsequent *local turn* that this book is built. In parallel emphasis, the roles of the civil society, local communities, and local actors have been growing since the early 1990s, leading to the conceptualisation of the idea of "peace from below".

The focus is not on the top and bottom only. The middle level includes the ambitious civil society which also plays a part in this analysis. In South Sudan, civil society is narrowly defined as "not for profit" organisations. This limited definition excludes the majority of what is the "true" civil society of South Sudan. In this chapter, "civil society is understood to comprise organisations that take voluntary collective action around shared interests, purposes, and values distinct from those of the state, family and market. It consists of large sets of organisations such as trade unions, professional associations, human rights groups, faith-based organisations, research institutions, social movements, and peacebuilding NGOs, as well as traditional and community groups". Civil society groups must also be civically minded, and it is important to note that these are much more than non-governmental organisations (NGOs), even though the NGOs are the main interlocutors for international cooperation (Paffenholz, 2014).

The Local Turn

In academic research, there is an emergence of a school of critical scholars advocating for an emphasis on the "local" in peacebuilding knowledge and practices. These scholars call for an

alternative approach that accounts for the dynamic relationships and agency at the local level (Da Costa & Karlsrud, 2012). This shift, while problematising the liberal peacebuilding framework, called for an approach that emerges from the local level, not one imposed by external actors (Tschirgi, 2004). The emphasis on a focus beyond the liberal approach has argued for the importance of peacebuilding to include more local ownership (Donais, 2009) and consent. This emphasis is to promote legitimacy and effectiveness in peacebuilding efforts (Tadjbaksh, 2011:26) and provides a premise under which peacebuilding work can draw from the different other local understandings of the issues at hand (Jok, 1996).

Most of these conversations have primarily taken place under the inclusion umbrella. An example of this inclusionary approach can be seen in the 2016 United Nations Security Council, *UNSC Resolution 2282* (UNSC, 2016), which was adopted unanimously and called for a reformation of the peacebuilding architecture to promote more inclusivity of local peace processes. The UNSC Resolution 2282 was later supported by the United Nations General Assembly.[3] Also, the G7+[4] developed a "New Deal" that highlights the necessity of a "legitimate and inclusive politic" (Liaga, 2017) when it comes to peacebuilding (Donais & McCandless, 2016).

These developments signify some of the most significant attempts at increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of peacebuilding strategies (Öjendal & Ou, 2015). These are all attributed to the fact that the question of sustained peace is not a naturally occurring phenomenon; it is often under construction and is ever-changing in nature (Jenkins, 2013:1). However, as

[3] Violence in South Sudan Continues, Confirming the …, https://docplayer.net/78319325-Violence-in-south-sudan-continues-confirming-the- (accessed April 29, 2019).

[4] The G7+ is a voluntary association of countries that are or have been affected by conflict and are now in transition to the next stage of development. The group represents 20 member countries: Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Liberia, Papua New Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo and Yemen. "Who We Are," G7+, http://www.g7plus.org/ .

argued by Wielenga (2018), these attempts continue to give "lip service" to the concept of local agency and local ownership in peacebuilding interventions. Peacebuilding practices continue to be liberal and "they do not include these important issues" at the bottom level, leading to the question of what or who is included? Moreover, how and to what degree are they included? This book will move beyond the evidence of lip service to critically analyse the evidence of local inclusivity in practice. The case of South Sudan will form the ground in which the type, level, and degree of inclusivity are tested to situate the position that the local occupies in contemporary peace initiatives in South Sudan and Africa.

The critical approaches draw on, amongst others, include Lederach (2001) elicitive approach, which, unlike prescriptive approaches to peacebuilding (such as the liberal approaches), recognises the existence of distinctive cultural understandings of conflict resolution, the primary notion here being that the training model of a universality needs to be rethought. Lederach's approach provides four key ideas, namely: people in a setting being seen as crucial resources; using indigenous knowledge as a key to discovery and actions; building self-sufficiency and sustainability from local resources; and empowerment that emerges from processes that promote participation in discovering appropriate solutions to identified needs and problems. This focus carries with it an emancipatory critique that emphasises giving agency to those who have so far been subject to, and objects of, intervention (Herbert, 2013:234). Emerging from these fundamental ideas, issues of local ownership, emancipation, and sustainability in peacebuilding are brought into focus. From this perspective, there is a need to engage with the non-liberal subjects (Young, 1998:211), especially ones without access to institutions of liberal peace – these are a range of institutions associated with "modern" states as a driving force for building "peace" (Zambakari, 2019). Lederach (1997), arguing along the same lines, proposes a grassroots approach where local leaders, NGOs, and international players take part in creating peace, with an emphasis on strengthening relationships amongst the involved parties through psychological, spiritual, social, economic, and political dimensions of society (Jepchumba Kidombo, 2013).

One important component of literature addressing the local turn is critical about the liberal peacebuilding paradigm. On the one hand, the project of liberal peacebuilding has been normatively accused of being an imposition of "Western" values, with inherent ethnocentrism that presumes a universalism of liberal goals (Paris, 2010:344–345; Richmond 2009:569). It is also pragmatically argued that liberal peacebuilding results in dysfunctional outcomes and that considering local realities is

> "not only an ethical necessity but also unavoidable for the aim of sustainability in peacebuilding endeavours" (Schaefer, 2010:504).

The "local" is generally seen as the place where the people at the grassroots peace is developed in distinction to the liberal peace (Simons & Zanker, 2014). This is also what Richmond, in his article *Resistance and the Post-liberal Peace* terms as "local local", an indicative of the existence and diversity of communities, where the "everyday" is at its most powerful as a critical tool. As The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) (de Coning, 2014) defines it, the "local" represents local communities and includes the local efforts, local knowledge of citizens, and organisations formed by the communities, who, in many ways, share attributes such as messages of mercy and forgiveness that transcend ethnic, national, political, and religious divisions. (Massoud 2014) The inclusion of what has come to be known as "the local", also referred to as local ownership, often remains in the form of rhetorical commitments (Donais, 2009:18). Nonetheless, there is much literature on the benefits of local involvement, especially amongst critical peacebuilding scholars (for example, Mac Ginty, 2018). However, many scholars such as Hirblinger and Simons (2015) and Simons and Zanker (2014) have also argued that this literature of the "local" remains under-analysed with weak empirical grounding. This research will, therefore, aim to fill this gap.

Much of the term "local" is flexible, and its exact meaning is debated. According to Leonardson and Rudd's definition, the "local" refers to "the acts of a diversity that go beyond elites" (Leonardsson & Rudd 2015:833), while Mac Ginty (2010?) argues that

"local" refers to the range of locally-based agencies present within a conflict. He shows that many of these can identify the processes necessary to promote peace, which in this context refer more to the everyday lives of people. The complicated nature of local conflicts, on many occasions, leads countries to need extra attention to defuse the causes of conflict (Richmond & Mac Ginty, 2013:769). The advantage that critical scholars bring out is that local approaches allow "cultural appropriateness" amongst the local people to have their voices heard (Hughes, 2015:818). The "local" is usually those whose views are least likely to be heard in a liberal peacebuilding process (Ganson & Wennmann, 2012). These voices are what this book will refer to as voices from below: that is, communities and organisations that engage in peacebuilding activities that spread to the communities with a bottom-up approach and have a majority of South Sudan staff have their headquarters in South Sudan.

Given the vagueness of such terms as "the local", it is imperative to define how these terms will be used in this book. "The local" or a "local peacebuilding actor" can mean two things. First, it can refer to a South Sudanese actor or organisation or institution, as a way to differentiate it from an external actor (regional, African or global). This book will use "internal" and "external or international actor" to mark the difference. Second, "local" can be used to differentiate between the different internal actors, a "local peacebuilding actor," and a "national peacebuilding actor." This differentiation is because of the geographic area of the implementation of their influence. For instance, a "national local NGO or organisation" has wider coverage, mostly over different provinces (for example, the government and subnational governmental bodies), but a "local actor" (for instance, a community-based organisation or an NGO) has a local influence and is geographically constrained to the immediate community and geographic locus. Therefore, this book will refer to "a local NGO" or "a local community-based organisation" in the case of an actor with a limited geographical area and a "national NGO or organisation or institution" to describe a larger entity in terms of geographic influence and capacity.

There are advantages of promoting the local turn; in most cases, local communities know the causes and nature of

conflict better than international actors. They form the best resource when solving conflicts (:832). If the interveners do not have any connection with the local community or subculture, this can provide a reason for the "local" to resist international interventions. This can be caused by them feeling threatened or suppressed in terms of their everyday life and traditions (Hughes, 2015:819). It has also been argued that the increase of employees from conflicting and post-conflict societies has led to the increase in the popularity of the local turn, thus raising the "cultural and historical awareness of different identities" on the international scene (Richmond & Mac Ginty, 2013:776). This growing importance of everyday life and local people is slowly altering the nature of liberal peacebuilding processes. As Öjendal argues, that the global and the local now can equally be held responsible for suboptimal outcomes as they also have the incentive to build sustainable peace in their region (Leonardson & Rudd, 2015:830–831). The decentralisation involved in the local turn can help with maintaining a stable and secure environment through increased levels of legitimacy, accountability, inclusion and participation (Leonardsson & Rudd 2015:828).

In this research, the local can be defined and categorised in terms of strategies and actors, although the research will not establish a clear distinction between actors and strategies. It is also important to recognise that there are different implications in assuming that the "local" represents the everyday, and the international does not. This is discussed in Chapter 3.

Strategies and Approaches to Peacebuilding

In terms of strategy, local actors operate at different levels. Various policy entities such as the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the UN, the World Bank, and municipal organisations like the Federation of Canadian Municipalities promote local ownership. They achieve this by supporting non-state and community actors in strengthening their role as intermediaries between the state and citizens (Klem & Frerks, 2008). For example, ACCORD supports local governance structures to provide channels for representation through political organisation (de Coning, 2014).

The top-down and bottom-up approaches to peacebuilding are two main methods used in the past and continue to be employed recently to transform post-conflict countries.

In the 1990s, towards the end of the Cold War, the UN engaged in large-scale state-building operations in countries affected by civil war. What is now termed comprehensive peacebuilding by the UN involved the trusteeship of institutions needed to establish liberal market democracies. These conventional approaches to peacebuilding refer to the formal and external bodies and structures, aiming to end conflict and assist countries recovering from civil wars, violent conflicts, and natural disasters (Bukari, 2013). The prevailing paradigm, according to Newman *et al* (2009), involves transforming war-shattered states into democratic market states and holding immediate democratic elections. Hoffmann (1995) supports this view, adding market liberalism, humanitarian assistance, formal court systems, and the rule of law to the principles of the Western or conventional approach to peacebuilding. The strategy of peacebuilding (also known as the method of implementation or implementation programmes) is the operational concept, deeply embedded in its design. Successful and sustainable peace depends on effective reconstruction. Stedman (1997) argues that while purely cooperative solutions to domestic peace can be envisioned, the chaos of violence makes rational cooperation amongst factions unlikely. This necessitates more effective (and additional) alternative strategies (Chandler, 1999).

Critics such as Paris have described this "top-down" approach to peacebuilding as authoritarian (Paris, 2002). As an alternative to the authoritarian practices of macro-level peacebuilding operations, several scholar-practitioners have put forward arguments for an "elective" and "transformative" approach to peacebuilding "from below", also known as "bottom-up" or community-based peacebuilding. For instance, Betts Fetherston (1994) argues that a bottom-up approach would be "counter-hegemonic" (Ramsbotham *et al*, 2005:217), emphasising the capacities for peacemaking inherent in communities in conflict situations (Curle, 1994:96). Advocates of this approach contend that "bottom-up" peacebuilding

involves supporting those affected by conflict and enabling them to develop more effective responses and voice their diagnoses of the issues that they face. This approach champions the idea that those most impacted by violence, and who must live with its consequences, are best placed to determine appropriate solutions and responses (McDonald, 1997:2).

On the other hand, bottom-up approaches to peacebuilding refer to the process of identifying the structural cause of conflict and using elements such as mediation, truth-saying, joint problem-solving, rituals, negotiation, people-to-people dialogue, the exchange of cattle, and marriage rituals to promote sustainable peace (Issifu, 2015a). Udofia (2011) argues that the "indigenous peacebuilding approach centres primarily on negotiation, mediation, reconciliation, pacification, and appeasement". In support, Okrah (2003) opines that most traditional societies tend to resolve conflicts through internal social control mechanisms. This approach is seen as a promotion of a win-win or non-zero-sum game in the aftermath of violent conflicts (Issifu, 2015b). This led Zartman's (2000) emphasis on the task of the indigenous approach to peacebuilding towards re-establishing contact between individuals, families and communities to rebuild social harmony. This approach, if well planned and managed, is a more durable and enduring option that may guarantee sustainable peace for war-torn countries. This has been the popular approach adopted in the process of peacebuilding in various West African countries.

The Local Actors

Following the definition by Hellmüller (2018), and as mentioned above, this book defines local actors as agencies, organisations, and groups within South Sudan that are largely led and driven by South Sudanese. This presents an amalgamation of civil society, communities, local government, traditional authorities, religious leaders and individual peacebuilding actors. A subsuming of all local peacebuilding actors into the general category masks the important peacebuilding. Attention is, therefore, called towards this category, and there is a need to treat them as an actors' category in their own right. Although these activities

may overlap, at the same time, we should also more clearly distinguish them.

International peacebuilding actors often have their headquarters outside of South Sudan and are active in different contexts and countries with expatriate staff in the country's office. They include a wide range of governmental, intergovernmental, and international non-governmental organisations (Liden, 2005:8).

Actors are categorised into different levels, which led Lederach (1997) to develop the pyramid approach as a base for analysing the intersection to understand the levels of actors (Knox & Quirk, 2000; Lederach, 2005 , 1995, 1997 , 1999 , 2001). In his pyramid approach, Lederach divides the pyramid into three sections representing the three levels. Certain common features characterise each level.

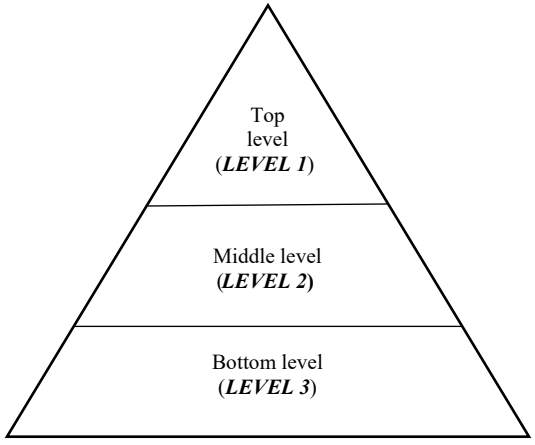


Figure 2: Lederach Pyramid

At the top-level elite leadership (Level 1), you find the key political, military, and religious leaders in the conflict. These are highly visible representatives of constituencies and elected political officials. Lederach argues that because of their high profile, they often find themselves in a locked position regarding the conflict's substantive issues. This often leads to issues of inflexibility during negotiations, and that is why negotiations take a long time and are easily derailed.

The middle-range leadership (Level 2) includes the mid-level NGOs and GOs (government organisations). This level is made up of those who have leadership positions not directly connected with formal government or major opposition movements. This is a considerable group compared to the top-level elite leadership. The focus at this level is not on the leader, but rather on the organisation as a whole and the mandate that it presents. The entities' status and influence derive from their relationships with others, both from the top-elite leadership and the grassroots leadership levels. Therefore, they are an important connector between the top and grassroots levels. Unlike the top level, the lack of visibility and individuality of middle-range leadership affords them more flexibility to manoeuvre within their projects.

Finally, the leadership at the bottom or grassroots level (Level 3) involves the community, indigenous community groups or NGOs, traditional and customary leaders, and local groups within everyday settings, such as refugee camp leaders. These grassroots leaders represent the masses, the everyday, the experience of the day-to-day struggle of finding food, water, shelter, and safety in violence-torn areas. Daily peacebuilding occurs at this level, as explained in Chapter 3.

Through these different levels, Lederach introduces the concept of inverse relationships. He argues that while top leadership have access to more information, resources and decision-making capacity, they are less affected by the daily war and the consequences of their decisions. Conversely, the base of the pyramid represents communities that are directly affected by the elite decision-making but have limited access to decision-making power. This inverse relationship results in difficulty in the implementation of peace. It is these various activities that Lederach argues must be integrated into a comprehensive peacebuilding framework (this will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, which will look at the top-down- bottom-up integration)

Having understood local actors and local strategy, which one of these (between the strategy and the actor) best defines the local? There is still a conceptual definition that the research will encounter, given the above definition of local actors and strategies, is the definition of the Government of South Sudan

(GoSS) based on the fact that it is a South Sudanese entity or on its top-down strategies? In most of the literature, there is a differentiation between local actors and international or external actors, as well as a differentiation between internal and external strategies. This points to the situational logic of peacebuilding that calls for a need for peacebuilders to define themselves as part of a certain peacebuilding logic, which propagates the assumption that "local" and "international" identities are in a mutual frictional relationship (Jabri, 2013). As explained before, the peacebuilding environment is not linear. While it is clear that an actor can either be a South Sudanese or not, the meaning of local, thus, goes beyond the actor and also incorporates the strategies. For instance, a local actor can adopt liberal strategies and vice versa. It is not enough to define local in simple terms as an actor or a strategy, as these roles can interchange and intersect within one actor, or amongst the many actors in peacebuilding. This view is demonstrated to be vague and reductionist. A gap exists in evaluating these muddles and not so definitive spaces that both the internal and external actors and liberal approach and local approaches to peacebuilding exist at the same time and shifting sides.

In addition to defining local or non-local actors, it is important to acknowledge that the issues being tackled reflect the dynamic area of intersection between the international and local (see Table 1). There are actors at different levels, tackling issues at their specific levels, and at the same time addressing issues that transcend their levels and cut across the entire structure to form a dynamic intersection.

This exposes the fact that within this complex interaction, there is a constant re-localisation and de-localisation amongst the actors, depending on their chosen level of focus of different issues. Amongst these actors, there is also the localisation phenomenon. Localisation here "describes a complex process and outcome by which norm-takers build congruence between transnational norms, including norms previously institutionalised in a region, and consists of local beliefs and practices" (Acharya, 2004:241). Kappler refers to constant processes of [de]localisation (moving away from the local) and [re]localisation (moving towards the local) which serve as tools. Various actors are socio-politically affected in the landscape of peacebuilding (Kappler, 2015).

Table 1: *Intersection of peace strategies on different levels of issues of conflicts*

Level	Approaches seeing conflict issues as distinct	Approaches seeing conflict issues as being influenced at all levels
Local ***Level 3***	Local peace (on issues such as cattle rustling)	Peace strategies (on local issues – cattle rustling). Peace strategies (on national issues – governance). Peace strategies on regional issues – resources. etc.
National ***Level 1***	National peace (on governance issues)	
Regional ***Level 1&2***	Regional peace (on resource issues)	
International ***Level 1&2***	International issues (world peace/ democracy)	

As Jabri (2013) demonstrates, the issue of localisation is a continuous process that a peace actor can possess at both different or same time and space. Jabri argues that there is a constant movement of entities to position themselves in the wider peacebuilding landscape. "This can be considered as taking on the form of 'de-localisation' (the deliberate attempt to avoid one's identity being framed as 'local') and the decision to frame one's identity as 'local', thus re-localisation" (Jabri, 2013:878). Thus, localisation and the intersection of the local and international should be analysed not as a static space, but as a space riddled with power and hegemonic tensions (see Chapter 2) where interactions are in constant movement, with fluid interactions.

This chapter's interest is, therefore, to situate the local in terms of both actors and strategies given various issues, and to challenge the conception of the "local" as a static concept or a set position.

Thus, there is a need to engage with the current peacebuilding calls for a focus on "the local", that is local actors,

strategies, and practices. As Wielenga (2018) stipulates, very little is understood in the local and its embedded systems of norms and values. These norms may differ significantly from those informing international interventions. This book will, therefore, join conversation on the local turn and southern voices, and contribute by providing exploratory research to understand the interplay between the liberal and the local turn's conceptual and theoretical framework, that is their contradiction (in other words, what dominates? can they be reconciled?) or their symbiosis (how do they work together, or inform each other?). The book will also situate local voices in peacebuilding practices in South Sudan, and view their prospects of achieving lasting peace through the lens of the "local turn".

There is consensus amongst local turn scholars that, despite the importance of the local turn in dynamic conflict environments, literature and interventions continue to be understood and conceptualised within the liberal peacebuilding framework (Chandler, 2006). This requires the examination of the link between the external and internal actors, their efforts, and strategies of peacebuilding. The understanding should not only focus on the local as an existing entity but where it exists in terms of mainstream peacebuilding that is increasingly practised.

Book Chapter Summaries

This book offers a bold reorientation of peacebuilding studies by centring local agency, voices and peace from below as the primary lenses for analysing conflict transformation in Africa and the Global South. It contributes to scholarship and practice in the following key ways:

> **Part I** provides conceptual and theoretical grounding by challenging state-centric and universalist models. These chapters offer intellectual depth through African-centred theories of peacebuilding, including transformative peace education, post-colonial critiques, and context-specific approaches. Together, they encourage

> a critical epistemological shift that recognises indigenous philosophies, grassroots ethics, and non-Western modalities of peace as both valid and essential.

Chapter 2 on Context-Sensitive Peacebuilding Approaches for Conflict Zones in the Global South argues that peacebuilding efforts are more effective and sustainable when they involve active consultations with local actors and leaders who understand the conflict context, rather than relying on externally imposed Western liberal approaches. It critiques liberal peacebuilding for often failing to address the root causes of conflict in the Global South because of its generic, one-size-fits-all methods that overlook local specifics. Such approaches can be seen as "alien" and unsustainable. The chapter recommends integrating local insights with liberal methods and involving impartial third parties to foster inclusive and effective peacebuilding processes. It emphasises the importance of conflict sensitivity for successful interventions.

> **Part II** expands the lens of peacebuilding to consider how gender, migration governance, and racialised violence shape agency at the local level. The chapters in this section explore the African Union's frameworks for women in peace processes, the role of municipalities in global migration regimes, and how community-level responses to racial tensions create or disrupt peace. This section deepens understanding of inclusion - not just as a normative goal, but as a political and practical process grounded in lived realities.

Chapter 3 examines the African Union-led efforts to foster women as Actors in local peacebuilding and addresses the persistent issue of women's underrepresentation in peacebuilding, attributing this to restrictive socio-cultural norms and the undervaluing of women's informal and local contributions. The chapter highlights the discrepancy between the significant roles which women play in peacebuilding and their minimal formal participation in peace processes. It examines various frameworks and organisational efforts, particularly those led by the African Union (AU), aimed

at increasing women's involvement in peacebuilding across Africa. Despite numerous initiatives and instruments designed to promote women's participation, the chapter finds that these efforts have not yielded proportional results, with women still significantly underrepresented in peacebuilding roles. Using qualitative research and a descriptive analytical approach, the chapter argues for the need for more effective measures to integrate women as key actors in local peacebuilding efforts. It emphasises the importance of amplifying the roles of local and often overlooked actors in peacebuilding and contributes to the broader discussion on enhancing women's participation in these processes.

Chapter 4 explores Local Governments as Key Actors in Global Migration Governance. It examines the impact of pandemics on migration governance, highlighting the growing role of local governments in managing displacement. The pandemic has led to unilateral migration and border policies, emphasising the need for global cooperation. The chapter identifies two key changes: the intensification of challenges for local governments and shifts in global migration governance spaces. It argues that local governments, because of their proximity to affected populations, are crucial in addressing displacement but face challenges like limited resources. The chapter concludes that a multi-level, multi-stakeholder approach is essential for effective migration governance.

Chapter 5 explores the racial tensions between Zulus and Indians that resurfaced during the July 2021 unrest in Phoenix, South Africa, where 33 black individuals were killed by violent Indian mobs. While previous studies have investigated the causes of the unrest, this chapter focuses specifically on the racial dynamics between these groups. Utilising secondary data from journals, media reports, and the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) report, the chapter argues that the violence in Phoenix is rooted in long-standing, unresolved racial tensions. Employing the concepts of othering and Conflict Theory, the chapter posits that the conflict reflects entrenched structural and cultural violence stemming from decades of racial discord. Despite South Africa's image as a "rainbow nation," the

study reveals persistent and overlooked racial tensions. It offers recommendations to address these issues and promote unity and social cohesion, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on race relations, conflict, and peacebuilding.

> **Part III** critically examines how national and international security frameworks intersect with community protection, drawing on examples from South Sudan, Nigeria, and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in Somalia. It provides grounded insights into the limits of security sector reform (SSR), the politics of arming communities, and the multi-actor complexity of conflict environments. These chapters highlight the uneven impacts of formal security structures and illustrate how local actors navigate, challenge, and repurpose them.

Chapter 6 explores how current international SSR interventions in South Sudan perpetuate security disparities and contribute to ongoing displacement. The chapter critiques the neoliberal reinforcements of SSR policies, which are often state-centric, top-down, and technocratic. These approaches, the chapter argues, fail to adequately address the complex political and socio-economic realities affecting displaced populations. By focusing on South Sudan, the chapter highlights how these SSR interventions have facilitated identity securitisation and exacerbated local security issues. The bureaucratic and institutional nature of these interventions has led to alternative forms of violence, including disputes over housing, land, and property, politicised returns, and militia-induced displacement. The chapter calls for a shift away from linear and depoliticised views of security and violence. It recommends adopting approaches that are informed by local understandings and inclusive of the rights and needs of displaced populations. These recommendations aim to provide more effective and equitable solutions for addressing the security and protection concerns of refugees and displaced persons.

Chapter 7 explores the complex dynamics of conflict in Somalia from 2007 to 2017, focusing on the AMISOM. It argues that understanding conflict requires analysing the interplay

between local and international actors, including the AU, Somali government, Islamist insurgencies, and civilians. The chapter critiques international liberal interventionism for overlooking local drivers of conflict and emphasises the limitations of AU-led missions because of their state-centric approach. Through a case study of AMISOM, it highlights how interventions, while aiming to stabilise Somalia, often exacerbated existing tensions and failed to address underlying socio-political drivers.

Chapter 8 examines the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and its significant role in countering Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, emphasising its importance for local security. The CJTF, in collaboration with state security forces, has made crucial contributions to stabilising Borno State despite facing substantial domestic challenges. The chapter outlines both the strengths and challenges of the CJTF and its impact on localities. It draws from fieldwork and literature on local security and unconventional strategies, providing insights into how local groups can effectively operate in conflict zones.

> **Part IV** engages with emerging frontiers of peacebuilding: climate security, borderland governance, and the blue economy. Whether addressing cross-border conflict in the Horn of Africa, farmer-herder clashes in Angola, or port resilience along Africa's coasts, these chapters illustrate the spatial and ecological dimensions of peace. The section reveals how environmental pressures, economic marginalisation, and shifting livelihoods generate both vulnerabilities and opportunities for localised peacebuilding.

Chapter 9 explores peacebuilding in micro-level conflicts within the cross-border Omo-Turkana Corridor in the Horn of Africa, focusing on Ethiopia and Kenya. The region is ethnically diverse, with pastoralist communities experiencing conflicts driven by factors like seasonal migration, resource competition, cattle raiding, drought, and small arms proliferation. The study highlights that peacebuilding in this context is complex

and ongoing, requiring nuanced engagement. Current strategies are deemed ineffective, necessitating coherent planning, implementation, and evaluation, as well as strong collaboration between government and civil society for successful peacebuilding.

Chapter 10 examines conflicts amongst Gambo communal farmers in Angola, focusing on their impact on local communities and national economies. Utilising mixed methods, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups, the study identifies the causes and actors involved in these conflicts. It highlights how government policies related to land allocation and resource management contribute to tensions. Climate-related factors exacerbate these disputes, leading to significant socio-economic consequences. The research advocates for a holistic, community-specific approach to conflict resolution and resource management, emphasising the need for policies that address local needs and promote sustainability for achieving lasting peace and security.

Chapter 11 examines the role of the blue economy in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing economic performance, with a focus on Africa's ports. It discusses the significance of the blue economy for promoting sustainable growth and the challenges faced by African ports in implementing innovation policies like smart ports. The chapter outlines how African ports are central to the blue economy but face significant governance, institutional, and financial obstacles. It reviews Africa's stance on the blue economy, assessing whether the concept is being advanced or hindered within the continent's ports. The methodology includes a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis and comparative review of ports in developed countries, supplemented by interviews and meetings with experts and stakeholders in Egypt. The findings reveal substantial commercial potential for foreign investment in Africa's emerging smart port sector. However, the study highlights that technical and operational challenges must be addressed. For Africa to maintain its competitive edge, significant investments in technological, institutional, and human resources are necessary.

Conclusion

The role of local agency in peace and conflict is a critical factor in shaping effective and sustainable peacebuilding efforts. By integrating local perspectives and respecting local contexts, peacebuilding initiatives can enhance their legitimacy, effectiveness, and sustainability. The historical evolution of local agency, theoretical perspectives, and case studies provides valuable insights into how local agency can influence peace processes.

Addressing the challenges and seizing the opportunities associated with local agency requires a nuanced and balanced approach. By fostering local ownership, utilising local knowledge, and promoting inclusive processes, peacebuilding efforts can be more responsive to the needs of affected communities and contribute to lasting peace.

The exploration of local agency in peacebuilding highlights the importance of reconciling universal principles with local contexts. As the field of peacebuilding continues to evolve, it is essential to recognise and embrace the role of local agency in shaping effective and sustainable peace processes.

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Chapter 2

Context-Sensitive Peacebuilding Approaches for Conflict Zones in the Global South

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Abstract

The key argument advanced in this chapter is that peacebuilding approaches based on active consultations with local actors and leaders who have relevant information on the conflict context are usually more effective and sustainable than those imposed from above by exclusively external players. Western peacebuilding approaches predicated on the liberal methodology usually fail to successfully solve root causes of conflict in the Global South. Liberal approaches impose one-size-fits-all and universal templates crafted in the capitals of the Global North, and not grounded in relevant local contexts of the conflict situations in the Global South. Usually, liberal approaches to peacebuilding are "blind" to peculiarities in the causes of conflicts, actors involved, profile and dynamics of the conflict, its duration, intensity, and cultural issues involved. Besides, liberal approaches to peacebuilding usually lack buy-in from local stakeholders, as they are considered "alien". They become unsustainable in the end. In cases where communities are fragmented along ethnic and regional fault lines, it is recommended that impartial external third parties should collaborate with local actors to achieve inclusive and impartial peacebuilding processes and avoid abuse of peacebuilding programmes and processes by any of the stakeholders. The chapter advocates for the blending of relevant liberal peace approaches with viable local ideas, resources and processes to effectively

resolve conflicts and build sustainable peace in the Global South. It embraces conflict sensitivity as the basis for any intervention measures aimed at building sustainable peace.

Keywords: Peacebuilding; Hybridity; Context-sensitivity; Local actors; Liberal peace; Integration

Introduction

Since the inception of colonial rule, colonisers modified many or almost all traditional practices in Africa in order to suit the colonial system. This was undertaken in the social, political and economic spheres of African life. In extreme cases, traditional practices were obliterated, local actors completely sidelined, and new Western systems imposed in the name of international best practices (Ndlovu, 2022). Colonialism pervaded every facet of African life, be it agriculture, commerce, social practices like marrying, worshipping, singing, giving names to children, as well as conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes, amongst other things. In the peacebuilding fraternity specifically, the colonial settlers disregarded most, if not all, the mechanisms and processes that Africans used to resolve conflicts and reconcile divided communities. However, a few of the traditional approaches and local actors remained resilient in some communities and survived throughout the colonial era.

The guiding philosophical mindset by the settlers that led to the above changes was cosmopolitan; that is, what works in the West, works everywhere else (Zambakari, 2016). The cosmopolitan thinking was caused by misconceptions that everything in Africa before colonial rule was retrogressive, backwards, and at worst, evil and had to be changed. Based on this faulty thinking, the ethnic heterogeneity of Africa, including its diverse and rich culture, history and traditions, and astute local actors were, thus, overlooked. The tendency was to give wrong and universal prescriptions, for example, to conflict situations that needed case-by-case analysis and consultations with local players.

Shizha and Ndlovu (2022) note that the colonisation of Africa and subsequent imposition of a plethora of colonial policies led to the destruction of African indigenous knowledge systems (AIKS). As a result, liberal peacebuilding methodologies were imposed

throughout Africa and results were largely negative. It is for this reason that Mwangola (2015) suggests a paradigm shift from liberal peacebuilding approaches to those that are relevant to the local dynamics and cultural peculiarities. The case of military integration of ex-combatants in Zimbabwe, after independence, in 1980, into the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) is used to illustrate how peacebuilding interventions that are conflict "blind", hijacked by one actor, and not related to the conflict context exacerbate rather than mitigate conflict. The integration process was undertaken by the government of Zimbabwe (local actor). However, Zimbabwe relapsed into conflict just about a year into independence because the integration process was inadequate, partisan and implemented out of context. This chapter suggests that the integration process could have been undertaken differently in Zimbabwe to produce sustainable peace, security and stability within the security forces as one of the foundational pillars of sustainable peacebuilding.

There are six inter-linked sections in this chapter. The first one interrogates the concept of peacebuilding, while the second one examines the concept of hybridity regarding peacebuilding. The third section focuses on Theories of Change (TOC) reasoning which are relevant to this chapter's case study. In line with the case study used, the fourth section briefly interrogates the context or history of the relationship between the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) and the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) during the fifteen-year period of the liberation struggle until independence. These two (ZIPRA and ZANLA) were the main liberation armies that fought against the colonial system in Zimbabwe. The fifth section briefly details the design and implementation of military integration by the government of Zimbabwe. The sixth section is the suggested alternative intervention approach regarding military integration, built around context-specific issues and the philosophy of conflict sensitivity that could have made the exercise more inclusive, impartial, more acceptable, and a bedrock of other sustainable peacebuilding activities and processes in Zimbabwe. Methodologically, secondary sources relevant to the peacebuilding discourse were the main sources of information. Peacebuilding is an ever-expanding field fraught with many controversies on how to build sustainable peace, and consequently, literature abounds

by both academics and policymakers on topical and contemporary issues. Evidence from secondary sources was corroborated through a few semi-structured interviews with key informants.

Peacebuilding

The concept of peacebuilding was comprehensively defined in 1992 by the then United Nations Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali. He defined peacebuilding as any action meant to develop and support structures and institutions that would obviate the resumption of violence after parties to the conflict have stopped fighting (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). In most cases, violent conflict starts within five years after a ceasefire. Boutros-Ghali made it clear that military victory on its own does not guarantee post-conflict sustainable peace. The peacebuilding thrust, as enunciated by Boutros-Ghali, addresses more a multiplicity of socio-political and economic issues that could make divided and hostile communities unite, reconcile and live together peacefully. This calls for the transformation of hostile pre-conflict and during conflict relationships, attitudes, views, and perceptions to positive ones that foster peaceful co-existence.

The expansion in peacebuilding activities since the end of the Cold War has increased our conceptualisation of peace. According to Galtung (1989), there are two main versions of peace. These are negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace refers to the absence of physical or direct violence; that is, people should not be engaged in physical fighting using whatever weapons and methods. However, negative peace does not address some of the challenges that could have caused violence, for example, repression, inequalities, exclusion, injustice, and marginalisation of some groups of people in a community. Positive peace entails the absence of systemic or structural violence and extends beyond negative peace. Curtis and Dzinesa (2013), thus, equate positive peace to social justice. It has to be noted that peacebuilding is not only about securing ceasefires, signing high-level peace agreements between political elites and rolling out expensive peacekeeping missions (Ndlovu, 2022). Although these processes are important as a starting point, they are not an end in themselves. More importantly,

in achieving sustainable peacebuilding, as posited by Karbo (2008) is the restoration of broken or strained inter-personal and inter-community relationships, healing, and promoting reconciliation. Achieving what Karbo articulates demands some full understanding of what broke or strained relations in the first place before any intervention process is undertaken, and this means leaning more on local actors with knowledge of the history of the conflict. In relation to the above views, the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (2005) observes that most of the externally driven peacebuilding approaches fall short of achieving healing and reconciliation. Their aims and approaches remain at the level of achieving negative peace.

It is because of deficiencies in externally driven peacebuilding processes that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2012) argues for conflict-sensitive peacebuilding approaches that take due regard of the conflict context and incorporate local actors in the intervention process. In this way, the peacebuilding process can facilitate forgiveness and reconciliation, which are key processes of achieving sustainable peace. Ending physical violence is not an end in itself. It is important that peacebuilding addresses structural violence, and to do this successfully, parties intervening and driving the peacebuilding agenda should have adequate background knowledge of the conflict situation. Strongly arguing for local actors to take leading roles in peacebuilding processes is not to suggest that external actors should be totally relegated. They (external actors) play key roles in capacity-building of weak and/or collapsed local institutions as well as ensuring impartiality in the way in which programmes and processes are conducted.

Peacebuilding is not an event, but a multi-dimensional process meant to reduce the risk of lapse or relapse into violent conflict, at the same time addressing both the root causes and consequences of conflict in order to lay firm foundations for sustainable peace and development (UNICEF, 2016). Laying a firm foundation for sustainable peace profoundly depends on clear and sound conflict analysis as alluded to earlier. Haider (2014) explains conflict analysis as a systematic process of understanding in a holistic manner the history of the conflict, the parties involved in

it, their long-term and immediate relationships, their needs, fears, positions, and the duration, intensity, and dynamics of conflict.

Put differently, successful peacebuilding interventions need to factor in the issue of context as a starting point. As observed by Aubyn (2018), many peacebuilding initiatives in the Global South fail because they are, in most cases, spearheaded by international actors who lack the necessary local knowledge and lived experiences needed to fully address the complex and multi-dimensional issues that caused conflict in the first place. Curtis and Dzinesa (2013) propose that in order to curtail the above challenge in the peacebuilding discourse, especially concerning the Global South, there has to be interaction of local and global ideas, actors and practices.

Hybridity in Peacebuilding

Discussions in this chapter are broadly informed by the hybridity of peacebuilding conceptual framework together with the Theories of Change (TOC) reasoning that would be explained later in a different section. While liberal peace has failed in many instances globally to achieve sustainable peace and development mainly because of its standardised model that excludes local culture, resources and actors, local peacebuilding practices which are deemed best alternatives to liberal peacebuilding have a fair share of their loopholes. Although their consultative, culturally grounded and inclusive nature make them attractive, they are susceptible to power abuse, partiality, and at times, exclusion and inhuman practices (Mushtaq, 2018). Put differently, local peacebuilding processes can be hijacked and manipulated by predatory national elites for self-serving purposes of power consolidation, evading justice and other corrupt motives. National elites can mute the voices of other critical internal stakeholders and then masquerade as their spokespersons and legitimate representations, while in practice, they are not. This chapter argues for the utilisation of hybrid approaches that blend liberal peacebuilding prescripts with local peacebuilding practices and resources to attain sustainable peace.

As articulated by Uesugi *et al* (2021), the utility of the hybrid approach in peacebuilding is that it embraces different and relevant actors, worldviews and activities. Hybridity in

peacebuilding is a result of the frank acknowledgement and realisation that while local actors carry a more refined and up-to-date view of the context, making use of international capacities in resource mobilisation, oversight roles as impartial guarantors, and enabling them to appreciate the specific context can result in more informed, relevant, impartial, broad-based, inclusive and effective interventions. Uesugi *et al* (2021) elucidate that in simple terms, hybridity is all about mixing, interpreting and adapting in order to derive the best outcomes under specific contexts.

This explicitly means mixing and adapting perspectives and lived experiences of both local and external actors to create an opportunity for the emergence of new and more resilient social structures and systems that can strengthen conflict-affected communities. These lived experiences and perspectives from different actors can benefit and reinforce each other. It is assumed that the strengths of one peacebuilding approach can offset the deficiencies of the other, and vice versa. The symbiotic interaction between two different peacebuilding approaches can produce outcomes that best suit complex realities on the ground. It is for this reason that Brown (2018:12) suggests that effective peacebuilding in this contemporary world should be characterised by an "intersection between the local and global, the formal and the informal, as well as between the liberal and the illiberal".

Undeniably, Western thinking and philosophies have become so predominant in the world since the colonial era, and they remain so to date. The global perceptions are that there are universal and accepted templates of directing all issues and of solving challenges that confront human beings globally. As alluded to earlier, colonial rule brought with it cultural imperialism that uprooted and, in some places, transformed African culture and imposed European economic, political and social systems. In the peacebuilding fraternity, for example, colonisers imposed the liberal peacebuilding methodology in all their colonies. In describing the adverse effects of colonialism on African pre-colonial conflict resolution and peacebuilding approaches, Omeje (2008:88) says that "...the traditional African approach has been significantly battered, while some of the related methods have been displaced".

Most liberal peacebuilding approaches are imposed from above without any analysis of the conflict context peculiarities. In most cases, results are negative. In other words, the prescriptive liberal peacebuilding model created harm rather than good, as it exacerbated tensions and conflict. Interestingly, Aubyn (2018) opines that, in most cases, there is very little difference, if any, between what African scholars offer in the peacebuilding discourse from their counterparts in the West. They (African scholars) propose modified versions of liberal peace, and not something completely different. The reason could be that many African scholars' education is funded by Western organisations, and Western scholars train them. As a result, they try to fulfil what their funders want in most cases, and echo the ideas and voices of their "teachers". On the other hand, advocating for mechanisms that are completely different and divorced from liberal peace could have its own flaws in terms of justice delivery mechanisms in the aftermath of a conflict. Blending what is effective from retributive justice, which leans more on liberal peace, with what is relevant from restorative justice, which is informed by local peacebuilding practices, could suit complex realities on the ground.

Briefly, liberal peacebuilding is modelled around liberal democracy and market economies. It is based on the belief that democracies rarely fight each other. Amongst other things, liberal peacebuilding is predicated on the promotion of multi-party democratic elections, constitutionalism, rule of law, separation of powers, good governance, gender equality, economic reforms and privatisation (Aubyn, 2018). Curtis and Dzinesa (2013) question some of the reasoning, highlighting liberal peacebuilding. There are flaws in the belief that there are techniques and lessons that can be learnt and transferable from different parts of the world and superimposed on different contexts elsewhere. Herein lies one of the weaknesses of liberal peacebuilding; that is, the thinking that there are universal and one-size-fits-all peacebuilding models that can fit any context. The other flaw is the perception that issues that ignite and fuel conflict emanate from within communities, and that outsiders bring solutions. When outsiders complement insiders, they could provide vital sources of viable solutions that could help build sustainable peace.

Liberal peacebuilding tends to be prescriptive. It offers predetermined solutions to different conflict situations without first consulting the local actors involved in the conflict about the actual causes of the conflict and what they think could be the best and most effective intervention measures. Some of the prescriptions of liberal peace intensify inter-party rivalries, tensions and hostilities. For example, the issue of multi-party elections has proved divisive, especially in ethnically heterogeneous societies. Evidence abounds that before, during, and after elections, especially in Africa, many people are injured, and some die. Mwangola (2015) notes that multi-party elections in September 1992 in Angola intensified violent conflict and did not serve as the basis for reconciliation. The same is true of elections in Zimbabwe since independence in 1980. All its elections were marred by political violence and disputation since then (Ndlovu, 2021).

The argument advanced here is that before implementing any of the methods of liberal peacebuilding, first, there has to be contextual analysis to understand whether the method can create lasting peace or fuel conflict. This is possible if local voices are consulted and respected. Approaches that foster empathy, peaceful co-existence, inclusivity, justice, confidence, dialogue, co-operation, mutual trust and friendship should be prioritised over those that escalate divisions, mutual mistrust, suspicion, hatred, rivalry, hostility and violence. It is for this reason that Arthur *et al* (2015) challenge peace builders to constantly appeal to the principles of empathy, forgiveness, sharing, and reconciliation in the spirit of solving common problems for the common good. Embracing different worldviews, alternative voices and "others" is key in building durable peace.

Some of the drivers of conflict in local communities cannot be holistically resolved through liberal peace methods. For example, most conflicts in local communities in Zimbabwe and the Global South in general emanate from competition for grazing and farming lands, water sources for domestic animals and household uses. Conflicts also stem from accusations and suspicions of witchcraft and infidelity within households and across communities. Besides, domestic violence spurred by poverty and unequal access to incomes as well as succession disputes within the traditional

chieftaincy set up are some of the drivers of conflict in local communities. It is, therefore, unwise to appeal to the principles of rule of law, constitutionalism, multi-party elections and privatisation in a context where the causes of conflict are different and mainly social and need different solutions at micro levels. People in the Global South and Global North socialise differently and have different beliefs. They also operate under slightly different economic systems. So, one-size-fits-all peacebuilding processes would not be the best in such varying contexts.

Montanaro (2019) is of the view that any serious peacebuilding intervention should be preceded by clear conflict analysis so that the intervention process is conflict-sensitive and does not inadvertently compound conflict and do more harm. Every conflict is unique, and its resolution requires community and context-sensitive peacebuilding approaches, rather than top-down, prescriptive, exclusionary and universal approaches that are not informed by anything that is transpiring on the ground. Closely linked to Montanaro's view is that of O'Driscoll (2018), who argues that innovative and bottom–up peacebuilding approaches that are grounded in contextual realities are the best in addressing inequalities, marginalisation, mutual mistrusts, suspicions, rivalry and hostilities within communities. In this way, communities emerging from conflict can be able to achieve both negative peace and positive peace. However, it is important that there has to be rule of law in communities, transparency and accountability in the sharing of resources for people to live in harmony and peace. As suggested by Aubyn (2018), and especially regarding Africa, the above liberal peacebuilding prescripts should be implemented within the local communities' conception of peace, justice, and order that are rooted in local culture, history and traditions.

Theoretical Framing Relevant Specifically to Military Integration in Zimbabwe

The Theory of Change (TOC) provides an effective analytical framing specifically for the military integration of ex-fighters in Zimbabwe. TOC reasoning is part of liberal peacebuilding methodology, but in this case, it is adapted to suit the local

context. TOC reasoning emphasises the significance of context in peacebuilding. Omach (2013:96) adequately captures this point by acknowledging the fact that "each conflict is unique, and it is not possible to create a blueprint or model that fits all situations". In other words, TOC is about uniqueness rather than universality. TOC is not a theory per se, but a set of testable assumptions developed within a rich context of evidence meant to drive positive change in an intervention process. TOC asks that we identify initiatives that seek to induce positive change, i.e., those things that need to be performed in a particular context that will lead to the desired change that is sought. It seeks to explain why and how we think that certain actions will produce desired change in a given context. In its simplest form, a TOC can be expressed in the following form: "If we do X, Y and Z, it will lead to W or if we do X, it will lead to Y, which will lead to Z which might possibly lead to W" (Woodrow & Oatley, 2013:8). In the peacebuilding fraternity, TOC is about interventions that could produce stability and justice. TOC seek to come up with peacebuilding approaches that are transformative in nature. For example, transforming negative relationships, perceptions, attitudes, behaviours, views and opinions about the "other" into positive ones that foster peaceful co-existence, inclusivity, respect, mutual trust and friendship as well as forgiveness and reconciliation.

Framing peacebuilding approaches within TOC helps to obviate the temptation of imposing irrelevant theories designed for a specific context throughout different conflict contexts as if all conflicts worldwide are universal. Peacebuilding approaches that contribute to desired outcomes in one context may have a different effect in another setting (CARE, 2012). Peacebuilding practitioners should avoid the temptation of thinking that there is a basket out there full of theories where they just pick any theory and use to solve conflicts. TOC seek to debunk standardised approaches in peacebuilding. How change can be delivered in one context does not necessarily mean that it can be directly transferred to another different setting. Since TOC is specific, it helps in building an intervention strategy that is testable and based on assumptions. According to Stein and Valters (2012), assumptions are prerequisites for desired change. Nan (2010) corroborates Stein and Valters' view by stating that TOC helps

to avoid the implementation of many untested approaches, propositions, and programmes that donors and implementing partners roll out. Intervention initiatives not based on TOC risk being donor-focused rather than conflict-focused and sensitive. In the peacebuilding field, particularly, there is more research to obtain evidence during the whole design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of intervention programmes. It is more difficult to restore strained relations and to transform negative attitudes and behaviours into positive ones outside an inclusive dialogue process informed by conditions on the ground and local stakeholders.

TOC is the basis for conflict-sensitive programme design and implementation because it is evidence-based and has identifiable pathways. Embracing conflict sensitivity is meant to circumvent the risk of unwittingly fuelling conflict, and making sure that such risks, if they occur, are identified and mitigated (Montanaro, 2019). In simple terms, conflict-sensitive programming is meant to minimise negatives, and maximise positives in any intervention process. That can be undertaken effectively if the context is known, and it is locals who can provide a clear and relevant context or background. The role of evidence being to check and challenge assumptions as well as broadening intervention options relevant to the context (Vogel, 2012). As indicated in Figure 1, a TOC results chain links together causal pathways that indicate how desired change is to be achieved. Though a TOC map or pathways is represented diagrammatically, descriptive details are always added to clarify some issues and make readers understand some linkages and relationships.

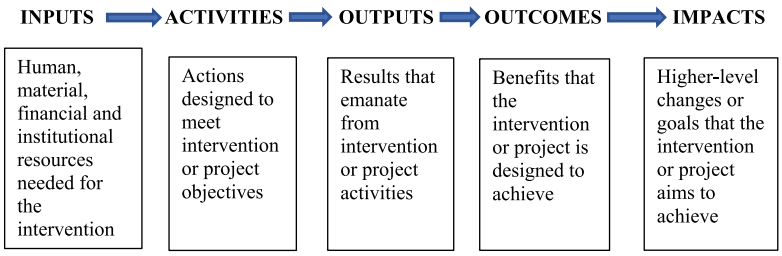


Figure 1: Theory of Change Results Chain
Source: Parsons *et al* (2013:8)

ZIPRA and ZANLA Relations: A Brief History

The liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, from the late 1960s up to 1979, was fought by ethnic and regionally based political and military formations that were usually competing and hostile to each other. On the political front was the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) with ZIPRA and ZANLA as their military wings respectively. ZAPU/ZIPRA mainly constituted of IsiNdebele-speaking people from Matabeleland and Midlands regions in the South-west of the country. ZANU/ZANLA was mainly made of IsiShona-speaking people from the East and the North-eastern parts of the country. Ethnic divisions became pronounced after the August 1963 split of ZANU from ZAPU (Ndlovu, 2021). From then onwards, ethnicity became politicised and manipulated by political leaders from both sides as a means of mobilising supporters and strategically positioning themselves to inherit the post-colonial State (Msindo, 2007). Even though ZANU/ZANLA and ZAPU/ZIPRA had a common foe in the form of the Rhodesian Front (RF) of the settler regime, their interactions during the liberation struggle were littered with scenes of division, animosity, rivalry and physical clashes, in some cases more than those of unity and co-operation.

Attempts at forging unity between both the political and military formations during the liberation struggle bore minimal results. ZIPRA and ZANLA combatants fought each other in the rear during training sessions. For example, there were bloody clashes between trainees aligned to ZANU and those aligned to ZAPU in Mgagao and Morogoro in July 1976 in Tanzania, where the two groups were undertaking joint trainings under the auspices of the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA) military outfit (Sithole, 1999; Alexander *et al,* 2000). ZIPA was an attempt to bring ZIPRA and ZANLA under one command and training. They also clashed in Mozambican military camps from where ZIPA operations were supposed to be launched (Nkomo, 1984; Bhebe, 1999 cited in Staffer, 2009; Alexander *et al,* 2000). ZIPA collapsed prematurely in 1976. Before ZIPA, there was the first attempt to bring ZANLA and ZIPRA under joint military command in 1967. This was the Joint Military Command (JMC) experiment.

It suffered a stillbirth as military leaders from both sides jostled to control and manipulate the envisaged military outfit in favour of each party.

ZANLA and ZIPRA guerrillas' physical clashes not only played out in the rear. They also clashed at the home front where operational zones overlapped, like in Filabusi, Matobo, Gwanda, Shurugwi, Mberengwa, Mwenezi, and Beitbridge, to name only but a few (ZAPU Department of Information and Publicity, 2012). They also engaged in derogatory songs, slogans, and malicious propaganda against each other in their operational zones. For example, ZIPRA guerrillas derogatorily labelled ZANLA guerrillas as *oPasi* from their popular slogan, "Down with….". They also claimed that ZANLA guerrillas were poorly trained, poorly armed, undisciplined, fond of coercing women and girls for sex, loved food and did little fighting against the RF (Dabengwa, 1995; Interview with Dumani, 2023). Of course, it is a fact that ZIPRA guerrillas were better trained and more formidably armed than their ZANLA counterparts. They had a number of specialised units, departments and even an air force towards the end of the liberation struggle (Brickhill, 1995).

On their part, ZANLA cadres claimed that ZAPU retained most of the ZIPRA cadres in the rear, in Zambia, until independence, in 1980. They alleged that that was in readiness to stage a military coup once ZANU took over political power through the ballot. These clashes, be they physical or verbal, were in no way motivated by differences in training, ideology or policy, because there was none. They resulted from politicised ethnicity (Ndlovu, 2021). Nevertheless, the goals of the liberation struggle were never in doubt (Msindo, 2007). There were instances where they (ZANLA and ZIPRA) operated together against the RF, especially in Mashonaland West, though the co-operation was ephemeral because of mutual mistrust, suspicion, and rivalry. Overall, when viewing the animosities between ZANLA and ZIPRA combatants during the liberation struggle and the period thereafter, Bhebe (1999:89) concludes that "these young men and women were trained to hate each other by their leaders, who wanted to justify the separate existence of their parties". The hatred and competition extended into the independence

period. On Independence Day, 18 April 1980, the choirs of the two military wings sought to outdo each other at Rufaro Stadium (venue of independence celebrations). They sang at the top of their voices in support of their respective parties and leaders (Nkomo, 1984).

The Integration Process and its Results

Military integration into the ZNA and other security sector organs followed a shambolic disarmament process. While still armed, ZANLA and ZIPRA ex-combatants were juxtaposed at various assembly points (APs) dotted across the country. The two former liberation armies clashed fiercely at Entumbane, Chitungwiza, Glenville, and Connemara APs (Jackson, 2011; Alao, 2012). When real military integration began, tensions were already very high. To begin with, many specialist ZIPRA units were disbanded, including its air force. Within integrated military units, the IsiShona language became the "official" language of instruction. Many ZIPRA ex-combatants were incensed by this and some of them left the ZNA (Interview with Mpofu and Bhebhe, 2023). Not only that, ZANLA liberation songs were sung within integrated military units and played on national radio and television stations at the expense of ZIPRA liberation songs.

Although a couple of ZIPRA ex-combatants were promoted within the ZNA, they could not reach the top echelons of the army and other security organs. Until November 2017 (when the long reign of Robert Mugabe was ended through a military coup), all Zimbabwe Defence Force (ZDF) commanders were ZANLA ex-combatants. General Philip Valerio Sibanda (ex-ZIPRA commander) took over as ZDF commander in November 2017. This was in spite of the fact that many ZIPRA cadres were better trained and more disciplined than their ZANLA counterparts. Although he is an ex-ZIPRA member by military training and operations during the liberation struggle, General Philip Valerio Sibanda is not Ndebele, but a Karanga like President Mnangagwa, and they hail from the same province of Midlands. That explains a lot about ethnic dynamics in Zimbabwe, especially regarding the governance architecture and the security sector establishment.

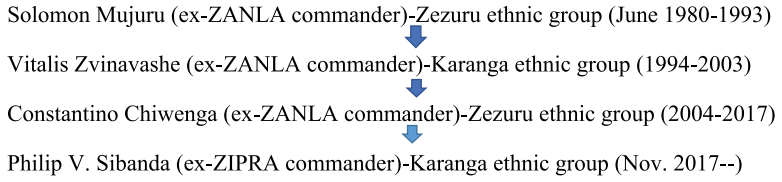


Figure 2: ZDF Commanders and their Respective Ethnic Groups from 1980 to Present
Source: Author

Figure 2 illustrates that promotions were ethnically skewed in favour of ZANLA over ZIPRA ex-combatants. This situation was made worse by the fact that after the so-called arms cache "discovery", two key former ZIPRA commanders (Masuku and Dabengwa) were removed from the Joint High Command (JHC) which was mandated to supervise the integration process (Nkomo, 1984; Alao, 2012). Many ZIPRA commanders were also removed from the ZNA on allegations that they were complicit in caching arms. Some of the purged and "forgotten" former members of the ZIPRA high command were part of the eighteen senior commanders of the liberation struggle who were belatedly recognised and given top of range vehicles and cash by President Mnangagwa on 15 July 2023, as part of honouring them for their sacrifices during the liberation struggle (Sunday News, July 2023). This was undertaken forty-three years after independence, a clear indication that the integration exercise was flawed to a large extent. With the removal of the top ZIPRA leaders from the ZNA, the ground was left open for the ZANLA ex-combatants to fill almost all the top leadership positions that were left vacant by the purged ZIPRA cadres (Ndlovu, 2021).

The net effects of all these developments in the integration process were retrogressive and impacted negatively on the peacebuilding process. Many ZIPRA ex-combatants deserted the ZNA. Some became "dissidents" and caused instability in their former operational zones. Ndlovu (2021) points out that some ex-ZIPRA cadres became "dissidents" because they were victims of different forms of physical and verbal abuse within the ZNA, some of which were life-threatening. In order to curb the

phenomenon of "dissidence", the government deployed a brigade (5th Brigade) into Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands regions. The 5th Brigade committed heinous crimes against civilians and their property that led to the death of about 20 000 civilians in the two regions (CCJP & LRF, 1997). Briefly, the partisan and ethnically skewed integration process exacerbated division, instability and perpetuated physical violence that left the infant post-colonial state torn apart along regional and Ndebele and Shona ethnic lines.

Divisions, suspicions, hostilities and rivalries between ZIPRA and ZANLA ex-combatants continue to date, though in subtle ways. In early 2025, efforts spearheaded by war veteran Blessed Geza, affectionately known as "Comrade Bombshell" to galvanise war veterans' support to oust current President, Emmerson Mnangagwa, from power did not gain much traction amongst ZIPRA ex-combatants. Most of them (ZIPRA ex-combatants) perceived the Geza-led manoeuvres as an exclusively ZANLA ex-combatants' affair meant to dupe them into supporting a cause that they would not benefit from (Interview with Bhebhe, 2025). In fact, Bhebhe (an ex-ZIPRA combatant) said that ZIPRA ex-combatants feared the repeat of the 2017 scenario where they were hoodwinked into supporting the "military assisted transition" which propelled Emmerson Mnangangwa into office yet ex-ZANLA combatants ripped most in terms of attaining high political positions after the "soft coup". It is evident that beneath the veneer of war veterans' national unity forged through the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association (ZNLWVA), where both ZANLA and ZIPRA ex-combatants belong, lingering residues of mistrust, hostility and suspicions between the former liberation fighters persist to date and they can be traced back to the partisan military integration process which was positively skewed towards ZANLA ex-combatants at the detriment of ex-ZIPRA ones.

Suggested Alternative Military Integration Approach

Given the context of hostile ZIPRA and ZANLA relations during and after the liberation struggle, the activities suggested

schematically overleaf could have had positive results that built unity, peace, tolerance, mutual trust and confidence. The issues that divided ZIPRA and ZANLA ex-combatants hinged on differences in attitudes, perceptions, feelings, relationships, and experiences. These issues cannot be expressed quantitatively. Consequently, the suggested pathways that lead to the desired change are not rigid. In other words, any of the inputs and activities on the left-hand side of Figure 3 can contribute in one way or the other to any of the outputs, outcomes, and impacts on the right-hand side, depending on how they are applied and how stakeholders to the integration process react to them. Elements of inputs suggested on the far left-hand side of Figure 3 depict programmes and processes that can be performed by both local and external implementing partners.

Inclusive, non-partisan, and participatory activities that involved local stakeholders (ZIPRA, ZANLA ex-combatants and local leaders) as suggested in the concluding paragraph would have assisted in breaking down stereotypes and prejudices, avoided discrimination and manipulation of the integration process in a bid to achieve political goals. Key amongst a myriad of processes that could help inculcate an inclusive and collaborative mind set amongst ZIPRA and ZANLA ex-combatants would have been the holding of reconciliation, peacebuilding and nation-building workshops at APs before the integration process, and then later, within integrated security sectors, within and across political parties. That could have helped in transforming the mindset of violence, mutual fear, mistrust, rivalry, suspicion, bitterness, and hostility built over the years since the late 1960s into that of mutual tolerance, trust, co-operation, and peaceful co-existence. As indicated by Bhebe (1999) earlier in the chapter, ZIPRA and ZANLA cadres were taught to hate and despise each other by their respective political parties. Conversely, the same political parties could have played key roles through inclusive and participatory peacebuilding processes in reversing that mentality if they were helped by impartial third parties as guarantors of the integration process.

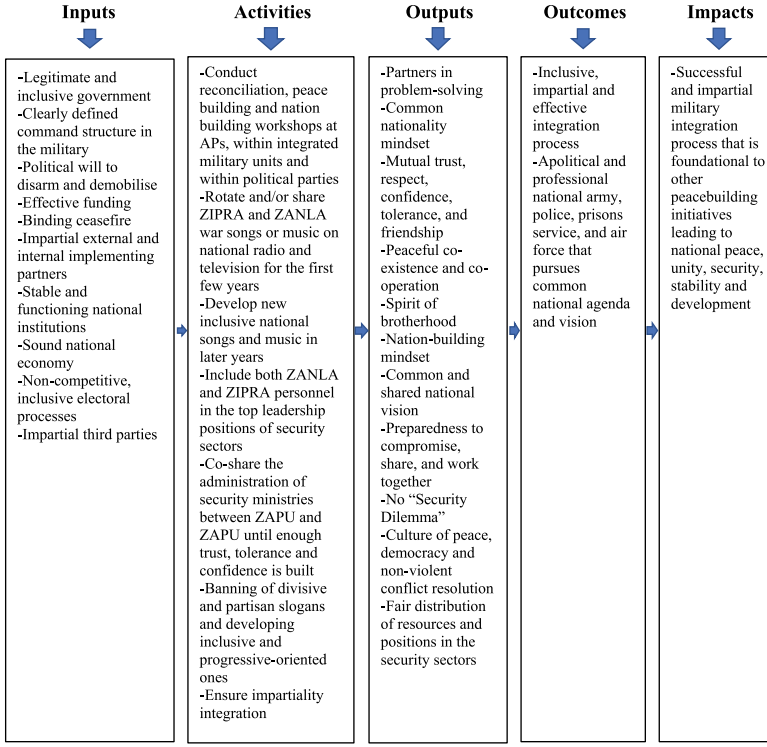


Figure 3: TOC embedded Interventions in the Context of Integration in Zimbabwe

Conclusion

Any intervention programme and process not informed by relevant contextual factors is bound to be ineffectual and not address the critical issues at stake. Local ownership and leadership of peacebuilding programmes and processes is vital in bringing up relevant, sustainable, and effective solutions that have buy-in from locals. Informed by the concept of hybridity and TOC reasoning, caution has to be taken to avoid romanticising local voices and actors in resolving conflicts and building peace without looking at the context and political dynamics at play. In the context of military integration in Zimbabwe, local actors and leaders failed to conduct the process impartially and effectively. This indicates that local ownership and leadership of

peacebuilding programmes and processes is not an end in itself. Left alone (local actors and leaders) to build peace, and in a polarised and hostile environment with politicised ethnicity, they compete, are partial, manipulate and weaponise peacebuilding processes. As shown by the poor military integration process that was conducted in a context of polarised, competing and hostile ethnic and regionally based political and military formations, local actors alone failed to design and implement adequate and impartial integration programmes and processes. For example, after gaining political power in 1980, ZANU-PF manipulated and weaponised the integration process through partisan and politicised programmes that marginalised ZIPRA ex-combatants, thereby escalating rather than abating mistrust, hatred, suspicion, rivalry and physical violence (Ndlovu, 2021). Besides their roles of securing adequate funding for peacebuilding programmes and processes, external partners or impartial third parties, in a context of ethnic cleavages, should work together with local stakeholders in the design and implementation of military integration programmes to guard against their manipulation and weaponisation by one party against another or others. Left alone, local actors can at times exacerbate rather than mitigate conflict and divisions.

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Part II

Gender, Local Governance, and Inclusive Agency

Chapter 3

African Union-led Efforts at Fostering Women as Actors in Local Peacebuilding

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Abstract

This chapter examines the different frameworks that have been instituted to foster increased women's participation in peacebuilding in Africa. It explores organisational attempts to engender women in peacebuilding by looking at African Union-led efforts at increasing women in peacebuilding. Considering the challenges that women face in local peacebuilding, the chapter also investigates what the African Union has undertaken to mainstream women as actors in local peacebuilding. Using a qualitative methodology and a descriptive analytical framework, the chapter finds that there have been numerous frameworks and instruments put in place by the African Union to foster increased participation of women in peacebuilding. However, these instruments have not translated into commensurate results, as women are still underrepresented in peacebuilding and, even more so, ignored in local peacebuilding. It recommends that targeted efforts need to be exerted to engender women as actors in local peacebuilding in Africa. The chapter contributes to studies geared towards amplifying local and ignored actors in peacebuilding.

Keywords: Africa, African Union, local peacebuilding, representation, women

Introduction

Women have often been underrepresented in peace processes such that they are not visible in peacebuilding. Different factors have been cited for women's underrepresentation, ranging from restrictive socio-cultural norms to systemic and institutional discrimination (Garba, 2016; Scanlon 2016; Olaitan 2020). These factors are often highlighted as the reasons for the low participation of women in peacebuilding on the African continent. However, the low participation of women as actors in peacebuilding is at the intersection of the dichotomy between formal and local peacebuilding. This dichotomy allows us to understand the importance of the local in broader peacebuilding in Africa. Formal peacebuilding is top-down, institutionalised peace processes coordinated by international or regional organisations like the United Nations (UN) or African Union (AU). It includes processes like peace operations, special envoys, mediation, etc. Apart from being top-down and reliant on the trickle-down principle, they feature fewer women. For instance, the number of women in peace support operations in Africa is less than 15% (UN, 2025). Hence, the continued underrepresentation of women in formal processes has created new interest in what is known as local peacebuilding or, alternatively, informal peacebuilding.

Because of their continued underrepresentation in formal peace processes, women have found solace in largely participating in the local space of peacebuilding. Although their participation can be attributed to the realm of the local, this is limited and does not gain much visibility in the broader peacebuilding sphere. While we can appraise the increased participation of women in informal peace processes, there is a need to understand the challenges that women face within this realm. Compared to the formal space where there are institutional mechanisms to foster the women, peace, and security agenda, which focuses on engendering women's participation in peace and security, the local realm lacks institutional recognition and support (Scanlon, 2016). This lack can be attributed to what is termed the underreporting of women's contribution to peacebuilding largely because of their participation in the informal space. To decipher how we can foster the increased participation of women in local peacebuilding, we must begin to interrogate the institutional mechanisms that are in

place to mainstream the efforts of women in local peacebuilding. Specifically, there is a need to ask what the AU and its peace and security architecture are doing to increase the visibility of women in local peacebuilding. Mainstreaming the voices of local women and their informal peace processes is of utmost importance to ensure a holistic and inclusive peace and security architecture in Africa.

Therefore, this chapter examines frameworks that have been instituted to foster increased women's participation in peacebuilding in Africa. It explores organisational attempts at engendering women in peacebuilding by looking at AU-led efforts at increasing the number of women in peacebuilding. The chapter engages the effectiveness of these frameworks and the extent to which they have been able to engender women as actors in local peacebuilding. The chapter is divided into five sections; section one provides an understanding of local peacebuilding by delving into the dichotomy between formal and local peacebuilding. Section two highlights that the emergence of local peacebuilding has provided a space for women to actively engage in peace efforts. However, because of the limited popularity of local peacebuilding, women's contributions are underreported. This underreporting creates a problem such that women are seen as not participating in peacebuilding and are not recognised as actors in peacebuilding. The chapter moves to establishing the different frameworks put in place by the AU to foster women as actors in peacebuilding. Section four examines the effectiveness of the frameworks by investigating whether they have been able to foster women as actors in peacebuilding. In discussing how effective these frameworks are, the discussion was divided into two: status of women in local peace support operations and women's inclusion in formal peace processes after their efforts in establishing local peace. The final section argues that apart from the ineffectiveness of these instruments to foster women as actors, certain restrictive socio-cultural norms are also responsible for women's underrepresentation in peacebuilding.

Methodology

The chapter adopts a qualitative methodology in its examination of frameworks put in place by the AU to foster the increased

participation of women in peacebuilding. It employs secondary data extracted from the website of the AU on the participation of women in peacebuilding and the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. It consolidates this with secondary literature written on women, peace, and security in Africa. Using a descriptive analytical framework, the chapter highlights relevant frameworks to engender women's participation in peacebuilding and the effectiveness of these instruments.

Theoretical Framework

To guide the analysis on women's participation in peacebuilding and the AU's role in engendering women as peace actors, this chapter employs the radical feminist theory of peace and security and feminist institutionalism theory. The radical feminist theory helps to understand why women are underrepresented in peace and security, while the feminist institutionalism theory provides insights on AU policy outputs to ensure women's participation in peacebuilding.

Radical feminism in peace and security questions the root causes of gender inequality by attributing women's subordination to ingrained societal structures and patriarchal institutions (see El-Bushra, 2007). It does this while calling for a gendered understanding of violence, patriarchy, and militarism; the inclusion of women's voices; and redefining peace and security, amongst other things (Willet, 2010). Olaitan (2023a) argues that the increased participation of women as participants in peace and security is central to the radical feminist theory of peacebuilding, which is primarily concerned with the emancipation of women from the secondary or inferior status that has been ascribed to them in society. The theory establishes that the genesis of acknowledging women as actors in peacebuilding must start with understanding how war affects women, with women being adjudged to be one of the most affected groups during war, along with the aged, children, and persons with disabilities (Scanlon, 2016). It fosters the rethinking of the agency of women during war and peace processes such that their multiple agencies as victims as well as actors are embraced. For this chapter, this theory

provides an understanding of why women are underrepresented in peacebuilding and justifies their participation in peacebuilding.

Feminist institutionalism posits that all institutions are gendered, implying that the constructs of masculinity and femininity are interwoven in the logic of political institutions (Krook & Mackay, 2011:6). It explains the gendered nature of institutional outputs, the interactions between institutions and actors, and the experiences of men and women within these institutions (Thomson, 2018). It facilitates a gendered comprehension of the interactions between formal and informal politics. For this chapter, this theory enables us to understand how the AU grapples with its policy framework to balance the gendered nature of formal and informal peacebuilding. Noting that the nuance between formal and local peacebuilding requires tailored policies to address their intricacies, it exposes the process involved in developing these outputs.

Understanding Local Peacebuilding

Local peacebuilding is the peacebuilding in communities and districts, the one that directly affects people. It addresses the root causes of conflict and tries to transform the conflicts by changing the fundamental parameters of how the society functions (UN, 2022:8). It is described as efforts at the sub-national level or as actions that engage local civil society. The dichotomy between formal and informal peacebuilding establishes a proper understanding of local peacebuilding. Lederach (1997) explains that this dichotomy is closely linked to liberal peace and the approaches to peacebuilding. Liberal peace delves into the nature of the process, while the latter discusses how the processes are implemented. It is the differentiation between liberal peace approaches and alternative approaches that has provided a clearer understanding of local peacebuilding.

Formal peace processes are the collective peacebuilding instruments used to institute liberalised peace, such as peacekeeping, peacemaking, disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR). These instruments are embedded in the liberal idea of building peace and usually adopted to propagate the liberal idea. Richmond (2004:110) states that the "Western

international community thinks of peace as an achievable ideal form, the result of top-down and bottom-up actions that rest on liberal social, political, and economic regimes, structures, and norms". Peace processes used by the UN, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union, and other established organisations usually espouse these liberal ideals even though the aim is achieving peace. Formal peace processes, such as peacekeeping, peacemaking, DDR, elections, and instituting democracies, became a standardised framework for peacebuilding following what Kahler (2009) called the New York Consensus. This consensus has, over the years, informed how peacebuilding activities are carried out around the world, with a focus on creating multiparty democracies with market economies, strong civil societies, and secular authority, which are all based on Western liberal values and practices (Newman, 2009:12).

After observing what he called the UN post-settlement peacebuilding standard operating procedure, Ramsbotham (2000:170) asserts that formal peacebuilding usually takes on four interdependent dimensions: i) "military and security; ii) politico-constitutional; iii) socio-economic; and iv) psycho-social". This peacebuilding process has taken on a compact front that espouses the universal and hegemonic character of the liberal ideology. While this is not necessarily a bad thing, it is limited in its conception of what peace is and how it is achieved. The peace processes in and of themselves are meant to achieve sustainable peace, but they have been corrupted to spread liberal ideals that are sometimes antithetical to peace. The strong influence of the developed economies that propagate these instruments means that they become easily identified as formal peace processes with continuous replication across conflict-afflicted zones, becoming the constitution for building peace around the world. This hegemony means that other forms of instituting peace will encounter problems when being used to achieve the same goal, as they are perceived as being insufficient and unconventional. Mac Ginty (2010:403) contends that "hegemonic ambitions of liberal peace mean that it attempts, often successfully, to minimize the space for alternative versions of peace and it succeeds in promoting the perception that locally

inspired peace processes that do not use the approved models of the global North are somehow illiberal and illegitimate."

Local peacebuilding, unlike formal peace processes, is not widely recognised and standardised because of its context-specific nature. They are mostly based on local and indigenous models of building peace and are usually practiced on a small scale. It is difficult to have an organised form of informal peace processes, as they are dependent on the culture and practice of a community or society. Landon (2017) adds that local peacebuilding is mostly concerned with spotlighting the effort and voices of those on the frontlines of peacebuilding and expanding notions of ownership by enabling local participation in processes that engender peace in their communities.

Scholars such as Richmond (2004), Mac Ginty (2010), and Cravo (2017), while critiquing the formal peace processes for having failed in achieving their goal, call for a hybridisation of formal and local processes. This is laudable, but without the constant propagation of the need to recognise local forms of building peace, formal peace processes will continue to be regarded as the only acceptable forms of peacebuilding. Mac Ginty (2010:402) asserts that "local forms of dispute resolution and reconciliation that draw on traditional, indigenous, or customary norms and practices exist in many societies." This renewed attention to alternative forms of instituting peace enabled further research into the field of local peacebuilding. With the dichotomy between formal and local peacebuilding, the question remains, what is the status of women in local peacebuilding?

Women as Actors in Local Peacebuilding

The dichotomy between formal and local peacebuilding led to calls for the adoption of local peacebuilding. Importantly, it created another opportunity for women to actively contribute to enforcing peace in their communities. Hence, the emergence of local peacebuilding provided a space for women to actively engage in peace efforts (Olaitan, 2020). However, their efforts at instituting peace are grossly underreported, which further deepens the representation of women as actors in peacebuilding (Adeogun & Muthuki, 2018).

The under-reporting of women in peacebuilding arose primarily from the division between formal and informal peace processes. This division addresses the growing popularity of the liberal peace used by vast international organisations in peacebuilding. This popularity has contributed immensely to what constitutes peace processes and what is generally acceptable as peacebuilding. Its growing popularity and acceptability are not because of its success but a function of the ideology behind it. Until recently, peace processes were only known within the context of the widely used collective security instruments of the UN, but now alternative forms of peacebuilding are being recognised. These alternative forms of instituting peace have always existed, and traditional communities have historically used these alternatives because of their nature of being context-specific (Olaitan, 2020). These processes are rooted in the customs, traditions, and norms of the specific community, making them context-specific, and are not recognised by the international system. Thus, these alternative forms lack the social capital needed to be inducted into the hall of formal peace processes. Some of the major reasons for this are the specificity of these processes, as they are most times only used within a community. These processes are not standardised, so they are difficult to replicate. On the other hand, formal processes are those that are carried out in official capacities by governments, international organisations, the military, such as negotiation, mediation, peace agreements, peacekeeping, etc. They are usually top-down approaches to building peace, which are often reflective of mainstream peacebuilding. Formal peacebuilding is dominated by men (almost all mediators, negotiators, and peacekeepers are men), and women continue to be excluded from formal peacebuilding.

The continued marginalisation of women in formal peace processes, along with the dichotomy between formal and informal peace processes, contributes to the underreporting of women's contribution to peacebuilding. With little or no chance of debuting into formal processes, women engage largely in the informal aspects of peacebuilding. Alaga (2010:5) argues that given their lack of presence in the formal political realm, the grassroots community-level engagement became the main outlet for women's peace activism. Adeogun and Muthuki (2018:85)

write that in South Sudan, women were largely excluded from the strategic peacebuilding plan; "however, they used their influence by adopting a bottom-up approach and were involved in peacebuilding at the grassroot level". Scanlon (2016) asserts that the under-reporting of women in peacebuilding is a function of their widespread involvement in informal reconciliation rather than in formal processes. Women's efforts towards fostering and building peace in their communities have often been ignored and remained underrepresented. The UN (2000:74) notes that even if women leaders and organisations are active in track-two mechanisms and civil society forums, these mechanisms do not necessarily find their way into the formal peace processes. Therefore, their involvement is mostly not reflected in mainstream peacebuilding, which makes women's contributions to maintaining peace in their communities invisible to international peace organisations. Jordan (2003) argues that women who engage in peacebuilding work are rarely accorded the same recognition as the men. Alaga (2010:3) asserts that "women's painstaking peacebuilding work on the ground has not been institutionalized and rarely influences national and global policies on war and peace. Their knowledge, ideas, and experiences remain at best marginalized and at worst invisible."

Therefore, the problem is not that women are not involved in peacebuilding, but that the work that they perform in their communities is not recognised. The argument here is that women are involved in peacebuilding work; the problem lies with the recognition of the work that they are performing to engender peace in their various communities. Thus, the subtle discrimination against local peacebuilding explains the non-recognition of informal methods that African women are using to foster peace. This could also be ascribed to the historical use of the top-down approach to foster peace by the UN, which, most of the time, ignores indigenous practices that are mostly grassroots oriented. Autesserre (2014) notes that the UN peace operations resist adaptations to local, cultural differentiation and rely on doctrine and organisational templates. These templates are often replicated in different conflict communities under the project of rebuilding peace without consideration for local practices and specificity of context. This problem concedes to

the long overdue argument about the credence usually given to Western-centric approaches to peacebuilding while indigenous processes are not respected; however, this is not always the case. UN missions in various countries promote the idea of local ownership and consider the value of the indigenous systems of conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the communities that they work in. This is important, as the contributions that women make in peacebuilding are often informed by traditional forms of ensuring peace and are not represented in formal peacebuilding.

African Union and Fostering Women as Actors

The African Union is the apex organ that coordinates the intergovernmental affairs of African states. It assumed this role following the rebranding of the defunct Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the early 2000s. With the establishment of the AU, a broader responsibility was placed on its shoulders in terms of regional peace and security because of the considerable change in the conflict climate in Africa. Lisk (2012:1) argues that "the transition from OAU to the AU was clearly intended to transform the institutional framework to realize the Pan-African vision from what some critics regarded as a mere talking shop into an action-oriented forum."

The metamorphosis of the AU in 2000 coincided with the passing of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The WPS agenda facilitates increased women's participation in peace processes and promotes a gendered perspective in peace and security. The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) was established to ensure adequate stability and security in Africa. Specifically, it was created to address the many peace and security challenges that the continent faces and to proffer African solutions to African problems (Lisk, 2012:2). The new APSA took on a different structure than its predecessor and is built on two pillars: the common "African defence and security policy" and the "Peace and Security Council" (PSC). Juma (2005:3) notes that the council is a standing decision-making organ responsible for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts, including post-conflict reconstruction. Specifically, the PSC was created to promote

and implement peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction activities. The AU (2015) asserts that the PSC has three branches to carry out these tasks: the Panel of the Wise, the Continental Early Warning System, and the African Standby Force. These three branches and the Peace Fund that finances the missions and activities related to peace and security and the regional mechanisms, which are the regional economic communities for conflict prevention, management, and resolution, make up the APSA. Hence, the APSA is the organ of the AU that is saddled with the responsibility of maintaining peace and security in Africa. Each organ of the APSA has specific functions that help with the larger aim of ensuring regional peace and security.

Juma (2005:3) asserts that the AU plays a central role in the promotion of gender equality and gender justice in post-conflict societies according to its mandate in article 5(2) of the AU Constitutive Act. It adopted peace and security and gender equality as part of its social transformation agenda and has shown its commitment by creating various structures and adopting legal instruments to push its agenda (Hendricks, 2017). The AU's and the APSA's first step towards ensuring women's representation and participation in peacebuilding was the integration of the UNSCR 1325 into the AU's gender-related frameworks (Hendricks, 2017). This was undertaken to increase women's presence in peace and security, which was followed by the appointment of a special envoy on women in peace and security.

In 2003, the African Union adopted the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa. The Protocol is an important instrument that calls for increased women's participation in peacebuilding. Article 10(1) of the Protocol establishes that "women shall have the right to peaceful existence and the right to participate in the promotion of maintenance of peace." Article 10(2) further provides that "states shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the increased participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding." It also gives African women the chance to be protected from human rights abuses that affect them while they are troops, civilians, or refugees during armed conflicts. Additionally, the Protocol affirms the right of women to peace

and urges countries to guarantee that women are included in all facets of post-conflict rebuilding and rehabilitation planning, formulation, and implementation.

Subsequent efforts by the AU were the solemn declaration of gender equality in 2004, which noted the importance of implementing UNSCR 1325; the appointment of women as special envoys and special representatives of the AU; the framework for post-conflict reconstruction and development in 2006; and the AU gender policy in 2008 (AU, 2016:7). The AU Gender Architecture enshrined in the African Union (2009) included legal instruments and policies that tackle the subject of WPS. This has translated into an increase in the number of women in senior-level positions within the AU, the nomination of special representatives in countries in conflict or post-conflict, and women mediators and special envoys (AU, 2016:8). In 2014, the Gender, Peace, and Security Programme was launched to serve as a continental framework for the AU and the Regional Economic Communities towards the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and its sister resolutions on WPS (Hendricks, 2017:81).

In 2014, Dr Dlamini-Zuma (the first female chairperson of the AU Commission) appointed Ms Benita Diop, the president and "founder of the Femmes Africa Solidarite", as special envoy on WPS with a specific mandate "to ensure that the voices of women and the vulnerable are heard more clearly in peacebuilding and conflict resolution" (AU, 2016:7). Ms Diop stated upon her appointment that her work would be geared towards galvanising actions to bring women's voices, experiences, and expertise to the table of peace processes with the vision to silence the guns (AUC, 2015:11–12). The special envoy and her team have been on a mission to conflict and post-conflict countries to advocate for women's inclusion in peace processes and to initiate networks and trainings towards this purpose. Some examples are "the Network of Reporters on WPS, the African Women's Mediator's Network, and the training of women mediators" (Hendricks, 2017:82). The PSC enjoined its member states to adopt a National Action Plan for the implementation of the WPS Agenda; as of 2023, 36 African countries have adopted the plan. In a bid to raise awareness concerning the gender perspective on war and peace

and particularly the inclusion of women in peace processes, the AU declared 2010–2020 the African Women's Decade (AU, 2016).

APSA launched the Gender, Peace, and Security Programme (2015–2020) that aims to develop "effective strategies for gender mainstreaming in peace and security" and to consider diverse gender experiences (men and women) and potentialities in building peaceful and sustainable societies (AU, 2016:8). The programme focuses on gender mainstreaming in peace and security and aids the facilitation of dialogue around women's effective participation in peace and security. Its aims are: Mainstreaming gender in all areas of peace and security, including post-conflict and reconstruction, through collaboration with regional economic communities and regional civil society platforms to develop and implement continental and regional strategies for the participation of women in peace and security (AU, 2016:8).

The main components of the programme are

- "Enhancing the capacities of African institutions working in the areas of peace and security and human rights to mainstream gender into the Continental Peace and Security Agenda.
- Strengthening partnerships and promoting research and dialogue on gender, peace, and security.
- Strengthening the role of women in peace and security in Africa; and
- Preventing and responding to women's, men's, and children's vulnerabilities in times of conflict and post-conflict situations and ending impunity" (Hendricks, 2017:83).

Some of the achievements of the AU in the implementation of the WPS agenda within its structure, as contained in the progress report of AU implementation of the WPS agenda, are

- One female as a special envoy on WPS.
- Three of the five members constituting its mediators (Panel of the Wise) are women.
- Through the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre and the Pan-Africa Centre on Gender and Development, the Office of the Special Envoy has trained 35 women leaders in electoral observation and dispute mediation in 2015.

- The African Standby Capacity launched its Roster to facilitate the identification, recruitment, and training of civilian experts in peacebuilding. A pledge was made to have 50% women's representation in the roster selection guidelines in 2015.
- Holding seven annual open sessions of the PSC on women in armed conflict or UNSCR 1325 since 2010 (extracted from AU report on implementation of the WPS agenda 2016:35).

Additionally, the African Union has taken steps to increase women's participation in peace support operations in line with the WPS agenda of the UN. For instance, "the AU Commission Review, Implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in Africa, the Continental Results Framework: Monitoring and Reporting on the Implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in Africa (2018–2028), the review Women, Peace, and Security – Implementing the Maputo Protocol in Kumalo and Sigworth (2016), and the 10-year Review of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda of the Amani Africa (2020)." Notably, the Continental Results Framework (CRF) was created to monitor and evaluate how the WPS Agenda is being implemented. The CRF refers to UNSCR 1325 as well as a sizeable collection of documents and other laws. By requiring member states to monitor and report on WPS commitments in a systematic and ongoing manner, the CRF seeks to hasten their fulfilment. Beyond formal peacebuilding, the AU has done its bit to facilitate women's participation in local peacebuilding. AU (2015:7) states that the "2016–2020 APSA roadmap made gender mainstreaming a priority, with the AU PSC organizing an open session on the role of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In March 2017, the AU PSC created the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa). FemWise-Africa is aimed at strengthening the role of women in conflict prevention and mediation efforts and enhancing the implementation of the commitments for women's inclusion in peace-making in Africa." It is a network of women peacebuilders; it promotes the participation of women in all peace processes by providing training opportunities, capacity-building workshops, and access to a network of women peacebuilders (Vern, 2024). Although efforts like FemWise show how the AU is grappling with the interplay

of formal and local peacebuilding, most of its policies are tilted towards enhancing women's participation in formal peacebuilding. This situation exposes the gaps concerning how the AU balances formal and local peacebuilding and the ensuing inconsistencies.

Examining the Effectiveness of AU Frameworks at Fostering Women as Actors

While the AU has instituted different frameworks to foster the participation of women in peacebuilding, including local peacebuilding, not much can be said for the effectiveness of these frameworks. In discussing how effective they are, the discussion will be divided into two: the status of women in local peace support operations and women's inclusion in formal peace processes after their efforts in establishing local peace.

Status of Women in African-Led Peace Operations

There was a transformation of peace operations in Africa to shift from purely a militaristic format to include a support and civilian element in the early 1990s (Yaw-Tchie 2023). This transformation motivated the metamorphosis of peacekeeping operations to peace support operations (PSOs). Expectations arose on the gender inclusiveness of African-led PSOs that have since been deployed in Africa, with research focusing on the evolution of these African-led PSOs. However, not much progress has been made to foster increased women's representation in these operations (ISS, 2023).

The gender inclusivity of African countries' deployment to peace operations will be judged using the UN Department of Peace Operations' Gender Parity (UNDPO) target. The United Nations (2016) Uniformed Gender Parity establishes that by 2028, women should make up 15% of deployed contingent soldiers, 30% of individual police officers, and 20% of organised police units. Of the African countries with the highest deployment to peace operations as of January 2025, women constituted less than 15% of their deployment, except for Zambia, at 26% (UN, 2025). The average percentage of women when the numbers for the top ten African countries are totalled is 13.8%, which is a far cry from the target set by the UNDPO Uniformed Gender Parity

strategy. What this means is that the number of women that African countries send as part of peace support operations is low. Between 2018 and 2021, the average of women in PSOs increased from 5.7% to approximately 9% (UN, 2021). This coincides with a gradual increase in individual countries' deployment, such as Ghana, South Africa, and Zambia; they have over 15% of women in their contingents. However, the gradual increase still signifies slow progress on the inclusion of women in PSOs. What this demonstrates is that gender inclusion in peace support operations in Africa is very much below the UNDPO benchmark, further alluding to the argument that the women's participation in regional and local peace operations is very low. The low numbers of women in peace support troops of contributing African countries indicate that women are still largely excluded from local peacebuilding (Olaitan, 2023b). The exclusion of women from peace support operations, even with the inclusion of a civilian element, does not bode well for women as actors in local peacebuilding.

Women's Inclusion in Formal Peace After Their Efforts in Local Peace: Case of Sierra Leone

Women in Sierra Leone participated in local approaches to bring about peace following the civil war. However, they were excluded from formal peace processes instituted by international organisations. Jusu-Sheriff (2000) reported that women participated in the local peacebuilding informally as activists, relief workers, mediators, and lobbyists. Through these various means, they portrayed themselves as agents and participants in the peace process during the conflict and in the post-conflict reconstruction. In the post-conflict reconstruction, they played a key role in reintegrating former child soldiers back into society, as they recognised the danger of abandoning them without help. By providing help and feeding the ex-child soldiers, they protected the fragile peace derived from the signing of the peace agreements and the ceasefire. A major part of peacebuilding deals with disarming, demobilising and reintegrating former combatants with the sole aim of preventing a relapse of conflict.

Nonetheless, the participation of women in the local sphere did not translate into representation and participation in

the formal peace proceedings, because women were excluded from the official peace negotiations, peace agreements, and other processes. Women worked hard to initiate the whole peace process but were not incorporated into the official peacebuilding (Jusu-Sheriff, 2000). This captures the radical feminist theory of the peace lens, which argues that the oppression of women is a manifestation of the effects of patriarchy, which plays out in all scopes. Women could only actualise their potential in local peacebuilding, even though this sphere is also subject to the whims of the patriarchal system. It would be disingenuous to argue that their participation in the informal sphere was not frowned upon, considering that Sierra Leone is a patriarchal society. Their peace activism was met with protests by some male members of the community who saw it as being overbearing because they believed that such roles are reserved for men. Their absence from the formal peace process also lends credence to the feminist institutionalism theory as it exposes how the AU and other organisations interacted with the nuance between formal and informal politics of the peace process. Also, the contribution of women in the local peacebuilding did not translate to commensurate results when they contested for elections in 1996. Jusu-Sheriff (2000:49) states that "women believed that their hard work in the democratization process would be rewarded by places at the negotiating table, but politicians recognized that the ideas and attitudes of the women's movement would destabilize traditional politics, and so they discouraged further participation by women in leadership."

Challenges Hindering Women's Participation in Local Peacebuilding

This section argues that apart from the ineffectiveness of instruments dedicated to fostering women as actors in local peacebuilding, certain restrictive socio-cultural norms are also responsible for women's underrepresentation in peacebuilding. The debates about women and peacebuilding in Africa focus on the low participation of women in peacebuilding and the agency of women during times of war and peace. Because of these debates, research has been conducted to understand the place of women in peace and security. Inherent gender inequality has continuously

been used as the reason, with scholars like Garba (2016) and Onyenwere (2017) arguing that patriarchy is often used to explain the unequal relationship between genders in African societies. Onyenwere (2017:19) explains the unequal relationship between men and women in African societies by asserting that "culture is usually the justification wielded for the denial of women's rights and the perpetuation of gender inequality." Garba (2016) argues that peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding all follow a sheer discrimination against women based on culture as being weak, unfit, and inferior, while men are seen as providers, strong, and superior.

Another theme that emerges from the literature on women and peacebuilding in Africa is that of agency, which posits that the identity that women assume during times of war is very important as it affects their status during the peace process. The question of the agency of women as victims or participants arose because of the perception that war is masculine and should only be understood in that frame. This perception is fed by the notion that women are weaker than men and thus not suited to war. Schirch and Sewak (2005) argue that because women have been historically excluded from participating in peace negotiations and peace processes, their interests have been misconstrued as they are viewed through the victim lens. Jones (1983) argues that there is a perception that war is masculine and that women do not engage in war as active participants. This leads to the perception that women are victims of war, making them seem vulnerable. She further argues that this perception is false and that women do participate in armed conflicts. Shepherd (2016) consolidates this argument by asserting that women embody multi-agency during war as they act as belligerents, combatants, informants, etc, demonstrating that the status of victims only ascribed to women is one-sided.

Conclusion

The centrality of women's participation in peacebuilding is tied to ensuring a holistic and inclusive peace in Africa. The question of the local when it comes to women and peacebuilding has to do with the contribution of women in informal peace

processes. How can we foster the visibility of women as actors in local peacebuilding? This question enables the spotlighting of the local in peacebuilding, particularly local voices in building peace. The intersection of the local and women's engagement in peacebuilding allows us to focus on women's contribution in local peacebuilding. Secondly, it allows us to centre women as actors in peacebuilding and participants in peace processes. The discourse on the underrepresentation of women in peacebuilding focuses on restrictive socio-cultural norms and systemic discrimination. While restrictive socio-cultural norms prevent women's participation in public decision-making, systemic discrimination ensures that women are kept out of peace processes as participants. This is possible by maintaining the myopic status of women as victims' narrative rather than the multiple agencies that they embody as both victims and participants. These factors are often cited while ignoring the dichotomy between formal and informal peace processes. To this end, this chapter sought to understand what is being undertaken to increase the visibility of women as actors in local peacebuilding. It focused specifically on the African Union as the apex organisation in Africa and its peace and security architecture. It examined the different frameworks put in place by the African Union to foster the increased visibility of women as local actors in peacebuilding.

Using a qualitative methodology and a descriptive analytical framework, this chapter interrogated the effectiveness of instruments instituted to engender the women in peace and security agenda. The chapter employed the radical feminist theory of peace and security and the feminist institutionalism theory to support its analysis. The chapter found that while several instruments have been instituted, such as Article 10(1&2) of the Maputo Protocol, the special envoy on WPS, and the CRF, these instruments have not yielded commensurate results when it comes to fostering the increased representation of women as actors in local peacebuilding. This is because these instruments are not targeted at the local, which is the dominant space where women are actively participating in peace. The chapter found that the dichotomy between formal and local peacebuilding creates a disconnect wherein there is a conscious underreporting of the work that women are performing in local peacebuilding.

This underreporting further deepens the underrepresentation of women as actors in peacebuilding generally. The chapter also found that even when women successfully employ local means to engender peace, they are still excluded from the formal sphere of peacebuilding. The chapter recommends that more needs to be undertaken by the AU to foster the increased representation of women as actors in local peacebuilding. More focus needs to be directed at the local sphere of peacebuilding primarily to mainstream the contributions that women are making, which will enable their recognition as actors. This chapter notes that the participation of women at different levels of peacebuilding and recognition as actors will ensure an inclusive, holistic, and sustainable peace in Africa.

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Chapter 4

Local Governments as Key Actors in Global Migration Governance

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Abstract

This chapter examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migration governance and highlights the increasing importance of local governments in addressing the complex and interconnected drivers of displacement. The pandemic has led to ad hoc unilateral policies on migration, mobility, and border management, while emphasising the need for global cooperation in this field. The chapter argues that the post-pandemic era has revolutionised migration governance in two ways: first, by creating new and intensifying existing challenges for local governments as key actors in migration governance, and second, by fundamentally affecting the access to and forms of deliberations within spaces of global migration governance. Drawing on a review of existing literature, the chapter explores the role of local governments in global migration governance, including their involvement in policy development, implementation, and monitoring. It argues that local governments are uniquely positioned to respond to the needs of displaced communities, given their proximity to affected populations and their knowledge of local contexts. Furthermore, the chapter suggests that local governments can play a critical role in shaping global migration governance by advocating for the needs of their communities and influencing national and international policies. However, the chapter also highlights the challenges faced by local governments in managing displacement and their limited resources in responding to complex global challenges. The chapter

concludes that a multi-level and multi-stakeholder approach is necessary to effectively address displacement and utilise the potential of local governments in global migration governance.

Keywords: Migration governance, Local governments, COVID-19, Displacement, Global migration governance, Multi-level governance, Refugees, Mobility.

Introduction

In the recent times, the landscape of global migration governance has witnessed a profound metamorphosis, a change markedly accentuated in the milieu of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. This historic inflection point has not only reshaped migration trajectories but also emphasiseded the burgeoning role of local governments in grappling with the intricate challenges of displacement. Academics have noted that the advent of the pandemic precipitated a marked shift in global migration dynamics, characterised by a precipitous decline in cross-border movements (Boucher *et al,* 2021), a consequence of the stringent travel restrictions (Ratha, 2022) and border closures implemented globally (Murzakulova *et al,* 2021). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported a significant contraction in global migration flows during this period, resulting in an unprecedented number of migrants being stranded, thereby altering the essence of migration processes (IOM, 2020).

These alterations in migration patterns exhibited notable heterogeneity across different geographies. Certain regions observed a near-total halt in migration, while others experienced a redirection of migration flows or the emergence of novel migration corridors (Castles *et al,* 2020). Concurrently, the pandemic amplified vulnerabilities within migrant communities, particularly amongst the undocumented, heightening their risk of exploitation and marginalistion (Fasani & Mazza, 2020). The global response to the pandemic exposed the limitations inherent in existing international frameworks for managing sudden disruptions in global mobility. Nations predominantly adopted swift, unilateral migration and border control policies, largely eschewing international coordination. While these measures were ostensibly

necessitated by public health considerations, they culminated in a disjointed global response, highlighting the deficiencies in current structures of migration governance (Brettell & Hollifield, 2021).

In this context, local governments have ascended as crucial actors in the domain of migration governance. Confronting the immediate ramifications of the pandemic, these local actors have played an instrumental role in devising and implementing responses attuned to the needs of migrant populations within their jurisdictions. Their initiatives have encompassed the provision of essential services and the advocacy for more inclusive migration policies at both national and international tiers (Caponio & Borkert, 2020). The proximal relation of local governments to impacted communities, coupled with their insights into local exigencies, has conferred upon them a distinctive capability to tackle the multifarious challenges posed by the pandemic. Demonstrating remarkable adaptability, they have frequently filled the voids left by national and international responses (Lefebvre & León, 2021). This development necessitates a re-assessment of the role of local governments in migration governance, indicating a trend towards more decentralised and locally appropriate approaches.

This chapter posits that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a catalyst in revolutionising migration governance, emphasising the imperative for an enhanced comprehension of the role of local governments. The impact of the pandemic extends beyond immediate mobility patterns, influencing the core mechanisms of governance. It has laid bare the shortcomings of unilateral, impromptu policy measures and highlighted the necessity for augmented global cooperation and coordination in migration governance. The augmented role of local governments in addressing displacement reflects the potential for a more layered and inclusive approach to migration governance. Acknowledging and utilising the role of local governments is, thus, crucial for formulating effective, humane, and sustainable migration policies in the post-pandemic era (Schmeidl & Poudel, 2021). The heightened role of local governments in this new landscape emphasises the necessity for a more integrated, multi-level approach to addressing the complexities of migration in today's globally interconnected milieu.

Context and Background

Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, migration governance operated within a complex global framework, largely influenced by factors such as economic needs, political stability, human rights considerations, and international cooperation. The pre-pandemic era witnessed significant migration flows, driven by a combination of economic migration, forced displacement caused by conflict or persecution, and environmental factors. The governance of these movements was supported by international agreements like the United Nations' Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, which sought to establish cooperative frameworks for managing migration (UN, 2018).

However, these frameworks often struggled to balance the sovereignty of states with the rights and needs of migrants. Issues like the integration of migrants, border security, and the management of refugee flows remained contentious, and policies varied widely across different nations and regions. The European migration crisis of 2015–2016, for example, highlighted these challenges, as countries grappled with the influx of refugees and migrants, leading to diverse and sometimes conflicting national responses (Castles *et al,* 2020).

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 radically altered this already complex landscape. The immediate response to the pandemic led to an unprecedented halt in global mobility. Countries around the world rapidly closed their borders and imposed travel restrictions, suspending the usual patterns of global migration. The IOM reported that by mid-2020, over 200 countries had imposed travel restrictions, affecting millions of people worldwide (IOM, 2020).

This sudden halt in mobility had far-reaching implications. Migrants and asylum seekers found themselves stranded in transit countries or unable to leave their host countries. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) noted significant disruptions in asylum procedures, with many countries suspending or limiting access to asylum processes (UNHCR, 2020). Additionally, the economic downturn triggered by the pandemic led to job losses and increased vulnerability for migrant workers, particularly those in informal sectors or with precarious legal status (Fasani & Mazza, 2020).

The pandemic also prompted a re-evaluation of national and international migration policies. In some cases, it led to a tightening of immigration controls and a heightened emphasis on border security. For instance, the United States significantly reduced its refugee admissions and implemented more stringent entry restrictions (Goodman *et al*, 2020). Conversely, some countries adopted more flexible policies in response to the pandemic, such as extending visas for migrants already within their borders or regularising the status of certain groups of migrants to ensure access to healthcare and social services (Triandafyllidou, 2020).

At the international level, the pandemic highlighted the limitations of existing migration governance frameworks. The unilateral nature of many travel restrictions and border closures emphasised the lack of coordinated international response mechanisms for managing global mobility during crises. This situation exacerbated existing inequalities and vulnerabilities amongst migrant populations, leading to calls for more inclusive and coordinated approaches to migration governance (Betts & Collier, 2020).

In addition to policy changes, the pandemic also impacted the discourse around migration. Migrants were sometimes unfairly stigmatised as carriers of the virus, leading to increased xenophobia and discrimination (Vearey *et al*, 2021). This shift in public perception further complicated the challenges of migration governance, emphasising the need for policies grounded in evidence and respectful of human rights (Bauböck, 2020). The pandemic's disruption of global migration thus served as a critical juncture, exposing the fragilities and disparities in existing migration governance systems. It called attention to the need for more robust, flexible, and cooperative approaches, capable of responding to the complex realities of migration in a rapidly changing world. As the world gradually transitions into the post-pandemic era, these lessons will be crucial in shaping the future of migration governance.

Local Governments: Emerging Key Actors in Migration Governance

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly altered the landscape of migration governance, illuminating the crucial role of local

governments in addressing migration challenges. An extant body of literature shows that, traditionally, migration governance has been viewed predominantly as the domain of national and international bodies (Koinova *et al,* 2023; Panwar & Mishra, 2020; Robinson, 2018). However, the pandemic's unique challenges have brought to the forefront the key role that local governments play in managing migration effectively and humanely. In a press statement, the Mayors Migration Council (2019) reasserted that local governments, being the closest administrative units to the populace, have been instrumental in responding to the immediate and complex needs of migrant populations during the pandemic. This addresses the evolution of responses ranging from providing healthcare and social services to advocating for inclusive migration policies, thereby, filling gaps left by national and international responses. To examine these transformations, we investigate several prominent cases of cities that have made significant progress in managing migration.

In a study conducted by Mazzilli (2022), a nuanced analysis of Lisbon's migration local governance is presented, particularly emphasising the strategic implementation of Local Centres for Migrant Integration within Portugal's national framework. These centres, conceived as a cornerstone of governmental policy, are dedicated to providing an array of support services to migrants, including but not limited to language education, vocational training, and facilitation of social integration. In 2020, the city of Lisbon adopted a temporary regularisation policy enacted by Portugal. This policy, diverging from the traditional crisis-centric narratives that often dominate migration policy discourses, granted migrants unfettered access to the national healthcare system, thereby removing the fear of deportation. Nonetheless, Mazzilli's research posits that this policy, while progressive in its intent, failed to tackle the systemic shortcomings inherent in the Portuguese immigration framework. This oversight led to unintended consequences, manifesting as new complexities and further intensifying pre-existing issues within the system.

Similarly, in Canada, the city of Toronto exemplified the role of local governments in protecting vulnerable migrants. Toronto declared itself a "Sanctuary City," pledging that all

residents, regardless of their immigration status, would have access to city services. This policy was particularly significant during the pandemic as it allowed undocumented migrants to access healthcare and other essential services without fear of deportation (Triandafyllidou, 2020).

In contrast, in the United States, local government responses to migrant populations during the pandemic have been more varied, often reflecting the political orientations of their respective states. For instance, cities like New York and Los Angeles, known for their progressive stances on immigration, actively worked to include migrants in their COVID-19 response plans, providing free testing and healthcare services. In contrast, other localities with more restrictive immigration policies were slower to extend such services to migrant populations (Goodman *et al*, 2020).

This variation in local government responses can also be observed in the Asia-Pacific region. For example, in Singapore, the pandemic's initial outbreak disproportionately affected migrant workers, highlighting gaps in the government's response to this community. In response, the Singaporean government eventually implemented measures to improve living conditions and provide healthcare for migrant workers, although these measures were reactive rather than proactive (Yea, 2020). Another insightful case is seen in the city of Gaziantep in Turkey, which hosts a large number of Syrian refugees. The local government there has been actively involved in integrating refugees into the local community, providing language courses, employment opportunities, and access to health services. The pandemic added another layer of complexity to this task, but the local government's prior experience with migration governance allowed it to adapt its response effectively to meet the new challenges (Erdoğan & Ünver, 2021).

A comparative analysis of diverse local government strategies during the pandemic yields key insights. The efficacy of local migration management depended on autonomy, resources, and political will. Resource-rich cities with supportive policies exhibited more effective migrant support. The pandemic highlighted the necessity of local government

participation in shaping national and international migration policies, drawing on their frontline experiences. Furthermore, a strong correlation emerged between pre-established inclusive policies and positive outcomes for migrants, as evidenced in Lisbon and Toronto. The varied responses also reflect the influence of political orientations and local contexts, emphasising the need for adaptable, context-sensitive policy frameworks in migration governance.

Local Governments in Global Migration Governance

The role of local governments in global migration governance, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, reveals a nuanced and evolving landscape. Traditionally, migration policies have been dominated by national and international authorities; however, the growing involvement of local governments challenges this status quo. This shift illustrates a dynamic interplay between different levels of governance, where local realities inform broader policy frameworks. Local governments, through their direct interaction with migrant populations, offer a ground-up perspective often missing in high-level policy discussions. For instance, the innovative policies of cities like Barcelona in refugee integration (Caponio & Borkert, 2020) or São Paulo's support for migrant entrepreneurs (Lefebvre & León, 2021) demonstrate a nuanced understanding of migrant needs, which often escape national policies. These local initiatives, while effective at the municipal level, also emphasise the complexities and potential disconnects when integrating such policies into broader national strategies.

The role of local governments in monitoring and evaluating migration policies, as emphasised by Goodman *et al* (2020), further highlights the dichotomy between policy intent and impact. Cities like New York serve not just as implementers of policies but as critical evaluators, providing feedback that often reveals gaps in national and international policy frameworks. The influence of local governments extends beyond their administrative boundaries. The success of sanctuary cities in the US (Triandafyllidou, 2020, 2022) has sparked national discourse, suggesting that local policies can often act as catalysts for broader

policy change. This indicates a growing recognition of the need for more inclusive, bottom-up approaches in migration governance.

However, this increased role of local governments also raises questions about the coherence and uniformity of migration policies. The variation in local responses, shaped by specific political, social, and economic contexts, presents a challenge to creating a unified national or international migration policy. It emphasises the need for flexible, adaptable policy frameworks that can accommodate diverse local realities. Moreover, the involvement of local governments in international forums (Schmeidl & Poudel, 2021) suggests a shift towards a more multi-layered approach to migration governance. This development, while promising, also calls for careful coordination to ensure that the diverse and sometimes conflicting priorities of different governance levels are effectively balanced.

In conclusion, the increasing role of local governments in migration governance highlights a crucial dimension of the policy-making process. It presents both opportunities and challenges, advocating for a more integrated approach that recognises the interdependence of local, national, and international policies. The success stories from various cities around the world serve not only as models of effective local governance but also as reminders of the complexities inherent in scaling these practices to larger contexts.

The New Landscape of Migration Governance Post-Pandemic

As aforesaid, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic marked a significant shift in the landscape of migration governance, characterised by the implementation of ad hoc unilateral policies by countries worldwide. These measures, primarily driven by urgent public health concerns, significantly altered the dynamics of global migration and posed a range of challenges and opportunities for local governments, while simultaneously highlighting the need for increased global cooperation in migration governance.

As the pandemic unfolded, countries rapidly closed their borders, imposing strict travel restrictions to curb the virus's

spread. This response, although critical from a public health perspective, was often made unilaterally, without the usual processes of international consultation or cooperation (Ratha, 2022). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported that by mid-2020, over 200 countries had imposed travel restrictions, impacting global mobility significantly (IOM, 2020). These measures varied widely in nature and scope, with some countries like Australia and New Zealand imposing near-total border closures, while others like the United States suspended entry from specific countries (Kerwin, 2020).

The European Union, despite efforts to coordinate responses amongst member states, also witnessed a fragmented approach to border management and migration control. This lack of uniformity in policy responses led to a patchwork of regulations that not only disrupted migration flows but also posed significant logistical and administrative challenges (Castles *et al,* 2020). One notable outcome of these unilateral policies was the immediate reduction in the number of asylum applications and refugee resettlements. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported a dramatic decrease in refugee resettlements in 2020, as countries suspended or limited their resettlement programmes (UNHCR, 2020). This reduction had profound implications for those seeking international protection, exacerbating the vulnerabilities of already marginalised groups.

According to Murzakulova *et al* (2021), these ad hoc policies also created unique challenges and opportunities for local governments. For some scholars, local authorities faced the immediate task of managing the impacts of these policy changes on migrant populations within their jurisdictions (Lara-Guerrero, 2020; Koinova *et al,* 2023). This included addressing the needs of stranded migrants, providing healthcare and social services, and ensuring the protection of migrant rights in a rapidly changing environment (Mayors Migration Council, 2019; Fasani & Mazza, 2020).

Yet for others, the pandemic presented local governments with opportunities to assert their role in migration governance more prominently (Grandi, 2020; Triandafyllidou, 2022; Heins & Unrau, 2020). Many local authorities took proactive steps

to fill gaps left by national policies, implementing measures to support migrants and refugees. For instance, some cities offered healthcare services to undocumented migrants, recognising the public health imperative of ensuring access to care for all residents, irrespective of their legal status (Bauböck, 2020). According to Triandafyllidou (2022), the pandemic also emphasised the increasing need for global cooperation in migration governance.

The unilateral nature of the travel restrictions and border closures highlighted the limitations of existing international frameworks in responding to global crises. This situation called for a more coordinated approach, emphasising the importance of international cooperation in managing migration flows, protecting migrant rights, and addressing the broader implications of migration on public health and security (Betts & Collier, 2020; Vearey *et al*, 2021). Furthermore, the pandemic revealed the interconnectedness of global migration systems and the necessity of collaborative efforts to address the challenges posed by large-scale mobility disruptions. This recognition led to calls for more inclusive and flexible migration governance frameworks that can better accommodate the complexities of global migration in a post-pandemic world.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has not only disrupted traditional patterns of global migration but also catalysed a significant transformation in the field of migration governance. The implementation of ad hoc unilateral policies, while necessary to address immediate public health concerns, has exposed the inadequacies of existing governance structures and highlighted the key role of local governments in responding to migration challenges. As the world gradually emerges from the pandemic, the lessons learned during this period will be crucial in shaping a more resilient, cooperative, and inclusive framework for migration governance in the future.

Challenges and Limitations for Local Governments

The burgeoning scholarship on the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on migration governance emphasises the critical role of local governments, highlighting both their strengths and the

formidable challenges that they face. Bauböck (2020) and Caponio and Borkert (2020) note that local governments, increasingly the primary interface for migrants and displaced persons, grapple with a myriad of hurdles ranging from resource limitations to policy constraints, while endeavouring to cater to these vulnerable groups.

A key hurdle is resource limitation. Effective migration management demands considerable financial, human, and infrastructural resources. Many local administrations, particularly in economically strained regions, are overstretched, struggling to provide even basic services to their resident populations and migrants (Bauböck, 2020). The paucity of resources can lead to inadequate living conditions for displaced communities, restricted access to healthcare and education, and scant legal and social support, impeding migrant integration and heightening vulnerabilities, including exploitation and social exclusion (Fasani & Mazza, 2020; EU, 2020; Mazzilli, 2022). In critically examining the resource limitations faced by local governments in migration governance, it becomes apparent that the issue is not merely one of insufficient funds. Bauböck (2020) illuminates a deeper systemic problem where even well-intentioned local governments find themselves in a quagmire of competing priorities. This predicament raises questions about the equitable allocation of resources, challenging the assumption that increased funding alone can resolve the complexities of migration governance. Furthermore, the dependence on fluctuating economic conditions exposes a fundamental vulnerability in the current framework of local governance, suggesting a need for more sustainable and resilient financial models.

Policy constraints further complicate the scenario. National immigration policies often circumscribe the authority and autonomy of local governments in migration management. Restrictive or hostile national policies can hamstring local governments' efforts to offer support to migrants, particularly undocumented ones, pushing these individuals into further marginalisation (Goodman *et al*, 2020). The critique of policy constraints highlights a tension between national directives and local realities. Goodman *et al* (2020) point out that restrictive

national policies often leave local governments in a paradoxical position, caught between compliance and the practical needs of their communities. This dichotomy not only impedes effective local governance but also reveals a broader discord in the conceptualisation of migration policy. The rigidity of national policies may reflect a monolithic view of migration, disregarding the diverse and context-specific challenges encountered at the local level. This discrepancy emphasises the need for a more dynamic and responsive policy framework that empowers local governments while aligning with national objectives.

The interplay between local and higher-level migration policies is intricate. Local governments must comply with national laws, yet the localised nature of migration often renders national policies ineffective or inappropriate. This can lead to friction between governmental tiers, exemplified by sanctuary cities in the United States that defy national immigration laws (Kerwin, 2020; Kishor, 2020). International frameworks, while intended to guide migration governance, can complicate local governments' roles. The implementation of global compacts often falls on local governments without adequate resources or support, posing practical challenges (Mayors Migration Council, 2019; IOM, 2020). In the context of international agreements and their implementation at the local level, as discussed by the IOM (2020), there is a discernible disjunction between global aspirations and local capacities. The burden placed on local governments to actualise international commitments without corresponding support highlights a gap in global governance structures. It prompts a re-evaluation of how international frameworks are designed, questioning whether they adequately consider the on-the-ground realities and capacities of local actors

In summary, a critical examination of the challenges that are faced by local governments in migration governance during the pandemic reveals systemic issues in the allocation of resources, the rigidity of policy frameworks, the balance of governance power, and the implementation of international agreements. These challenges call for a reimagined approach to migration governance that is not only more responsive to local needs but also more integrated across different levels

of governance, ensuring coherence, efficacy, and fairness in addressing the complexities of migration.

Towards a Multi-Level and Multi-Stakeholder Approach

The intricate challenges of contemporary migration, accentuated by crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, necessitate a multi-level, multi-stakeholder governance approach. This paradigm emphasises the imperative for concerted efforts from local, national, and international entities to comprehensively address displacement issues. The diverse and complex nature of migration issues mandates this collaborative stance, as no single governance level can independently muster the requisite resources or expertise.

A multi-level governance framework engenders a more nuanced understanding of migration dynamics. According to Serra and Revez (2023), local governments, being in close contact with migrant communities, bring a vital perspective on the localised aspects of migration, encompassing both challenges and opportunities unique to their contexts. National governments, in contrast, can provide extensive policy frameworks and resources, complemented by legal support (Triandafyllidou & Yeoh, 2023). International bodies, meanwhile, contribute a global outlook, facilitating cross-border cooperation and consistency in policy approaches. The European Union (EU)'s response to its migration crisis illustrates the potential of a multi-level approach. Despite initial hurdles, the EU has strived to harmonise responses across member states while empowering local authorities to implement context-specific policies (Castles *et al,* 2020). Nonetheless, this approach demands refinement, particularly in enhancing resource distribution and improving inter-governmental coordination.

Integrating local governments into global migration governance could be realised through several strategies. Foremost, their inclusion in national and international policy deliberations is crucial to ensure that local experiences shape broader policy frameworks (Tripathi & Agrawal, 2022). Platforms like the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) exemplify this integration, offering local authorities a venue

to voice their insights and exchange best practices (Schmeidl & Poudel, 2021). Enhanced emphasis on resource-sharing and capacity-building for local governments is also key. This might encompass financial aid from higher-level governments or international organisations, along with initiatives for training and knowledge exchange. The UN Development Programme's support to local governments worldwide serves as an exemplar, enhancing local capacities in migration management (UNDP, 2020).

Additionally, fostering partnerships amongst local governments, civil society, and the private sector could augment the efficacy of migration governance. Such collaborations can utilise diverse resources, expertise, and networks, leading to innovative and sustainable solutions. The collaboration in São Paulo between the municipal government and local NGOs to provide entrepreneurship training to migrants demonstrates the potential of these multi-stakeholder partnerships in facilitating economic integration (Lefebvre & León, 2021). Yet, the application of a multi-level governance approach is not devoid of challenges. Discrepancies between various governance levels, especially when local and national policies diverge, can create friction (Robinson, 2018). Moreover, ensuring effective coordination and communication across multiple stakeholders is a daunting task. To navigate these complexities, Triandafyllidou and Yeoh (2023) suggest mechanisms for collaboration, conflict resolution, and regular communication channels are indispensable.

In sum, the multi-level, multi-stakeholder approach is integral to tackling the multifaceted nature of current migration challenges. This approach acknowledges the distinct contributions and necessities of varying governance tiers, advocating for cooperative engagement and resource-sharing. By harnessing the capabilities of local governments and ensuring their proactive involvement in both policy formulation and implementation, migration governance can evolve into a more responsive, effective, and humane system.

Conclusion

The exploration of migration governance in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic reveals several key findings and implications

for future policymaking. The pandemic has undeniably transformed the landscape of migration, highlighting both the challenges and potential of various governance approaches, particularly the role of local governments. One of the primary findings is the significant impact of the pandemic on global migration patterns, marked by a sudden halt in mobility caused by travel restrictions and border closures. This disruption has emphasised the limitations of existing migration governance frameworks, which struggled to adapt to the rapid and unexpected changes. The unilateral nature of many countries' responses to the pandemic revealed a critical need for greater international cooperation and coordination in migration governance.

Local governments have emerged as key actors in this new landscape. Their proximity to affected populations and understanding of local contexts have positioned them uniquely to address the multifaceted challenges of migration during the pandemic. The cases of Lisbon, Toronto, Nairobi, Kampala, Munich, and Seoul illustrate the diverse strategies employed by local governments to support migrants. These ranged from granting temporary citizenship rights to offering sanctuary and inclusive services, demonstrating the potential of local-level interventions in migration governance. However, local governments also face significant challenges, notably resource limitations and policy constraints. These challenges have often hindered their ability to provide adequate support to migrant populations, highlighting the need for a more integrated approach that involves multiple levels of governance. The success of local interventions in cities like Lisbon and Munich contrasted with the struggles in Nairobi and Kampala, emphasising the impact of resource availability and political will on the effectiveness of local governance.

The analysis suggests that a multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance approach is crucial to effectively address the complexities of migration. This approach would involve collaboration amongst local, national, and international stakeholders, ensuring that the insights and experiences of local governments inform broader policy decisions. The involvement of local governments in global migration governance forums, such

as the GFMD, and support from international organisations like the UNDP, are steps in the right direction. Such collaboration can enhance the capacity of local governments to manage migration and ensure that policies are responsive to the needs of diverse migrant populations.

The implications of these findings for future migration governance are significant. In a post-pandemic world, the importance of flexible, responsive, and inclusive migration policies cannot be overstated. The pandemic has shown that migration governance needs to be adaptable to sudden and unforeseen changes, emphasising the importance of resilience in policy frameworks. The inclusion of local perspectives in national and international policymaking can lead to more effective and humane migration management, ensuring that policies are grounded in the realities of those most affected by migration. Moreover, the experience of the pandemic highlights the importance of addressing the vulnerabilities of migrant populations. Policies need to be designed with a view to protecting the rights and well-being of migrants, particularly in times of crisis. This includes ensuring access to healthcare, legal support, and social services, irrespective of migrants' legal status.

Finally, the role of local governments in shaping a post-pandemic world is crucial. As the level of governance closest to the people, local governments are best positioned to understand and respond to the needs of migrant communities. Their role in policy development, implementation, and monitoring is essential to ensuring that migration governance is both effective and humane. As the world continues to grapple with the challenges of migration, the experiences and approaches of local governments will be invaluable in guiding future policies and practices.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the complexities of migration governance and the crucial role of local governments in addressing these challenges. The insights gained from this period must inform future approaches to migration governance, ensuring that they are adaptable, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all stakeholders, particularly migrant communities. The potential of local governments in contributing to effective migration governance is immense, and

their involvement is key to shaping a more equitable and resilient post-pandemic world.

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Chapter 5

Peacebuilding from Below in Post-Conflict Settings: Searching for the Rainbow Nation Amid the July 2021 Racial Tensions between the Indians and Blacks of Phoenix, Durban, South Africa

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Abstract

In July 2021, an estimated 33 black people died in Phoenix at the hands of violent Indian mobs during the pro-Zuma riots. Various studies have analysed the July unrest, often studying the causes behind the events. However, very little of this seeks to study the racial tensions that resurfaced between black people and Indians in the July unrest of 2021. This qualitative study uses secondary data mainly from relevant journals, media reports, and the SAHRC report on the July unrest of 2021. The chapter argues that the killings in Phoenix can be traced to decades-old unresolved racial tensions that continue to threaten a fragile relationship between the predominantly Indian township and its black neighbours. Using othering as a conceptual framework, Conflict Transformation and the Conflict Theory, the chapter argues that the conflict between the black and Indian communities during the July unrest is a part of the entrenched structural and cultural violence that is a product of decades of violence. Findings reflect that although South Africa is recognised as a rainbow nation because of its many different races and cultures, hidden beneath

are racial tensions that have existed and been ignored for decades. The study puts forth recommendations to address racial tensions and attain conflict transformation and social cohesion. This study contributes to the growing body of literature on race relations in conflict, peace studies and social cohesion.

Keywords: Race, Black, Indian, Rainbow, Nation, Peacebuilding, July Unrest

Introduction

The July social unrest of 2021 was a violent outbreak of civil upheaval that happened during the third wave of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic after the "Free Zuma" protest, mainly affecting the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and Gauteng provinces. A key catalyst for the riots was the imprisonment of former President Jacob Zuma resulting in days of utter mayhem (Vhumbunu, 2021; Phungula, 2023). While the former President's arrest acted as a trigger for deep-rooted grievances in KZN, later moving to Gauteng, the social unrest was fuelled by various socio-economic issues including frustration at high unemployment, service delivery concerns, the economic and psycho-social effects of the lockdown period, and the overall COVID-19 pandemic (Vhumbunu, 2021; Phungula, 2023).

The July unrest claimed over 350 lives in KZN (Heiberg, 2021). The cost of the damage of the unrest is estimated at R50 billion (Vhumbunu, 2021). Despite the enormous damage caused by riots, one specific modus operandi was observed. The various races and classes generally did not act violently against each other, nor did looters destroy personal possessions, but rather focused on looting big business. Moreover, those who sought to form neighbourhood watches confined themselves to their communities, not attempting to protect or stop looting outside of their communities. One noticeable exception was the township of Phoenix in Durban, which experienced two races acting violently against each other. Observing this exception in the July unrest, it becomes vital to probe into the racial aspect of the July unrest that manifested in and around Phoenix.

The province-specific dynamics of KZN assist us in understanding the background to the events of July 2021.

Whereas KZN, in line with the rest of the country, shares the apartheid legacy, together with its spatial arrangement, its typical construction can be traced back to its pre-1910 status as a British colony (Strauss, 2019). Unlike other provinces, KZN has the highest population of Indian people, mainly concentrated around Durban (Khan, 2017). This spatial reality, combined with the colonial agenda that focused on the advancement of a Zulu nationalism through the previous KZN Bantustan government which played a key role in the political violence of the 1980s and early 1990s (De Haas, 2021; Sithole, 2021).

The spatial planning orchestrated by the National Party apartheid government forms the basis of the realities of the occurrences that are discussed in this chapter. Phoenix was built by the apartheid government in the 1960s as an Indian township to receive and house Indians who had been forced out of their bases in the city under the Group Areas Act no. 41 of 1950 (De Haas, 2021). The township is adjacent to land historically occupied by native black Africans. Consistent with the NP's segregational social engineering, the city of Durban, now part of the eThekwini Metro, was also organised to cater for the white minority while placing other races (black, Indian and coloured people) in buffer zones such as townships and rural areas (De Haas, 2021).

The July unrest is considered the worst civic unrest in post-apartheid South Africa. Notwithstanding the ending of the July 2021 unrest and the release of the South Africa Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) findings, there have been no improvements in the circumstances that contributed to the tensions witnessed in Phoenix. The political transition of 1994 fell short in developing policy to integrate the numerous racial groups that were previously separated. Instead, the post-apartheid government's focus was on portraying a rainbow nation. Moreover, this tactic missed the mark by not focusing on the importance of socio-economic equality, harmony and acceptance between different races in South Africa. This suggests that the country could face similar unrest in the future. Consequently, it would appear that the question is not whether further racial tensions between the Indian and black communities' unrest will erupt, but rather when it will erupt.

Against this background and contextualised within a broader study of the July unrest of 2021 and race relations in South Africa, the

chapter aims to explore the racial tension between the Indian and black communities of Phoenix, Durban while critically examining how local actors navigated these tensions, revealing opportunities and challenges for peacebuilding from below. Within the literature, few attempts have been made to analyse racial tensions between black and Indian people in South Africa. While much emphasis has been focused on race and ethnicity in the country, a plethora of literature has focused on African-white or Indian-white relations, thus neglecting a crucial aspect for the understanding of racial conflict in between the black and Indian people of South Africa (Thiara, 1999). The chapter begins with the methodology that guides the study. The next section provides a review of various literature perspectives. This section is followed by the theoretical structure of the study. Finally, the chapter offers the findings of the study which are presented thematically. This chapter argues that there is a long history of conflict between the Indian and black people of KwaZulu-Natal, first in 1949, and 36 years later in 1985 and again in July 2021. Finally, the chapter offers recommendations maintaining that there is a need to confront the tensions between the black and Indian communities of KwaZulu-Natal if we are to avert disruptions of a similar nature from recurring in the future. Nevertheless, while the July 2021 unrest in Phoenix demonstrates the violent consequences of unsettled racial tensions, it also offers an opportunity to study how local communities, civil society actors, and ordinary residents have engaged in peacebuilding from below. Understanding these grassroots efforts is crucial to developing sustainable, locally grounded approaches to social cohesion and conflict transformation in South Africa.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative approach. Despite the extensive research literature on the July unrest, there is little literature on the racial aspect of the Phoenix killings. The focus on the racial tensions between the Indian and black communities in South Africa over time has been relatively limited. This study contributes to the limited knowledge on the factors behind a topic that requires further research. More importantly, the chapter offers an opportunity to study how local communities, civil society actors,

and ordinary residents can engage in peacebuilding in their own conflict settings. To answer the research question, secondary research was conducted using both primary and secondary sources. Data was primarily sourced from Google Scholar by searching for key words relating to the July unrest of 2021. Media accounts and secondary literature that documented an eyewitness account of the July unrest, and journal articles were purposively selected and analysed under the guidance of the research questions. Data was analysed guided by the chosen conceptual and theoretical frameworks. Data analysis was conducted through thematic content analysis and presented in themes in the discussion section.

The Rainbow Nation

> *"I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life."* (Genesis: 9:13-15, New International Version).

This section opens with the scripture verse from the book of Genesis 9: 13-15. In the excerpt, God the creator of the heavens and the Earth makes a covenant with Noah and humankind that after much evil and man ultimately being wiped out by the floods which God had sent. God vows that He will never again destroy all life by a flood. It may be argued that the rainbow is a reminder of the promise of the preservation of life. It further illustrates God's grace and magnificent purpose of redemption to give humanity a chance to start afresh. Based on the passage of scripture, God devoted important meaning to the rainbow to ensure that every time it is seen, humanity may be reminded of God's covenant to never destroy life. Intriguingly, numerous mythologies consider the rainbow as a supernatural "bridge" or path that enables a move from chaos to a fresh start on a clean slate.

South Africa is dubbed the "rainbow nation" despite the atrocities committed against the non-white populations over

decades, too, found its future pre-1994 hinged on a similar promise as that made by the God of heaven in the days of Noah. The phrase "rainbow nation" is sometimes used synonymously with non-racialism referring to a multicultural society that addresses the aim to dismantle discourses built on racism and white supremacy (Buqa, 2015). The year 1994 marked a new start, a promise that the atrocities of the past would never be committed again - a befitting analogy considering the racial diversity in the country and the ANC's vision for a free and fair South Africa.

The predominantly Indian township of Phoenix has somewhat embraced the idea of the rainbow nation. However, the township has also been failed by the South African government - a scourge that cuts across the majority of townships in the country. Today, Phoenix is considered a multi-racial residential area, containing formal townships, informal and Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) housing. Events during July 2021 must be understood in this spatial and historical context (De Haas, 2021). Moreover, Phoenix is well known for criminal drug-dealing gangs and criminal activity caused by socio-economic challenges including poverty and youth unemployment.

Consequently, while substantial changes have been achieved post-apartheid, including an emerging black middle class, important issues such as wealth redistribution poverty, and inequality continue to be determined by race (Whitehead 2013). Despite the progressive constitution, post-apartheid South Africa has struggled to address the socio-economic inequality between races and specifically the Indian versus black structural and direct violence in the KZN province. This reality was seen again during the unrest of July 2021 which showed rising racial conflict between the Indian and black communities of Phoenix.

Framing the Point

Conflict Theory

The chapter utilises the Conflict Theory as a theoretical lens. The theory argues that competition for scarce resources in societies almost always guarantees the presence of conflict. This suggests that those who own and possess resources will do everything and anything in their power to protect and safeguard these resources.

On the other hand, those without resources will also go to extremes to access and attain resources. This dialectic addresses the constant struggle between those who "have" and those who "have not". This chapter recognises the competition for resources amongst the poor often generated by the overall condition of the hierarchy of economic power that leaves many so destitute that violence becomes an option in asserting and defending interests. In light of this, it seems that most societies are characterised by conflict more than by accord. With this being said, conflict is an unavoidable aspect of human nature and is not necessarily a negative phenomenon.

Given the general levels of inequality between the black and Indian communities in KZN, it could be argued that racial tensions, violence, and killings are to be expected. The theory also recognises that the elite may resort to violence to maintain and contest power to access resources in a capitalist society. The argument put forth here is one that maintains that individuals and groups in society will do everything in their power to maximise their resources and hold on to power.

Othering in Apartheid and Post-Apartheid South Africa

This chapter used the concept of othering as a conceptual framework. Othering can be understood to take place when one distinct group perceives another group as not fitting into the norms that construct that particular grouping (Staszak, 2009). Moreover, othering happens when one group attributes adverse characteristics to individuals or other groups that are different from the main group, which is often the dominant group. The concept is informed by the "us versus them" line of thought, which boxes people and groups based on certain characteristics. The concept addresses perceiving others and concluding that "they are different from me" or "they do not belong with us." Zevallos (2011) determined by race. In this regard, Leibbrandtdraws on the importance of othering in understanding the construction of majority and minority identities. Othering can be understood within the confines of age, disability, ethnicity, nationality, race, gender identity, sex, and language (Staszak, 2009). This view is

further reiterated by the Conflict Theory, which highlights the "haves" and the "have nots" from one's way of thinking of being. The basis of differentiation may be beliefs, customs, traditions, religion, and socio-economic status. The ideas of socio-economic status can be argued to have been constructed by the colonial and apartheid administrations in South Africa.

This point is reiterated by Vichiensing (2017), who alludes to the fact that othering has the potential to make individuals and groups feel inferior and excluded from dominant groups as though they do not belong. Consequently, the practice of othering provides a fertile ground for tense environments, which may result in conflict, and ultimately, violent conflict. Based on this, the elements of othering between black and Indian communities have been festering for decades. The system of apartheid gave rise to numerous economic development implications that had negative effects on the lives of all non-white people. These consequences included illiteracy, lack of access to development opportunities, wage differences, and poverty amongst non-white people. In light of this, the system of apartheid intentionally ensured wage differences amongst different races between racial groups executing similar tasks. While black people had substandard education and were reduced to positions of cheap semi-skilled and unskilled employment. This, in turn, affects the type of opportunities which black people could have access to.

The concept of othering must be understood in the context of the socio-economic and political occurrences that have shaped the country. Historically, as constructed by the apartheid system, people of Indian descent were placed in a higher social position than the black people and their communities. This higher status in social hierarchy meant that the Indian communities were afforded more opportunities, better service delivery, and amenities. In this context, these tensions have largely been fuelled by the multi-racial nature composition of the population in South Africa and the apartheid government's segregation policies.

In the South African context, the political transition era signalled the termination of overt segregation and white supremacy in the country. Nevertheless, post-apartheid South Africa did not signal the end of all forms of domination; instead,

white privilege would still fester but in a different way than it had existed under apartheid. This view is reiterated by Hofmeyr and Govender (2015), who maintain that within the South African context, the legacies of apartheid were simply carried over into post-apartheid South Africa, thus, maintaining and reinforcing existing patterns of prejudice. The transition from apartheid to democracy in 1994 did not unite the various races that continue to co-exist alongside each other.

Conflict Transformation

Conflict transformation can also be understood as a "process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests discourses and, if necessary, the very constitution and structure of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict" (Miall, 2004:70). Conflict transformation scholars advocate for a comprehensive approach, which places emphasis on local ownership and on providing support to affected groups within society in conflict situations as opposed to importing external mediators from outside the context of the conflict. This view is supported by Lederach (1995:212), who reiterates the need for inclusivity, utilisation and respect for the human and cultural resources from within a given setting. This offering presents a fresh perspective through which we do not mainly view the context and the parties involved as the "problem" or the outsider or the intervener as the "solution". Instead, emphasis is placed on utilising the actors and resources from within the conflict context to collaborate and attain positive peace. Local peacebuilding proves sustainable on various fronts. To begin with, actors within the conflict often have an interest in attaining positive peace, as they may often benefit from stability. This reality suggests that local actors should be prioritised as the actual custodians of the peace process, considering that transformation aims to attain peace and build a sustainably peaceful and secure society. Another feature that makes the Conflict Transformation Theory appropriate for this study stems from the emphasis that it places on bottom-up peacebuilding approach as opposed to a top-down approach or even force-fed solutions from external players.

Understanding the Link Between Conflict and Violence in South Africa

While democracy brought with it political and civil rights for all South Africans, the country's economy is still largely controlled by a white capitalist elite. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (RSA, 1996) guarantees fundamental human rights such as the right to life, equality, and freedom. Thirty years later, South Africa still struggles to live up to its beautiful Constitution, ranked amongst the best in the world, at least on paper. Today, the country boasts a well-known skewed distribution of income and, therefore, high poverty levels for an upper-middle-income developing country (Van Der Berg, 2002). Van Der Berg (2002) observes that the NP government's legacy can still be seen in unequal patterns of wealth distribution, which continue to reinforce poverty and inequality. Moreover, present-day South Africa is largely separated along racial lines. Where one can afford to reside is mainly influenced by their socioeconomic standing. In addition, the reality of socioeconomic status and hierarchy is still largely determined by race. In this regard, Leibbrandt *et al* (2011:2), refer to a comment made by former President Thabo Mbeki, who stated that "South Africa is essentially comprised of two nations, mainly the prosperous white minority and the larger black and poor". Additionally, the World Bank (2018) observes that race remains as the main predictor of poverty in South Africa, with black Africans at the highest risk of being disadvantaged.

Johan Galtung's work has provided a lens through which we view and understand violence as a critical concept in conflict studies (Phungula, 2020). According to Galtung (1969), violence occurs under the following conditions: when conflict exists; secondly, when efforts to manage the conflict are unsuccessful. In light of this, Galtung (2000:3) reiterates: "it is the failure to transform conflicts that lead to violence". Moreover, violence is generally displayed in two main forms; that is, direct and indirect forms of violence. The former is generally verbal and easily noticeable while the latter is structural and often unseen (covert).

Galtung (2000) extends his argument, submitting that violence is made up of three elements. These elements can be explained as the cultural, structural, and direct forms of violence.

Cultural violence is covert and carries significant weight in people's minds (Phungula, 2020). Because of this, cultural violence is often characterised as indirect or covert violence. Additionally, it is generally accepted as "those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence... that can be used to justify or legitimise direct or structural violence" (Galtung, 1990:291). Consequently, culture is understood to be the entrenched traditional norms, and practices that a particular social order subscribes to. In this regard, cultural violence threatens and undermines these recognised norms and practices that make up the moral code that social orders ascribe to (Phungula, 2020).

On the other hand, structural violence plays a critical role in human relationships within the social, political, and economic contexts. This type of violence is typically invisible, and is, therefore, perceived to be a component of daily life. It is understood to be a direct outcome of rigid and inflexible structures in governance. These can be understood as indifferent frameworks that benefit a few to the expense of the majority as was the case with apartheid. Such practices may be explained within the views espoused by the Conflict Theory, which argues that those who "have" often put in place policies, laws, traditions, and other societal structures with the goal to preserve power and to avert the "have not" others from ascending to their level.

Race and racism remain sensitive topics in South Africa. Moreover, the well renowned rainbow nation still struggles with racism and racial inequalities. Similarly, race and class in South Africa are two conceptions that have often overlapped under the apartheid National Party government (Whitehead 2013). The apartheid system was, in essence, designed as a system that would draw clear lines of segregation, rank citizens based on race and class and further skewed development between the racial groups (Van Ham *et al,* 2015; Gordon *et al,* 2020).

On the contrary, direct violence is conceivably much easier to observe and, thus, is simpler to understand. As provided by the term, this component of violence is direct, with a clear intention to harm, injure or even kill. This form of violence is perceived and accepted as highly destructive and irreparable. While structural and cultural violence has unnoticeable elements, direct violence is visible and explicit.

History of Violence Behind the Racial Tensions of the July Unrest

For Soske (2018), the relationship between black and Indian communities in South Africa has generally been complex and ambivalent. Consequently, violent conflict between Indians and Africans in South Africa has erupted over various issues throughout history. Moreover, these existing racial tensions between Indian and black South Africans remain a contentious issue that has often been avoided. This view is reiterated by Hofmeyr and Govender (2015), who argue that the divisions between the racial groups in South Africa today can be credited to the country's glossing over racism. The authors maintain that sweeping this festering issue under the carpet only permits racism to continue to fester and to reproduce within generations. On a similar note, Prof Paulus Zulu (2021), in his research, locates the July killings in Phoenix within the fragile nature of race relations in the province. According to Manyane *et al* (2021), the violent killings in the predominantly Indian township of Phoenix brought to light the racial tensions and frustrations that still very much exist in the country but have been masked and concealed through the masquerade of the rainbow nation.

The July unrest and, ultimately, the Phoenix killings, took place against a background of racial tensions between the black and Indian communities that spans decades. Indian and black South Africans were both oppressed groups during apartheid, albeit in different ways and to varying degrees (Moodley, 2013). While the other races, including the Indians, were also discriminated against, they were relatively better off than their black counterparts. The accounts and imageries of public unrest, as stated by Lake and Rothchild (1998), posit that public conflicts are frequently founded on prehistoric animosity and conflicting differences that exist between people sharing different cultures, ethnicities, religions, and languages. The same may be argued in the racial tensions between the black and Indian communities of Durban, KZN. The tensions between the two racial groups can be traced back to pre-apartheid times. Durban has a history of Indian and black African conflict that dates back to conflict and violence that swept the area in 1949 and 1986, and more recently in the July 2021 unrest.

In 1949, more than 130 people died in Durban following clashes between the black and Indian communities. According to Mngadi (2022), the riots started after an Indian shopkeeper allegedly assaulted a 14-year-old black teenage boy after a petty disagreement over change at the Indian Market in Victoria Street. Majavu (2021) corroborates Mngadi's (2022) account, submitting that the riots of 1949 were triggered by the assault of a black youth by an older Indian man. In response to the assault of the black teenager, witnesses to the assault decided that they would no longer tolerate the racist assaults and racism. The events of 1949, often referred to as African/Indian Durban riots, led to the destruction of one factory, and damage to over 1,000 buildings and 58 shops (Johnson, 2022). By the end of the turmoil, 87 Africans and 50 Indians had been killed and 1,883 people were injured and hospitalised (Majavu, 2021:1). While the number of Indians was far greater, a number of black Africans were killed mainly at the hands of law enforcement.

According to Majavu (2021), it was not foreign for Indians to assault black people in those days, mainly because Indians related blackness with marginality and subsidiarity (Majavu, 2021). A similar view is sponsored by Ravi Thiara (1999), who alludes to the reality that Indian people considered themselves to be better than the black people, as they perceived themselves to be closer to white than black people. In this regard, Thiara submits that "Indian attitudes towards Africans reflected the retention of the traditional caste system in which dark skin colour was associated with inferiority" (Thiara, 1999:159). While the Durban riots of 1949 could be understood to have been spur-of-the-moment, they were structurally predetermined by the nature of a deeply racially defined society (Thiara, 1999).

The next clash between the two races would be seen 36 years later, in August 1985, following the constitutional change in 1984. Similar attacks to those of 1949 were witnessed against Indian shop owners in Inanda township. The area was highly contested by both the ANC-affiliated United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) (Johnson, 2022).

At this point in history, the political landscape in the province was intricate and treacherous. Indians were prominent

in the UDF, while many had participated in the 1984 state parliamentary structure and also operated as shopkeepers in Inanda (Johnson, 2022). The NP incited state-sponsored violence that ravaged the nearby black townships, which eventually spread and led to the raiding and burning of Indian houses in Inanda.

During the violent conflict, armed attackers demanded that Indians leave the area, which led to over 500 Indian families leaving their homes. The damages included the burning of over 47 shops either owned or managed by Indian people (Ainslie & De Haas, 1998:244). Soske (2018)notes that some black African residents had made efforts to protect their Indian neighbours, arguing that the incitements were another apartheid divide-and-rule strategy intended to force Indian families out of the area for the consolidation of the KwaZulu Bantustan. Desai observes that "although Indian businesses were targeted, anti-Indian sentiment was not the sole cause of the Inanda uprisings" (1985:51).

The July 2021 Unrest

The next racial conflict would flare up in July 2021 in Phoenix, Durban. A total of 36 people, three Indian, the rest black, mainly from the nearby KwaMashu, Amawoti, Inanda and Bhambayi townships around Phoenix, north of Durban, were killed (Mngadi, 2022). Videos on social media showed some members of the Indian South African communities standing vigil, and sometimes opening fire against alleged rioters. The victims were either shot or hacked to death. Many of those killed were innocent victims caught in the racial rage. During the looting spree, Phoenix was used by neighbouring communities as a transit route. Consequently, roadblocks were set up and racial profiling became conspicuous. Moreover, hundreds of informal neighbourhood watch groups sprang up overnight as people tried to protect their homes and families from the looters. Zulu (2021)submits that residents put up barricades to protect their area, homes and businesses from the looting. On a similar note, Mngadi (2022) observed that community members claimed that they were protecting their area when the looting and unrest broke out (Zulu, 2021; Mngadi, 2022). These neighbourhood watches were

later infiltrated by racist vigilantes who took the law into their own hands (Mngadi, 2022). Consequently, the neighbourhood watches are used as a tool for racial profiling and eventually as fuel towards racial tension between the neighbouring communities.

Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study which are presented and analysed in relevant themes. The paper finds that racial tensions and spatial inequalities formed an important dynamic of the July unrest in the context of Phoenix. The study establishes that the inequalities which form a part of the daily lives of many South Africans brewed frustrations that culminated in aggressive, violent and deadly behaviour. Chief amongst these issues are historical tension and racial segregation, Economic disparities and competition and perceptions of *swart gevaar*. These findings are discussed in detail in the section below.

Historical Tension and Racial Segregation

Systemic inequalities in the distribution of power and privilege have served as the societal backdrop in the racial dynamics of South Africa. The study established that racial segregation, reinforced by apartheid policies in the past, has contributed to a lack of interaction and social cohesion between the Indian and black communities, leading to violent conflicts. Furthermore, the study maintains that historical experiences and the narratives of those experiences have the power to shape how people view themselves and others in society. This finding is consistent with findings in the literature on social cohesion that highlight difficulties inherent in human beings to readily discard particular views and prejudices that had long been imprinted in their minds through socialisation and experience. This finding is supported by the findings in the literature by Thiara (1999), writing on the 1949 riots, he states:

> "Although the 'riots' lasted only three days, they left an enduring psychological legacy which is of continuing significance to Indians, informing not only the way they perceive African people but also their ambivalence towards majority rule" (Thiara, 1999:161).

This finding is supported by the findings of the SAHRC report, 2024 which found that:

> "The mistrust and suspicions of the Africans by Indians, allegedly led to the killings of Africans by Indians, as cited by some community members may have its historical origin in 1949...This mistrust and suspicion make it difficult for the Phoenix and surrounding areas communities to co-exist and foster the values of friendship, peace, humanity, and tolerance based on equality, non-discrimination and free association" (SAHRC, 2024).

The study concludes that racial tensions between the Indian and black communities in South Africa have deep historical roots, largely influenced by the country's apartheid system. In light of this, the report stated: *"historical racial tensions between some members of the African and Indian communities, may have contributed to the deadly Phoenix violence, which saw 36 people killed"* (SAHRC, 2024).

This finding is also corroborated in the literature by Patrick (2022:137) who says, "*a society's historical legacy plays a fundamental role in determining the resort to violence."*

Furthermore, the study maintains that the history of Indians first arriving as indentured labourers and later climbing up the ladder as traders in South Africa (leaving the natives behind) has, at times, created tensions with the black community. This finding directly addresses perceptions of privilege or exploitation as furthered by apartheid.

In this regard, Majavu (2021:1) says:

> *"a wealthy and powerful Indian elite used their power to prevent blacks from owning property in Durban through employing a combination of monopoly position, underselling, and legal action,"*

Economic Competition

The study establishes that competition for jobs, business opportunities, and resources has flared up tensions between

the Indian and black communities in Phoenix. This point is emphasised in the literature, by Zulu (2021), when he asserts that the most important contributing factor, the continuation of gross economic inequality in which the participation in government business, especially tender awards, is seen to be skewed in favour of Indian South Africans is a major contributor. This view is bolstered by the chosen theoretical support, which is the Conflict Theory which maintains that racial groups who have access to power may be driven by a hunger to hoard power and resources at all costs. These actors easily cross the line between politics, rent-seeking, political work and business. Consistent with Conflict Theory, as the divide between the rich and poor grows, tensions rise, politics become divisive, and the stage is set for conflict and even violent conflict.

This view is supported by Moodley, who maintains that: "*The Indian and Black groupings were not only placed socially apart but often competed for limited resources made available to them"* (Moodley, 2021:1). Based on this line of thinking, the continuous economic competition between the two racial groups may be explained by the Conflict Theory, which addresses the presence of constant struggle between those who "have" and those who "have not" when there is resource scarcity.

This economic competition has a historical basis; in light of this, Moodley (2021:1), writing about the Durban riots of 1949 says: *"The cause of the riots must be seen against the economic conditions of the time. While Whites dominated Industry with white monopoly capital, Indians to a lesser degree were included into the local economy through commerce and trade in "Non-European" areas. The absence of transport for "African" workers who had to travel great distances also became a contentious issue, especially when buses became Indian owned."*

The study finds that Indians have historically enjoyed privilege over black South Africans. This viewpoint was reiterated in literature, for example, Soske, (2018) notes: *"the Indian came to exemplify the dependent position of the African within a series of spaces that governed core aspects of daily life' in urban Natal, primarily as shopkeepers and landlords (and sometimes as employers)."*

Moreover, as different racial groups that reside near one another are marred with socio-economic differences, the study finds that there is an employer-employee relationship between the Indian Phoenix residents and black neighbouring communities. In this regard, a significant number of black people from black neighbouring communities are often employed as labourers in various fields with neighbouring Indian communities.

A Stench from the Past: Swart Gevaar

The study establishes that the Phoenix killings and behaviour displayed during the unrest may be located within the apartheid concept of *Swart Gevaar. Swart Gevaar,* also known as the perceived threat of black individuals, played a role in the violent attacks directed at black African people solely because of their race and their purported intentions.

An interesting observation is made by Zulu, "*those who died were not Black African residents of Phoenix*" (Zulu, 2021). This addresses the reality of othering in the sense that the killings targeted black people who were not from the area but from neighbouring communities who were ultimately viewed as a threat. Given the socio-economic conditions and crime levels in the country, socio-political realities in the country have developed a kind of citizen who has been socialised to fear those who they perceive to be beneath them in terms of social and economic status. This phenomenon may be understood within the tenets of Othering and has been introduced and furthered by colonialism, imperialism and apartheid. The study finds that structural violence was utilised to create boundaries and, thus, mistrust and eventually racial tension and conflict amongst the various races. In light of this, the SAHRC report (2024) stated: "*While it is understandable that a general sense of fear accompanied the July Unrest and that individuals felt the need to protect their families and properties, especially in the absence of sufficient police protection, it becomes evident that, for some, this fear was driven by racial motivations as well.*"

Not Loud Enough: The Role of Local Voices

The research exposed that civil society organisations are trusted mediators in the racial conflicts in Phoenix, which is an

advantage for the conflict transformation and social cohesion process. This finding is consistent with the general consensus that locals are better placed to lead mediation efforts as they are in close proximity to the context and closer ties with conflicting parties, which makes it easier to build trust, respect and confidence between those directly involved in the conflict (Galtung, 1990).

Within the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation, numerous factors support this consensus. To begin with, grassroots actors and civil society organisations based within the context of the conflict are familiar with the dynamics and historical relations of conflicting parties. This reality empowers them to impact positively and have an audience with the locals and the populace in general, as they bring in traditional methods that are more favourable to durable stability and peace advancement.

For example, the study established that there were attempts on the side of the Church in Durban and KZN widely in efforts to bring attention to the challenges of racism in Phoenix. The study notes that a number of initiatives, including a march, were organised by various churches in and around Durban and KZN that sought to bring attention to the killings. The church leaders marched to the Phoenix police station to hand their memorandum to the station commander. One of the prominent church leaders, Bishop Vusi Dube, said*: "We are also calling for the perpetrators to hand themselves in."*

Moreover, the study found that a local peace committee was set up to build race relations and run social cohesion programmes in the wake of the July 2021 unrest. However, the study found that the committee had received little to no support from the government. In this regard, the coordinator of the committee, a Mr Delani Mncwabe, says that the process was a sham, because racial tension is still simmering in the area.

Similarly, the KZN Christian Council's (KZNCC) chief executive, Douglas Dziva, said*: "The KZN church leaders group is mobilising to support the initiative to bring peace to the people who are conflicted. We are calling for organisations with expertise to provide counselling and healing for the affected families."*

However, the study established that the South African government has not fully engaged nor supported the grassroots organisations in its conflict transformation efforts in Phoenix following the July unrest of 2021.

In this regard, Delani Mncwabe (Committee Coordinator) said:

> *"There was no effort from government. They treated this thing as a PR and tick-box exercise. Racial tensions persist in Phoenix. I wouldn't be surprised if the tensions flare up again. Blacks and Indians are treating each other with suspicion,"*

The importance of locals in the conflict transformation process cannot be overemphasised. The grassroots actors and organisations have a crucial role to play in transforming the conflict in Phoenix, Durban.

Recommendations

Based on these findings and reflections in this article, the following recommendations are made:

The South African government requires strategies to redress socio-economic realities in the country. Socioeconomic redress towards equality may be a solution to achieving social cohesion and a reality of the rainbow nation. Moreover, the government, together with relevant stakeholders, must be able to lead honest conversations to ensure that there is ultimately sustainable conflict transformation and social cohesion in the country. Honest and open conversations must be able to afford black and Indian South Africans the opportunity to honestly reflect on their respective historical attitudes and perceptions that manifest in the present era. Efforts to address these racial tensions may include the promotion of dialogue, community engagement, and initiatives aimed at fostering mutual respect and cooperation between the two communities. These efforts must be led from the local level and must receive support from the government.

Conclusion

South Africa is by no means a rainbow nation, as the state continues to grapple with inter-racial conflict as witnessed in the July killings.

It would appear that the country has been preoccupied with keeping up appearances of a rainbow nation based on pretenses of promoting unity and reconciliation to the detriment of actual work towards the attainment of the important rainbow nation. This chapter sought to explore the racial tension between the Indian and black communities in KZN in the context of the July unrest of 2021. This article explored the indirect, direct and structural violence that exists between these neighbouring communities.

The chapter puts forth the argument that the racial tensions that seem to arise every 36 years, if not addressed, will continue to challenge the idea of the rainbow nation and social cohesion in South Africa. The study established those racial disparities in power and privilege have been built into the societal system of South Africa, which are evident in the present day. If these issues are not resolved urgently, the tension and conflict may continue to have indelible consequences for generations.

The avoidance of practical and open conversations on racial tensions in the country may be likened to placing a Band-Aid® over a festering wound and creating the false impression of healing. The chapter argues that unity and reconciliation should never be promoted under false pretenses. Instead, the chapter argues that there is a need for promotion of dialogue and openness concerning the reality that confronts a nation trying to make sense of the aftermath of apartheid.

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Part III

Security Governance and Localised Responses

Chapter 6

The Role of Security Sector Reform (SSR) Policies in Exacerbating Inequality in Protection of Displaced Populations – Evidence from the Case of South Sudan

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Abstract

Focusing on the empirical study of the case of South Sudan, this chapter addresses how current international SSR interventions reproduce security disparities and rearrange violence in local post-conflict contexts, further perpetuating displacement. Such policies echo a continuity of neoliberal postulations of security provision in the SSR model and broader peacebuilding agenda that fail to address inequality in displaced populations' protection. These conceptualisations of security have resulted in SSR being state-centric, heavily reliant on top-down implementation, and technocratic in its objectives, which are unattuned to SSR's political nature.

In South Sudan, this bureaucratic-institutional approach enabled identity securitisation dynamics rampant in and beyond the sector, which lie at the centre of political and socio-economic security issues of South Sudan's displaced populations. This resulted in alternative forms of violence in the post-conflict context against displaced populations, notably housing, land and property issues, politicised returns, and community

militia-induced displacement. I put forward recommendations that challenge practitioners across the humanitarian and peacebuilding spectrum to transcend linear and depoliticised understandings of violence and security that reinforce inequalities in refugee protection. In doing so, practitioners can move towards approaches grounded in local understandings of security and violence that are inclusive of the rights of displaced populations.

Keywords: Security sector reform, displacement, refugees, post-conflict societies, identity securitization, durable solutions, return, reconstruction, South Sudan, peacebuilding, local perceptions, judicial, police, state-centric, militias

1. Introduction

In 2013, inter-ethnic disputes between the Dinka and Nuer ruling tribes in South Sudan drew the country into a five-year civil war, displacing over four million persons within and across borders. The civil war erupted as conflict parties set out to gain exclusive political and economic control to protect their identity security. By September 2018, the main warring political parties, led by the country's President Salva Kiir (a Dinka) and Vice President Riek Machar (a Nuer) signed the Revitalised Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS). However, the internationally and regionally backed security arrangements set in the agreement have, thus far, neither resolved pre-existing displacement nor prevented the rise of subnational violence in the post-conflict context – causing the resurgence of displacement. Consequently, many of the returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain unable to return to their communities of origin. As this chapter highlights, the process by which displacement is reproduced in post-conflict contexts, elicits important questions regarding the utility of reform interventions in advancing the security sector's function: to provide human-centred security. This includes displaced populations' physical, material, legal and social security.

Security sector reform (SSR) in post-conflict contexts remains - as argued by this chapter, a neo-liberal standardised procedure, with a top-down implementation rooted in promoting state identity security and cementing the status quo over

provision of human security and local ownership of SSR. It is the under-investigated nexus between displacement and SSR that provides the gateway to exploring how security provision is practised and reformed in response to the needs of the most marginalised in the conflict aftermath.

The chapter first outlines the study's methodology and theoretical framework. This follows with an examination of SSR theory against its operationalisation and repercussions for displaced populations. The third section then moves to analyse the South Sudanese context and how SSR architecture in R-ARCSS augments the security elite's identity securitisation within different areas of governance The next section highlights SSR's blind spots, particularly the unaccounted role of local militias and their instrumentalisation by security elites. It also discusses how international SSR and humanitarian communities' disregard for local power dynamics and politics plays a critical role in rekindling and prolonging displacement. The analysis demonstrates the importance of recognising the role of local politics, domination, and inequality in the conceptualisation of security and violence in SSR interventions.

Two particular themes were central yet beyond the remit of the study: the intersections and interdependencies between SSR, DDR (disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration) and transitional justice and their impact on displacement and the role that the interests of international, regional and national mediators and actors played in the formation of SSRs in the R-ARCSS. Both, however, are generally recognised throughout this chapter.

2. Theoretical and Methodological Framework

2.1. Research Methodology

Assessing the degree to which SSR in post-conflict contexts affects displacement, an under-investigated and deeply contextual topic, merits a qualitative approach with an exploratory design (Babbie, 2016:90). The chapter critically examines this impact through the case of South Sudan, using secondary data analysis to establish intersection points and provide impetus for future primary research. It uses a semi-systematic approach to reviewing literature "designed for topics that have been conceptualised differently and studied by various groups of researchers within

diverse disciplines and that hinder a full systematic review process" (Snyder, 2019:335). Sources include academic journals, books, policy reports, case studies, news sites, databases, and grey literature. Selection of references was contingent on reliability, validity, and timeframe. Included references were assessed for scope, relevance and findings and then cross-referenced. Recent research was given precedence unless analysis required historical referencing. The chapter adopts an interpretive epistemology in analysing the subjective meaning that different local actors assign to security and violence (Bryman, 2012:30) and a constructivist ontology that views social actors as the constructors of constantly evolving social organisations and categories (ibid:32).

2.2. Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. Critical Security Studies Lens

Utilising a critical lens to understanding security; this study shifts from realist perceptions that exclusively focus on state-centred security (Walt, 1991). Such an approach to security is derived from our perceptions of how the world and politics function (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010) and gives rise to important questions on security such as what we perceive as threats, threatening actors, and security's referent objects. Two concepts are, thus, particularly relevant for this study: the broadened security agenda and the challenged realist paradigm of state being security's sole referent object. Transcending schisms in the critical security studies (CSS) discourse, the chapter draws on select concepts from CSS to analyse how local actors understand, structure, provide and maintain security and the reverberations of this on displaced populations in post-conflict contexts. The broadened security agenda, while precipitating liberal interventions, helps to highlight divergent perceptions of security and threats in post-conflict contexts. I argue that the SSR process' failure in reconciling these local perceptions prolonged protracted displacement and hindered SSR's ability to achieve its main goal - human security. This critique of SSR also draws on a postcolonial lens that analyses how human security de-historicises pre-existing interactions from which human insecurity emerges and probes the perception of security institutions rooted in Western ideals as the antithesis of conflict (Barkawi & Laffey, 2006).

2.2.2. *Securitisation and State vs. Societal Security*

Derived from the Copenhagen School, securitisation and societal security are CSS concepts that provide a useful analytical framework to analyse why currently, SSR does not address displacement in post-conflict contexts. Securitisation is defined as an actor's decision to nullify "political procedure" when an issue is perceived or framed as an "existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions" (Buzan et al, 1998:23–24). Securitisation can happen in military, political, economic, environmental, and societal sectors (Buzan, 1983) and with state and society as two distinct referent objects (Waever *et al*, 1993). A society's security then can be threatened by the state through military (external or internal aggression), economic, environmental, and political sectors (Buzan et al, 1998:121). This could be the case in a country where particular ethnic or religious groups dominate minorities, who in turn, attempt to control institutions and regions related to their identity in order to reclaim security (Roe, 2004). In contrast, societal security is largely sustained for the dominant group through securitising its privileged political position (Roe, 2004:71).

Fear of displacement, in this vein, can be perceived as a societal threat on the local level inducing securitisation measures in the form of violent resistance or self-defence militias to ensure safety. Regionally and internationally, displacement induces various securitisation responses from restrictive asylum policies to hasty peace agreements that promote the "safe" return of refugees (De Waal *et al*, 2019). On a national level, retaining the state's monoethnic identity becomes a pretext to use displacement as a securitisation tool against other identity groups, subjecting them to a range of threats.

3. SSR: Is It Relevant for the Security of the Displaced?

3.1. The Evolution of Human-Centred Perspective

Despite its introduction as a necessary component to development, SSR was initially set back by the Cold War's focus on enhancing state survival and military capability – rendering security assistance a highly politicised endeavour (Peoples & Vaughn-Williams, 2010). With the end of the Cold War, security

conceptualisation evolved – broadening and deepening the international security agenda and replacing state security with human-centred security (Jones, 1996). The strides made by the proliferation of the human security agenda have culminated in placing SSR at the heart of liberal state and peacebuilding; not just to restructure security institutions but to reshape social, political and economic structures institutionally and behaviourally vis-à-vis their constituents (Hettne, 2010).

In this context, SSR turned into a device to instil "order from the Western 'core' to the 'unstable periphery'" (Duffield, 2002). Aiming to mitigate poverty, resource competition, ethnic strife and other threats (Kaldor, 2005), the human security agenda reconstructed development aid as a strategic instrument for conflict prevention and social reconstruction (Duffield, 1999) aiming to provide protection against "new wars" on the "borderlands" (Duffield, 2001). Efforts for liberal interventionism, however, failed, leading to a reconsideration of its underlying assumptions. Democracy, as it appears, came hand-in-hand with "new forms of militarism, violent conflict, and insecurity" which resulted because of heightened political expectations, opposition from state elite and "self-interested democracy promotion by the West" (Cawthra & Luckham, 2003:3–7). These debates raise various questions about liberal interventions and frameworks, specifically SSR, to varying post-conflict contexts.

3.2. The Conceptual-Contextual Divide

Beyond realist notions of security fostering the Weberian state's control of legitimate violence, SSR theory builds upon a liberal values system bound by good governance, accountability, gender equality and human rights (Jackson, 2011). It proposes a holistic approach including political, institutional, and socio-economic reforms to provide state and human security (Sedra, 2010). Politically, SSR aims to introduce civilian elements that can oversee and alter security sector management democratically (Chanaa, 2002). Institutionally, reforms include army right-sizing and shifting its focus from political affairs towards national defence and peace-support activities. They also aim to build police, judicial and penal systems capacities delineating their roles, autonomy, and accountability. Reforms also include emergency

services, paramilitaries, and non-statutory security services, amongst others (OECD, 2008). Socio-economically, reforms aim to increase civic oversight over the sector and manage resource consumption. While ambitious in its objectives, SSR proponents promote it as a technocratic exercise applying predetermined provisions to liberalise "illiberal" security sectors (Jackson, 2011). This outlook has driven SSR's conceptual-contextual divide with its emphasis on institutional challenges that eschew the critical political questions of improving the security sector's ability to provide for local security needs.

Applying SSR's theoretical model through a political lens becomes even more challenging in post-conflict contexts because it can lead to cementing sectoral policies of excision where state legitimacy is contested amidst various ethnic and nationalistic priorities. For instance, in South Sudan, internationally promoted reforms deepened military ethnic divisions (Craze, 2019). Disarmament policies executed along ethnic lines have also exacerbated sub-national violence, rekindling mass displacement (Watson, 2021). Not accounting for local power dynamics and national strategic priorities can also translate into resistance to applying suggested reforms (Hendrickson & Karkoszka, 2002) and the creation of "shadow networks" where corrupt transactions between actors take place when regular methods become obstructed (Chanaa, 2002: 49).

Additionally, though SSR theory emphasises local ownership and security actors' inclusion, practice remains state-centric and linear (Bagayoko *et al*, 2016). Limited whole-of-society security assessments further undermine SSR's ability to address people's security needs. Such weak representation also has justice-related consequences for marginalised populations such as in the case of integration into the military of armed factions that have previously committed abuses against displaced persons (Caparini, 2012). Exclusion of informal security actors – who form around 80% of the sector – from SSR also obstructs measuring its efficacy in providing fair and comprehensive security. It also downplays their role in fostering return, reintegration and resettlement (England, 2012). Lastly, SSR theory's promotion of the apolitical inclusion of traditional local authorities as one homogenous group disregards their power

hierarchies and group contentions that are detrimental to security provision (Bagayoko *et al*, 2016).

SSR operationalisation also continues to be shaped by diverse political interests of external actors and attempts to strengthen donor buy-in while grappling to maintain its commitment to SSR's governing values and principles (Chanaa, 2002). Lack of strategic direction and holistic outlook characterise international and regional organisations' SSR interventions and provisions (Hutchful, 2009). Prominent patterns in post-conflict SSR in Africa reflect only partial efforts focusing primarily on military components (Detzner, 2017) while bodies concerned with the provision of human security such as the police and judiciary remain overlooked (ibid). With no effective entities and mechanisms to resolve disputes, claim lost property and land or administer reparations, returnees and IDPs face countless insecurities (Azzam, 2022).

3.3. Intervention Sequencing: Where do SSR and Humanitarian Actors Meet?

Further impeding SSR's function to provide IDPs and refugees' long-term security and justice needs is the lack of adequate sequencing between SSR and humanitarian interventions. A major contributing factor is the securitisation of migration discourse; framing migrants as security threats by both developed and developing countries. This translates to Western countries' employment of strategies such as restrictive asylum policies and aid provision to host countries to curb migration flows (Crisp, 2001). Resettlement and integration into host countries is equally problematic, as these, too, have similarly adopted the use of restrictive policies (Bhagat, 2020).

This leaves repatriation as the favourable option amongst humanitarian aid organisations (Chimni, 2002) despite broad criticisms of the negative effects that early return (Hammond, 1999) has on displaced populations against extended and state-centric peacebuilding interventions (England, 2012). It is, thus, imperative to address "more normative than technical questions" in the design, sequencing, and implementation of SSR and humanitarian interventions, "namely whose security they serve", what dynamics do they reinforce between displaced

persons and national security institutions and "where local ownership lies" (Azzam, 2022).

4. Conflict Historical Background

South Sudan's ethnic groups are predominantly Dinka (35%) followed by Nuer (15%). Other ethnicities include Shilluk, Murle and Equatorian tribes (MRG, 2023). Instigated over fifty years ago, inter-ethnic contentions date back to the British occupation and Sudanese administrative system, when political and socio-economic favouritism and separation between different ethnicities took place (Johnson, 2016). As the South Sudanese liberation project gained traction, contentions transformed to disputes over its historical ownership – ushering in the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) fragmentations led by the Nuer security elite from the 1970s onwards (Pinaud, 2021:28–33). Briefly obscured by the strive for independence from Sudan in the post-Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) period (2005–2011), this rhetoric resurfaced intensely after gaining statehood, leading to the 2013 civil war.

The five-year war was sparked by a prolonged political struggle resulting in the state's Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) splitting into two parties (SPLA and SPLA-IO [South Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army—In Opposition]), and Kiir accusing Machar of attempting a coup, leading to his removal from office in December 2013 (Pinaud, 2021:145). These dynamics marked the beginning of systematic targeting of Nuer and later Equatoria and the Shilluk populations by Dinka-led state security forces (ibid).

Oil revenues, a primary source of contention, have been utilised by the SPLM since 2005 to mobilise population-wide consensus for independence through handing out positions and promising a broad-based government and development (De Waal, 2015). Kiir's political-inclusion strategy shifted, however, post-independence towards the securitisation of non-loyalists, as oil resources were confined within the SPLM and dedicated to expanding and strengthening the security sector (ibid.). This played a crucial role in the failure of the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) and the floundering of the 2018 Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan

(R-ARCSS). The highest cost is paid, however, by citizens, whose agrarian and pastoral sustenance economies remain neglected by the state. Their living conditions have also been compounded by flooding and sub-national violence (Mednick, 2021), causing mass displacements, and leaving almost 60% of the population facing food insecurity (UNHCR, 2025; WFP, 2025).

5. "Locally-owned" SSR: Resolving or Protracting Security and Peace in the Post-Conflict Context for the Displaced?

5.1. Isolated SSR Provisions for Elite Security

South Sudan's record of political agreements presents ample insight on the intersections between displacement and SSR critical discourse. Like its antecedents, the R-ARCSS perpetuates the same model-based reforms "underpinned by neoliberal normative assumptions" and characterised by "ambiguity and apolitical idiosyncrasy" (Azzam, 2022). These reforms emanate from international and regional mediators' investment in creating hasty peace agreements where success hinges upon the "political will" of "belligerents" (Boswell, 2019). These, ultimately, risk becoming a disguise for sub-mensa manoeuvres that bolster the prevalence of security forces (Azzam, 2022).

In order to restructure the unified army, SSR provisions in the 2018 R-ARCSS entail ending recruitment and requiring parties to declare troop numbers, assemble, screen and train them and establish cantonment sites (R-ARCSS Chapter II Clause 2.1.8). However, this approach led to increased securitisation as warring factions resisted these reforms by being openly defiant or by using tactics to manoeuvre them to maintain or bolster their military standing (Craze, 2019). Both warring factions overinflated their troop numbers to maximise their share in the unified force and disguise the actual status of their troops. The uniforms, salaries and place allocated for these ghost troops, would later be utilised for recruitment (ibid.). They also evaded soldier vetting and registration processes. SSR's disregard for the warring factions' military and political concerns and their conflicting views on security and violence engrained the existing fragmentation amongst military forces rather than mending it (Azzam, 2022).

Security reforms' focus on creating a formal army also meant overlooking broader changes in the security sector landscape since 2013 and power asymmetries between the government and opposition. This had critical consequences for displaced populations (Azzam, 2022). A case in point was the Government of the Republic of South Sudan (GRSS)' allocation of resources to the National Security Service (NSS) - a security body excluded from SSR – rather than the unified army (Craze, 2019:5). Conversely, cantoned opposition sites received limited funds from those initially allotted to them through R-ARCSS. This led to opposition forces dying because of limited food and medical supplies (UNPoE, 2020) after they were isolated in areas that restricted their influence over civilians and resources (Craze, 2019). Such tactics reflect that the GRSS still adopts ethnic targeting to eliminate opposition in the post-conflict context; a segment of the security sector that many displaced populations share ethnic ties and affiliation with. Centralised resource control and ethnic targeting of opposition troops further encouraged SPLA-IO forces' split from their leader Machar to join Kiir. Such navigation of SSR provisions to institutionalise ethnic segregation raises a pertinent question of whether security provision for IDPs and returnees would follow suit.

Politically, Kiir has also utilised a divide-and-conquer scheme to benefit from South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA) fragmentations and SPLA-IO internal discord and assume control of opposition positions in the cabinet to his advantage (MAAPSS, 2020). While the cabinet seems to attain the ethnic composition required by the R-ARCSS (ibid.) - this is supported by a "broader calculation of political and economic alliances" (Azzam, 2022). Accordingly, the greatest share of power and resources is concentrated in the hands of Kiir and the Dinka NSS Head of Internal Security (de Waal, 2015). This is especially true, as cabinet ministers do not have financial or political autonomy from the executive and, therefore, exercise no real power; akin to loyalty tokens (MAAPSS, 2020).

These examples demonstrate how ruling security actors in South Sudan have used loose ends in the SSR provisions to

bolster pre-existing power asymmetries – a feat that means that effective power-sharing and oversight are far from being achieved. The use of such manoeuvres, maintaining power in the hands of a few, impacts local ownership of SSR and can lead to further violations against marginalised ethnic constituencies or to violence resurgence if those groups rally – the outcomes for the displaced are detrimental in both cases.

5.2. Rearranging Boundaries or Identities?

In another vein, disputes over territory have been another hallmark of power assertion in South Sudan. Between 2015 and 2017, South Sudan's states were redivided from 10 to 28 and 32 (Pritchard, 2020). The decision, however, was met with criticism from marginalised ethnic groups who saw it as a packing-and-cracking scheme used by Kiir to cement his group's dominance. Kiir, however, justified the decisions as a concession to demands for federalism and better access to services (Justin & de Vries, 2019). While the decisions were eventually retracted in 2020, the repercussions that they had on deepening power imbalances between South Sudanese ethnic groups continue to linger.

A case in point is the assaults by the Padang Dinka militias on the Shilluk ethnic group in the oil-rich Upper Nile state, leading to their displacement and denationalisation (UNHRC, 2018). Supporting these assaults, the government employed tactics such as the rearrangement of boundaries, destruction of housing, land and property (HLP), appointment of local authorities and re-territorialisation of contested areas to strengthen the Padang Dinka's hold on the state. By 2020, the Padang Dinka had asserted their territorial and demographic preponderance (Pritchard & Verjee 2021) ahead of the 2022 census and presidential elections (MAAPSS, 2021). The recurrent failure of R-ARCSS to provide societal security to Shilluk civilians resulted in their support for the Agwelek militia, primarily focused on defending Shilluk land (Pritchard, 2020), in order to "preserve their livelihood and identity security" (Azzam, 2022).

R-ARCSS has further relegated territorial and boundary contentions to technocratic committees (the Independent Boundary Commission and Technical Boundary Committee)

despite the underlying ethnicised political race to control resources. Notwithstanding the wide acknowledgement of violence committed against the Shilluk, the agreement's provisions addressing displacement continue to view violence affecting IDPs as commensurate and apolitical. The consequences have meant that a Padang Dinka administration was assigned to the Upper Nile state, irrespective of the crimes committed by the group's militias (MAAPSS, 2021). Meanwhile, resolution of such disputes remains assigned to a stalled transitional justice process that risks being equally securitised (Azzam, 2022), while the livelihood and security of over 42,000 displaced civilians, mostly Shilluk, in the Malakal protection of civilians (PoC) site remain in limbo (OCHA, 2025).

On a more localised level, IDPs experience insecurities in the territorial sector, as many were forcefully evicted from their homes during the civil war. Such insecurities manifest in persisting HLP issues and fears of recurring violence – the main reasons causing IDPs to remain in post-conflict displacement (Harragin, 2020). These have arisen because of land grabbing (Deng, 2021), lack of land rights documentation with official and customary bodies (CSRF, 2021) and the use of ambiguous legislations to re-allocate abandoned land during the war to IDPs from state-favoured ethnicities (Wal, 2021).

Fuelling this further are the police and judicial sectors, which also demonstrate instances of power abuse and manoeuvres of identity securitisation. Alongside reforms targeting the military or territorial sector, reforms in the police and judicial sectors are imperative to the safety of displaced populations and their sense of local ownership. Lack of trust in these institutions is reflected in communal dependence on local informal mediators beyond these institutions to resolve disputes.

While R-ARCSS promises reforms to the 2009 Police Service Act (R-ARCSS 2018 Chapter 1 Clause 1.18.1.2) and the 2008 Judiciary Act (Clause 1.17.3), action on both Acts has been stalled, leaving both institutions subject to a government and security sector that lacks in equal representation and bodies of oversight. The police sector remains subservient to the SPLA and continues to conduct policing services with no training in civilian law enforcement.

It also relies heavily on violence and is characterised by a vague hierarchy that is occasionally bypassed with orders coming from Juba (Small Arms Survey, 2012). This means that corruption, extortion and human rights violations continue despite efforts by United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and other actors to build South Sudanese National Police Services (SSPNS) capacity (Vhumbunu, 2021) and to boost security locally. At best, SSPNS has fostered a small-scale, unstable protection net for some of South Sudan's displaced population. This is evident in the responses of displaced communities analysed from IOM's site assessment dataset (2022), where police rank second after community watch groups (CWGs) (IOM, 2022).

Judicial reforms "subscribing 'to the principle of separation of powers'" (R-ARCSS Chapter I Clause 1.17.1.) - on the other hand, have also been stalled and remain blatantly detached from the hybridised nature of the country's legal system (including statutory and customary bodies) despite the benefits that it offers (Ibreck, 2019:81–87). This leaves judicial bodies subject to military elites' securitisation, creating predatory and violent justice institutions (Ibreck, 2019:82).

A silver lining for IDPs came in 2018 with the drafting of a national IDP law. Nevertheless, the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons Act that was formally adopted in 2019 is yet to settle structural security issues for IDPs six years later and remains inoperable as the existing National Framework for Return, Reintegration and Relocation of Displaced Persons (Beyani, Kulang & Mwebi, 2020). Only recently, the GRSS adopted the South Sudan Action Plan on Return, Reintegration and Recovery: Achieving Durable Solutions 2024–2028, to guide the government and its partners in coordinating efforts to create conditions for safe, dignified, and voluntary returns, local integration, and recovery for displaced populations (Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, 2024). Such a plan, however, cannot be successfully implemented without consideration of systemic shortfalls in security sector reform.

In a political and security landscape where SSR is marked by the instrumentalisation of reforms to bolster the status quo, extreme doubt is cast over the feasibility of the national unity

rhetoric and the possibility for transparency and oversight. This raises important questions regarding the agreement's hasty architecture; the extent to which it perpetuates violence and security disparities rather than builds "peace" and the effect that making use of power asymmetries have on its structure. Human-centred security is a key pillar in the theorisation of SSR, yet understandings of violence and security as experienced by IDPs are unaccounted for in the SSR's provisions, which adopt a contextually irrelevant "top-down approach" in reforming police, justice and military bodies. This leaves IDPs in South Sudan exposed and vulnerable.

6. Where are the displaced in SSR? Blindspots and their Reverberations on Durable Solutions

6.1. Displacement Beyond SSR Reach: National Free-Riding on Local Identity Politics

Originally an intermittent phenomenon managed through a traditional checks-and-balances system, cattle-raiding defence groups in South Sudan were first militarised in 1991 when Machar splintered from the SPLA and mobilised a cattle-raiding defence group to create Nuer's "White Army." The Dinka's SPLA followed suit in turning herder-defence groups into militias (Wild *et al*, 2018:4–5). Continued developments led to their reconfiguration "from protectors and raiders of cattle to semi-integrated members of the security apparatus" (ibid). Following the 2018 peace agreement, intercommunal clashes by local pastoralist militias became the prevailing driver of displacement – resulting in nearly one million IDPs across Western Equatoria, Upper Nile, and Central Equatoria (IDMC, 2025).

An examination of subnational violence in South Sudan shows that incidents fuelling displacement do not result from a security vacuum but rather from security and opposition elites' instrumentalisation of ethnicised local tensions and grievances to their advantage. In this sense, government and opposition elites override direct combat by mobilising pastoralist or youth militias to claim local resources (Amnesty International, 2018). In the case of Jonglei, the heavy militarisation by the GRSS and opposition of

a local conflict over resources (Watson, 2021), through consistent weapon supply (UNPoE, 2020) and minimal interference, resulted in the regime's depletion of Nuer and Murle elements, displacing close to 170,000 persons (OHCHR & UNMISS, 2021). Contentions between NSS and militias affiliated with Kiir were also resolved through a proxy war in Warrap that utilised Dinka sub-clan militias' fight over resources (Watson, 2021). Finally, in Western Equatoria, government opponents excluded from R-ARCSS' power-sharing arrangements also militarised local groups to engage in feuds, stirring community-based violence and displacement (Boswell & de Waal, 2019).

Despite their long-standing role in the conflict, SSR in South Sudan continues to underplay the role of pastoralist militias as security actors that transfer contentions between the political and security elite in Juba to the peripheries. It has, instead, focused on reforming state security institutions' capacity and structure rather than underlying contentions leading to national free-riding on local identity politics. This is exacerbated by UN analysis that shows a preference for rationalising these clashes as irregular forms of traditional and localised violence resulting from a security vacuum (UNSC, 2020; 2021), while UNPoE and UNHRC (2018:5) depart from this logic yet these varied understandings affect how international SSR proponents design reform programmes and engage with "security" institutions. In South Sudan's volatile context, elite securitisation strategies trickle down to the local level while top-down reforms fail to do the same. The lines between who circulates violence and perpetuates displacement and who provides security and solutions are blurred.

6.2. Disengagement and Return in a Securitised Environment

In September 2020, against the aforementioned context, UNMISS implemented a decision to transition four out of five PoC sites to IDP camps under the protection of the South Sudanese government (UNSC, 2020). Its justification for the PoC sites' transfer was premised on the nationwide obligation to the "ceasefire of hostilities agreement and the spontaneous voluntary return of some 142,000 refugees" (UNSC, 2019). Other

explanations included the reallocation of funds for state-building (notably to SSNPS), concentrating peacekeeping efforts in hotspots (UNSC, 2021:9) and concerns over campsites' criminality and militarisation (Sullivan, 2018). Sources in PoC sites, however, paint a picture of extreme living standards in the camps that IDPs continue to cope with to avoid rampant external insecurity (ibid.).

The assignment of PoC sites' security to the government, however, means that their residents are currently governed by officials who were previously involved in inter-ethnic violence against them (ibid.). Residents fear this change might result in their forced departure or subsequent clashes with forces (CSRF, 2021). – a valid concern given the incessant targeting of marginalised groups, even with the cessation of active warfare. Exhibiting this is the Dinka security forces' direct targeting of Equatorian tribes that are deemed sympathisers with the National Salvation Front (NAS), displacing and denationalising 58,000 persons between January and March 2019 (UNMISS, 2019).

Further, in a context where the military, police and judicial sectors remain irrelevant to the provision of human-centred security, PoC sites' redesignation to the government and the propagation of "safe" return, pose critical questions regarding the design and sequencing of SSR and humanitarian interventions in post-conflict contexts. This is especially true where the basic liberal values of SSR have not been achieved and the UN persists in overlooking the impact that identity securitisation measures and standardised SSR have on displaced populations. It further addresses international actors' continued "problematisation" of IDPs "rather than their security issues" (Azzam, 2022) – placing displaced populations in direct risk in a wildly ethnicised context.

Finally, not only has the redesignation of camps directly affected IDPs, but humanitarian interventions have also resulted in complications for their security. UNHCR's Pockets of UNHCR (2022) - an initiative which designates specific locations as "Pockets of Hope" for IDPs' safe return - has led to compromising returnees' security. IDPs voluntarily returning to Magwi in Eastern Equatoria, for instance, were censured for being rebels (Craze, 2022). Concurrently in Bailet, Upper Nile State - where Shilluk IDPs remain displaced in the Malakal PoC

site - the UN was implicated in a forced demographic shift by aiding a government-facilitated return of Padang Dinka IDPs (MAAPSS, 2021). Meanwhile, a joint assessment by UNHCR and UNSWG proclaims communal stability and a lack of HLP issues in the Upper Nile, failing to mention the Padang Dinka's settlement in Shilluk houses while the latter continue to be displaced in the Malakal PoC site (MAAPSS, 2021:7).

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Currently, the international community is preoccupied with the technical implementation of the pre-defined goals of the SSR process and the identification of who will locally own and sustain these efforts in the post-transition phase. A more salient question, however, is whether these efforts contribute to addressing the day-to-day and long-term security needs of citizens, particularly those displaced who have been formerly targeted by formal security structures during the time of war.

Disparity in local ownership of SSR amongst different factions is creating a power imbalance and an authoritarian reform process that perpetuates and increases displacement. SSR and peacebuilding interventions continue to be state-centric dodging local security actors' divergent views of threat and security, a situation that leaves the displaced in an unfavourable position. SSR in South Sudan has allowed the dominant party to both preserve its position militarily and use a myriad of securitisation measures to nullify opposition and strengthen its political, economic and territorial standing. With power concentrated in its hands, the GRSS additionally continues to erect structural security barriers that perpetrate "administrative, political and physical violence" against displaced populations and obstruct their ability to return to their original homes (Azzam, 2022). This means that hope for any inclusive institutional reforms or ethnic representation in the SSR process is futile, subsequently forcing different factions (state and non-state security actors) into a cycle of violence that maintains the state vs. societal security dichotomy. It also creates a political marketplace of alliances and rivalry amongst ethnic groups where local militias gather along the lines of fire created

by security state and non-state elite in order to gain a role in a process that does not empower or include them.

Conversely, international actors' limited attention to reforming the police and judicial sectors reflects the need for a holistic long-term plan for reform. It also brings to the fore their rudimentary conceptualisation of security as the "cessation of violent conflict" (ibid.) overlooking the stark contrast between security provision for citizens versus states. Finally, UNMISS' plans for disengagement from PoC sites and the engagement of humanitarian organisations in enacting voluntary returns to "safe" locations reflects a lack of strategic sequencing of security reforms and humanitarian efforts.

Based on this, it is evident that SSR practice in South Sudan has largely failed at enacting the issues that it set out to address. On the contrary, it can be argued that power asymmetries have been exacerbated, leaving the sector's primary objective of achieving human-centred security unattained.

Accordingly, SSR interventions that contribute to providing durable solutions for displaced populations in the post-conflict context necessitate a paradigm shift from top-down strategies to more organic approaches that can transform underlying power politics, culture, and incentives over time.

In this context, the international community should:

- Integrate localised efforts to security provision as an integral component of a long-term strategy of SSR. This is specifically paramount in contexts where the operations of national formal security institutions are mired by identity and transactional politics.
- Prioritise efforts to strengthen the judiciary before or concurrently with other SSR efforts. Improved access to justice, including through legal training, supporting court observation and documentation increases accountability and transparency and provides pathways for durable solutions for returnees and IDPs. This is paramount not only to anchor other reforms (military, police, DDR) by hindering their reversal by the executive, but also to address unresolved grievances to sustain the peace process.

- Reduce the exploitation of various legal avenues through linking informal security systems with official institutions and delineating their roles and responsibilities.
- Provide marginalised political actors who are not part of the agreement with a higher leverage in the power-sharing arrangement and the SSR process.
- Utilise marginalised political actors' position to expand civic space by strengthening oversight mechanisms including the boost of local society's role in SSR monitoring and advocacy for shifting decision-making powers from the executive to the cabinet.
- Disseminate on a wide scale and integrate a more nuanced understanding of security and violence into interventions. This necessitates a context-specific understanding of how security provision and the practice of violence dynamics operate in each context.
- Adopt a holistic approach to security reform by transcending institutional silos and engaging in strategic sequence of justice, humanitarian, peacekeeping, and development interventions. This is imperative to address long-term protection needs of displaced populations and their sustainable re-integration.
- Base interventions on a thorough conflict and situation analysis that incorporates the political dynamics of displacement in humanitarian and peace and security responses.
- Concomitantly, national actors must:
    - Identify points of convergence between state and societal security through engaging in a political dialogue. This will help security actors to better understand security needs of citizens and restore bonds of citizenship and civic trust especially amongst vulnerable populations such as the displaced.
    - Implement SSR in conjunction with broader recovery frameworks (justice, DDR, penal reform). Mere focus on technical aspects of SSR overlooks political transformation and risks donor fatigue, premature disengagement, and conflict relapse.
    - Establish the safe and sustainable return as a central pillar of effective security sector reform in the post-conflict context alongside a robust implementation mechanism in conjunction with international actors across the humanitarian-security spectrum.

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Chapter 7

Multi-Actor Drivers of Conflict in African Conflict: A Case Study of Amisom 2007–2017

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Abstract

This chapter critically examines the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM, 2007–2017) through a human security lens, challenging conventional narratives that portray intervention as neutral and benevolent. It argues that peacebuilding outcomes in Somalia were shaped less by external stabilisation logics than by the complex interplay of regional, national, subnational, and insurgent actors, whose interests often undermined security for civilians. The study highlights how liberal interventionist assumptions - state-centrism, elite bargains, and militarised state-building - obscured local drivers of violence, exacerbated clan divisions, and unintentionally fuelled cycles of insecurity. Drawing on secondary sources and interviews with Somali civilians, officials, and ex-combatants, the analysis demonstrates how AMISOM's reliance on coercion, its alignment with weak state institutions, and its neglect of local social dynamics limited its effectiveness. The chapter emphasises the need for African-led interventions to move beyond state-centric frameworks and better engage with the diverse, contested, and often ambivalent roles of local actors in conflict.

Keywords: African Union, Human Security, Insurgency, Interventionism, State-centrism

I. Introduction

Conflict in Africa is often framed along dichotomous lines of aggressors, civilian victims and benevolent intervening forces. However, a more nuanced understanding of the role of local actors in driving violence and conflict presents a very different picture - one where no actor is necessarily neutral, but rather where the behaviour of actors intersects, shaping and being shaped by the behaviour of other actors, ultimately leading to a more or less secure environment. This chapter will assess how the interplay between African actors (regional, national and sub-national) in conflict can act as a driver of conflict within the context of third-party intervention. It will employ a case study approach using the African Union (AU) Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) from 2007 to 2017 to examine how the interactions between actors, including the AU, Somali government, local Islamist insurgency networks and civilians, have hindered, rather than helped, effective peacebuilding. A critical human security lens is used to examine the efficacy of African-led interventions in Somalia in anticipating, mitigating and responding to inherently problematic and conflict-prone dynamics arising between actors in the conflict. This study draws on secondary qualitative data sources including policy documents, mission reports and interviews with Somali civilians, government officials and ex-combatants. It aims to show that peacebuilding efforts in Somalia experienced mixed results in its ability to proactively account for and respond to nuanced multi-actor drivers of conflict.

II. International Liberal Interventionism

Interventionism has become a common response to ongoing conflicts in Africa in the post-Cold War era. Many Western nations have proactively internalised interventionist narratives based on principles like the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine and the Protection of Civilians (PoC). However, within the international liberal order, this shift has also contributed to the proliferation of a form of interventionism that, in reality, erases and overlooks the true local drivers of violence in African conflict. This oversight stems from the underlying assumptions that inform international norms on intervention. Some key assumptions that support

the normative framework of liberal interventionism include 1) that the achievement of liberal forms of peace and security is morally desirable and universally applicable, 2) that liberal peace and security can only be achieved within the context of strong, democratic and sovereign states and 3) that liberal peace and security are intrinsically linked to the promotion of liberal values, norms and societies (Mac Ginty, 2011; Zambakari, 2016). Achieving these objectives involves protecting and promoting the life and liberty of civilians, by eliminating the perceived illiberal "other" through mainly military intervention and state-building. The reification of state-building, specifically, as the primary form of peacebuilding in liberal interventionism is further driven by the perception that weak states create the conditions for terrorist and insurgent groups to flourish, and, therefore, pose an immediate threat to international security and norms. To remedy this, (Western) intervening actors employ a stabilisation logic, by securitising the state and enforcing its territorial authority and sovereignty, while constructing institutions that mirror liberal societies and eliminating alternative sites of legitimacy that may challenge the process of national state formation (Collinson *et al.*, 2010). However, in doing so, Mac Ginty (2011) argues that the liberal paradigm of interventionism becomes a technical, apolitical and problem-solving exercise rather than a comprehensive political process that considers the local social, cultural and economic drivers of violence, extremism and conflict. In its place, we find dualistic, enemy versus friend, narratives that fail to capture the motives and drivers of conflict in Africa, which are linked to "ideologies, local politics, economic and personal agendas" (Gilmore, 2011).

III. Africa Union's Adoption

The normative supremacy of liberal interventionism has also found fertile ground within African regional institutions. Initial attempts at African-led interventions in African conflicts reflect this dynamic. Scholars highlight that the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and the AU Mission in Burundi (AMIB) showcased the organisation's tendency to favour elite bargains in peace and security practices; where the state is viewed and legitimised as the

preferred "partner for peace", at the expense of recognising its role as a potential perpetrator of violence or the role of other local actors (Esmenjaud, 2014). In recent years, there has, thus, been a growing consensus amongst critical scholars that the AU's main deficiency as a peace and security actor is not merely caused by a lack of capacity or resources, but rather the implicit assumptions that shape and inform how the organisation positions itself and its priorities in relation to states, combatants and civilians on the ground (Williams, 2021). The incompatibility of conventional state-building approaches with the socio-political dynamics in African societies, has further meant that AU-led missions suffer from a lack of regard for the diverse social identities in African societies, which flare up in light of a perceived zero-sum game for power in the formation of centralised national governments (Opongo, 2014). Newman (2013) adds that the idea that state-building and peacebuilding are mutually dependent neglects to appreciate the inherently violent and coercive nature of state-building itself, which externally imposes centralised regulatory control over territories and peoples, inevitably aggravating local and historical social divisions and tensions. If these tensions cannot be properly managed, the outcome of state-building will be intensified cycles of violence.

Liberal interventionism further underestimates the agency of those populations and political actors which are intervened upon. It is assumed that liberal ideas and norms will be absorbed into societies and systems in a gradual yet consistent manner. However, in reality, those who are intervened upon often behave proactively in light of external interventions, according to their own interests. The liberal assumption that signs of political liberalisation, e.g., a secular state, regular elections etc. necessarily imply the emergence of popular consensus and support for the state-building project is, therefore, flawed (Richmond, 2007). Hagmann (2016:6) refers to this as the problem of "extraversion", whereby local and national actors employ an array of tactics to influence, shape and use the presence of external intervening actors to further their own aims. The problem of extraversion breaks down the distinction between local versus international actors, between the agency of those who intervene versus those who are intervened upon. In this regard, no

actor is neutral, and mission outcomes are shaped by the way that actors, both local and international, choose to interact, perceive and respond to each other (Mac Ginty, 2011).

IV. View From Below

Hydan (2015) highlights that conflicts in Africa often find their roots in perceptions of justice or injustice at a local level, between various groups in society, thus calling for a more authentic engagement with non-state actors. External interventions seeking to uphold peace and security, therefore, cannot be void of consideration for local context and views (Hayden, 2015). Thinking about security further implies that power relations allow some to define who is protected, in what way and from what/whom need to be identified and challenged. Newman (2010) argues that to carry out a critical assessment of the multi-actor nature of the drivers of conflict, one must uncover the "sources of insecurity, the nature of the institutions which provide security and the interests they serve" (Newman, 2010). Galtung's theory of direct and indirect violence becomes helpful here, as it highlights that violence can manifest in both visible, direct and invisible, indirect forms. Indirect forms of violence include structural insecurity, which relates to "unjust, repressive and exploitative economic, social and political systems" that are upheld by unequal power relations between actors (Galtung, 1969). Coteh-Morgan (2005), therefore, argues that "the first task of peacebuilding should be to eliminate the mindset that compelled people to distrust their socio-political environment", further emphasising how the "local" shaped interventions. (Conteh-Morgan, 2005). The AMIS presents a useful case in applying the more theoretical work that has been performed on the subject of how the interests and actions of local actors call into the question the assumptions of liberal modes of interventionism.

V. Case Study (Part 1): Actors and Interests in Somalia

Clans, Warlords and Imams

While Somalia was without a recognised central government throughout the 1990s, following the collapse of the Barre regime,

it was not without governance (Menkhaus, 2007). At the grassroots level of Somlai society lies a mosaic of traditional clan militias, warlords and Islamic leaders competing and cooperating with one another for control over Somalia's territories and peoples. The country experienced a localisation of politics and security, facilitated by the rise and fall of various economic, military and social elites (Menkhaus, 2007). Somalia is a clan-based society and the politicisation of clan identity has been foundational to conflict and tension in the East African nation. Ethnically, Somalia has five major clan groups, the Darood, Hawiye, Isaaq, Dir and Digil-Mirfle. Amongst these clans, the Darood and Hawiye are the largest (Menkhaus, 2018). Clan grievances played a key role in the formation of the United Somali Congress (USC), consisting of mainly Hawiye militia, that succeeded in overthrowing the Barre regime in January 1991. In the wake of the overthrow of the regime, divisions arose between USC leaders, which prevented the formation of a new Somali state. This created a mixture of security experiences for ordinary Somalis. International interventions aimed at alleviating the suffering of Somalis and stabilising the country further directly contributed to the evolution of clan politics in post-Barre Somalia. However, efforts to revive local governance institutions often had the unintended consequence of stirring animosity between clans and communities who viewed the process of state formation as a zero-sum game (de Waal, 2020). Clan leaders became political figures vying for positions in newly formed, externally constructed governance structures, which often led to increased violence between rival clan groups (de Waal, 2020).

Transitional Federal Government

Between 1995 and 2001, Somalia experienced a period of *no peace, no war*, characterised by an overall decline in the scope and duration of violent conflict. This was facilitated both by the withdrawal of international forces and the consolidation of the Islamic elite's growing influence in Somalia (Hagmann, 2016). However, local elites, particularly the business class and international Somali diaspora played a key role in reviving the push for a centralised administration from within Somalia

towards the turn of the century (Hagmann, 2016). This, coupled with a growing desire by Somalia's neighbouring states to stabilise the country, led to more extensive and inclusive attempts at state formation. Following several Inter-Governmental Authority to Development (IGAD)-endorsed reconciliation meetings, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was established in 2004. The TFG was constructed on a clan-based system of representation known as the *4.5 formula*, which weakened the role and influence of anti-clan actors like the Islamic courts. Menkhaus (2018) highlights that the clan-based approach was adopted in an attempt to avoid the zero-sum seat-banking that haunted previous state-building initiatives and to achieve a workable government. The outcome was the establishment of a 275-seat parliament based on the *4.5 formula* with selected elites representing each group respectively (Menkhaus, 2018).

The Rise of Al-Shabaab

In parallel to the matrix of warlords, clans and international forces that covered the Somali urban landscape, Islamic leaders and institutions also played an increasingly important role in the stateless Somali society. Islam provided both a common identity and a well-established legal system that most Somalis associated with and respected. As a result, Islamic courts served as an important source of socio-moral authority and justice for communities (Vinci, 2006). The administration of Sharia Law in matters of property disputes, contracts and civil matters provided civilians and businesses in major cities with a degree of certainty and security. Islamic elites were further consolidated as a major actor in Somalia following the creation of the national Islamic Courts Union (ICU) in 1994. This allowed the courts a greater degree of coordination and institutional resilience across the country (Vinci, 2006). The courts expressed strong criticism against clannism, allowing it to reach beyond historical divisions amongst Somalis (Ahmad, 2009). Desperate to secure its position, the TFG requested military intervention from its regional ally, Ethiopia, in December 2006. Within weeks from deployment Ethiopian forces defeated the ICU militias in Mogadishu and helped the TFG to establish and extend its territorial control in

the capital (Samatar, 2007). However, the Ethiopian intervention did not eliminate the ICU entirely, and instead, the nature of the conflict changed in a way that inadvertently increased insecurity in the country and the region. The fall of the ICU revealed and aggravated the dormant ideological divisions within the organisation allowing radicals within the movement further justification for their *jihad* against the TFG, Ethiopia and other Western powers (Menkhaus, 2007; Samatar, 2007).

VI. Case Study (Part 2): African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

Initial Deployment (2007–2011)

In January 2007, AU forces were authorised to deploy to Somalia, under the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The mission was initially given a six-month mandate to prepare and stabilise the country to an extent that would make UN deployment viable (Albrecht & Haenlein, 2016). In its initial phases, AMISOM was intended to focus on supporting and securing the TFG's position in and around Mogadishu. To achieve this, AMISOM focused the majority of its resources on systematically retaking areas of the capital city from Al-Shabaab fighters. Hence, the mission soon evolved into a war-fighting operation involving TFG, AMISOM and Al-Shabaab (Lotze & Williams, 2016). The deployment of AMISOM facilitated the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces by 2009. By 2011, Al-Shabaab forces were driven out of Mogadishu, allowing the TFG administration to establish itself securely in the capital. However, AMISOM remained unable to take an offensive stance against Al-Shabaab beyond the capital during this period, leaving the mission with limited impact on peace and security in broader south-central Somalia. The TFG also had limited capacity to maintain public law and order on its own, necessitating AMISOM to bear the brunt of this role (Lotze & Williams, 2016).

The Surge to Stabilise (2011–2014)

By late 2011, the fortunes of AMISOM improved significantly, aided by renewed support from both the region and the international community. However, the push to advance beyond Mogadishu

was ultimately facilitated by unilateral interventions from Kenyan and Ethiopian national forces, following Al-Shabaab terror attacks in the region. These unilateral interventions contributed significantly towards weakening Al-Shabaab's presence in urban strongholds and marked an offensive turn in the fight against the Islamist insurgency. Kenyan and Ethiopian forces later rehatted to officially join AMISOM in 2012 and 2013/14 respectively, pressured by increasing financial constraints and a perceived lack of legitimacy associated with ongoing unilateral interventions in Somalia (Williams, 2021). In February 2012, AMISOM also received a new and expanded mandate. This new mandate intended to degrade and eliminate the threat posed by Al-Shabaab. This shift came at a time when preparations were being made for the 2012 Somali elections that would mark the end of the TFG's transitional period and the formation of a new Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). In 2012 and 2014, the AMISOM Concept of Operation (CONOPS) was updated to reflect the perceived reality and intended outcomes that African and international leaders envisioned on the ground. The strategic objectives of the mission were clearly defined as 1) neutralise Al-Shabaab, restoring the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Somali state, 2) develop the capacity of Somali security forces, 3) restoration of governance in recovered territories and 4) facilitate 2016 Somali elections (Lotze & Williams, 2016). The mission adopted a clear-hold-build strategy, where it pushed against Al-Shabaab on several fronts, making the way for local governance and services to be restored in newly reclaimed territories (Lotze & Williams, 2016). By August 2014, Al-Shabaab had taken control of up to 80% of south-central territories controlled by the group (African Union, 2014).

The Stalemate (2015–2017)

The rapid push to recapture territories across south-central Somalia was hailed as a victory for AMISOM. However, Lotze and Williams (2016) point out that the increased existential threat facing Al-Shabaab led to significant changes in the group's tactics and operations. Because of the loss of major urban strongholds, the majority of Al-Shabaab's activities took place via its networks amongst villages and communities in the

countryside. Direct urban warfare once again gave way to more indirect, and often more violent, tactics such as the use of sleeper cells, assassinations, attacks on civilians and suicide bombings. As the group withdrew from cities and towns, they blended with local populations, making their movements more difficult to track. The asymmetric and protracted nature of the conflict with Al-Shabaab became a significant challenge to the continued advance of AMISOM (Lotze & Williams, 2016). This also prevented AMISOM from achieving its objective of restoring local structures of leadership, law and order, by stretching the capacity of the mission beyond its limit. After nearly three years of aggressive expansion, the mission's progress slowed from 2015 onwards and fell short of eliminating Al-Shabaab entirely. Instead, AMISOM adopted a hold-and-defend strategy to maintain relative stability in the areas of Somalia already captured under *Operation Ocean Build* (Lotze & Williams, 2016).

VII. Understanding the Complexities of Violence

Violence by Third Party Forces

The first major source of insecurity relates to the behaviour of third-party forces a.k.a. Troop Contributing Country (TCC) forces. Intervening forces played a major role in shaping the Somali conflict both positively and negatively. Interviews conducted with Somali refugees highlight repeated cases of intentional and severe violence carried out against civilians by Ethiopian National Défense Force (ENDF) troops in and around Mogadishu and other urban centres. Interviewees reported instances of throat-slitting, indiscriminate sniper and rocket fire, rape, torture and extortion as being amongst the forms of violence experienced by civilians (Amnesty International, 2008).

> *It started with the Islamists, then the Ethiopians came to Mogadishu. I left my house two months ago, before that the Ethiopians occupied my house. My family died in the first fighting in an artillery bombardment. After that, one day it was al-Shabab, the next it was the Ethiopians, who decided to stay. My own neighbours were attacked by the resistance, who blew up a military vehicle. In response the Ethiopians cordoned off*

> *the area. Then we found people cold bloodedly killed—shot in the forehead.* (Civilian Interview by Amnesty International, 2008)

Interviews show that the motivations behind the heavy-handed tactics employed by the ENDF was both to root out ICU supporters and as a warning against civilians who might support anti-TFG groups. to its dependency on Ethiopian support, AMISOM was unable to address violence carried out by Ethiopian or TFG forces (Williams, 2021). Crouch (2018) highlights in interviews with civilians that some community and clan leaders grew increasingly sympathetic to Al-Shabaab in the years after AMISOM's deployment, because of their frustration with the violence perpetrated by Ethiopian and TFG forces. In turn, these leaders allowed Al-Shabaab to recruit youth from their clan groups to fight what they perceived as a common enemy (Crouch, 2018).

Indirect Bombardment and Civilian Casualties

Another major contributor to physical harm faced by civilians was as a direct result of AMISOM's own combat tactics. As the mission grew and gradually occupied Mogadishu between 2007 and 2011, it relied increasingly on artillery bombardments to retaliate against Al-Shabaab positions in the areas surrounding the city. In the years following the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops, civilian casualties and fatalities remained relatively high in Mogadishu, where AMISOM was based. The number of civilian deaths ranged from 1,739 in 2009, 2,200 in 2010 to 1,400 in 2011 (CIVIC, 2011). The effects of bombardments on civilian areas had several devastating consequences including the loss of life and limb and the destruction of property like homes and businesses. It further fuelled civilian resentment against AMISOM forces. Interview evidence collected by Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) shows both the devastation caused by indiscriminate bombardment and the ways that Al-Shabaab used AMISOM's indiscriminate firing tactics to increase civilian fatalities.

> *Al-Shabaab had been attempting to defend the area against a push by Burundian AMISOM troops. Several al-Shabaab*

> *fighters entered my house around 2am. They were dressed in black and had their faces covered. When I refused to join them, they took all my belongings and went outside. They were shooting artillery shells from outside my house but they did not allow me to leave. They said, "You will be killed very soon. Do not leave the house." They killed two of my neighbours when they tried to escape. Then a Burundian shell came and hit us. It destroyed my house and damaged three others. I survived with my wife and my child but my father, two brothers and a cousin were killed.* (Civilian Interview by CIVIC, 2011)

Interviews conducted by Crouch (2018) with community elders also shows that the death of civilians from AMISOM bombardments served as a motivating factor for why some communities sympathised with and tolerated Al-Shabaab's occupation, viewing AMISOM as an ally of Ethiopian forces with little regard for the security of locals (Crouch, 2018). This shows that AMISOM's tactics were well-known and criticised as a serious security threat by civilians on the ground.

Violence Under Al-Shabaab

Al-Shabaab has been portrayed as the main antagonist in the Somali conflict. However, as shown thus far, the group was not the only source of violence against civilians during periods of intense fighting in Somalia. Yet the group has consistently been responsible for up to a third of all violent incidents in Somalia carried out against both combatants and non-combatants (Menkhaus, 2018). However, the level of threat that Al-Shabaab posed directly to civilians correlated with several circumstantial factors; namely, 1) the group's own perceived existential security, 2) whether it was operating within securely held territories or on the frontline and 3) changes in the behaviour and strategies of intervening forces like AMISOM. Data shows that violence against civilians by Al-Shabaab specifically increased after AMISOM troops began pushing the frontline in order to eliminate Al-Shabaab under its extended 2012 mandate. The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) (2015) data shows that the recorded incidents of violent attacks on civilians per month increased between 2012- and 2014. This period of increased

civilian insecurity corresponds with AMISOM's surge period when the "clear-hold-build" strategy was adopted and the mission became more ambitious in its endeavours to extend the territorial control of the TFG. Violence against civilians carried out by Al-Shabaab also occurred more frequently outside of the capital city on the borderline of Al-Shabaab-held and government-held territories, correlating with areas where AMISOM was gaining new territory (ACLED, 2015). Crouch (2018) makes an insightful observation that the "degrade & destroy" posture of AMISOM unintentionally fuelled a "pathology of violence" in Somalia. This manifested in a vicious cycle where violence carried out by Al-Shabaab grew proportional to the violence employed by the state and its allies in its surge to recapture south-central Somalia. As AMISOM forces advanced to enforce the national control of the TFG government, the group grew increasingly suspicious of civilians, often carrying out targeted killings against community members suspected of being pro-government spies (Crouch, 2018).

Militarised State-Building

In the Somali context, the process of state-building became an inherently militarised activity under what Hagmann (2016) refers to as a stabilisation logic. This process has consisted of securing the establishment of effective governance institutions as well as training, supporting and capacitating the Somali National Security Forces (SNSF); which consists of three main branches; namely, the Somali Police Force (SPF), Somali National Army (SNA) and the Somalia National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA). AMISOM's intervention played a direct role in enabling the establishment and expansion of the Somali central government through military means. Yet, this approach contributed to a dichotomous understanding of the dynamics of conflict in Somalia, where those who opposed the internationally backed state-building project to any degree were deemed inherent enemies of the country's long-term progress. The militarised response to state-building, in turn, had severe consequences for the perpetuation and escalation of violence in Somalia's political arena. In line with this observation, Ingiriis (2020) highlights an increasing trend of authoritarianism and state suppression

under the internationally backed Somali government. A prime example of state repression includes the Somali government's use and misuse of NISA which was formed under the Yusuf regime in 2007. The organisation serves as the Somali state's primary paramilitary intelligence agency and many of its senior staff at the time were members of the former Barre dictatorship (Ingiriis, 2020). Interviews conducted by Ingiriss (2020) with high-level officials in the Somali government show evidence of post-2004 administrations using the state's security apparatus to suppress pro-democracy sentiments to abolish the country's *4.5 Formula* approach of government by selection. President Mohamoud's administration (2012–2017) showed direct signs of antagonism towards those who critiqued the Somali central government, portraying these figures as a second threat to national security after Al-Shabaab (Ingiriis, 2020). Interviews conducted by Ali (2018) also suggest that the FSG's aggressive stance against even moderate Islamist groups alienated many Islamic elites from mainstream politics; leaving these underrepresented in the contemporary Somali political landscape, despite the wide support that Islamic elites enjoy amongst the general population. Ingiriis (2020:266) highlights the "Shabaabization of detained civilians" as a growing trend in the Somali political landscape after 2012, when the new post-transition government was officially consolidated.

Quality of Governance

An absence of effective governance has been an ongoing and indirect security threat to many Somalis. Local governance serves as a key indicator of public service delivery and the ability of a centralised authority to maintain law and order. However, several pieces of evidence highlight that the Somali state, which AMISOM has protected and helped to expand, has failed in delivering quality governance to its people. The failure to recognise the governance capabilities of Al-Shabaab reflects a broader miscalculation in the logic behind AMISOM's behaviour, which has neglected to consider the importance of governance over military victory. Interviews conducted by Ingiriis (2018) with civilian focus groups in several Somali cities highlights that while ordinary Somalis support a strong government, they

are more likely to measure its success based on its ability to provide basic services rather than on its ideological or political stance. Clapham (2017) further notes that from the perspective of ordinary Somalis, the issue of access to public goods plays the most important role in which actors they regard as legitimate. If the state fails to provide such goods the "[civilians] have to seek these goods through the instrumentality of alternative social networks e.g., bribery, clans, religion etc.", including networks like those of Al-Shabaab (Clapham, 2017). The evidence suggests that Al-Shabaab provided civilians with a semblance of stable governance and security in their day-to-day lives in areas that were firmly under the group's control. Interviews conducted with Al-Shabaab defectors show that the group functions internally "like a state system capable of delivering primary security in its territories" (Ingiriis, 2018:515). The features of Al-Shabaab governance includes organised systems of taxation, a functioning judiciary based on Sharia law and centralised political structures that deal with different socio-economic matters. Interviews conducted with business owners by Crouch (2018) also show that Al-Shabaab has been able to administer and secure ports and major trade routes more efficiently than government forces, despite the support that the latter receives from AMISOM. Furthermore, taxes (*zakat*) levied in Al-Shabaab-controlled areas were often administered in a more consistent fashion, in contrast to local government entities which were accused of inconsistency and corruption. Interview evidence suggests that Al-Shabaab also issued receipts for taxes and levies to keep records of payments and eliminate instances of corruption, further showing a lack of administrative and governance capability (Crouch, 2018).

Clan Conflicts

Since the mid-90s, 35% to 40% of violence faced by civilians in Somalia has been caused by conflict between clans and sub-clans (Menkhaus, 2018). The drivers behind clan conflict have included land disputes, politically motivated violence, identity politics and general predatory behaviour in the absence of an overall authority to administer a monopoly on violence (Menkhaus, 2018). The actions that AMISOM has taken have also had a negative impact on the clan relations in Somalia. While training militias in the Lower

Shabelle region, AMISOM provided resources to clans to fight Al-Shabaab, which, in turn, shaped the behaviour and perceptions of other clans in response. Before 2017, AMISOM trained members of the Habar Gidir, a subgroup of the Hawiye to fight Al-Shabaab in the region. However, after 2017, AMISOM began training members of the Biyomaal, a subgroup of the Dir clan and a historical rival of the Habar Gidir. This shift in AMISOM's training strategy directly contributed to the Habar Gidir clan leaders shifting their allegiance to Al-Shabaab, further reflecting the complex nature of clan relations (UN Accountability Project, 2018; Hagmann & Seid, 2018; Mushtaq, 2018). Clan politics, thus, became a systemic enabler for Al-Shabaab and the violence associated with the group, as clans who felt politically and economically excluded showed greater willingness to allow their community's youth to fight for Al-Shabaab (Crouch, 2018). Smaller and weaker clan groups from the Digil-Mirifle and various ethnically Bantu communities became a source of recruitment for Al-Shabaab. These groups were categorically the most vulnerable to looting and discrimination as minorities in the country (Clapham, 2017).

For civilians, the ability of actors to deal effectively with the nuances of clan conflict to restore security has influenced how those actors have been judged. In its initial years, Al-Shabaab held a strong anti-clanism ideology and used its coercive force to maintain compliance from clan elites (Crouch, 2018; Toros & Harley, 2018). Crouch's (2018) interviews show evidence that the group employed expert negotiators and advisers to help to settle disputes between clan communities, thereby reducing inter-clan conflict in the regions under the group's control. This directly contributed to the peaceful mediation of several long-standing inter-clan feuds in different parts of south-central Somalia. Al-Shabaab also employed mobile courts to settle commercial and civil disputes between communities and individuals to avoid inter-clan rivalries, even near regions controlled by the government. Some interview evidence suggests that Somalis showed greater willingness to take cases to the Al-Shabaab courts, even travelling to regions controlled by the group, because of the perceived ineptitude and corruption of state-run courts (Ali, 2018). However, after pro-government forces recaptured the region, these clan animosities flared up again, leading to renewed violence.

The re-emergence of clan disputes and conflict took place amidst the absence of any adequate local administration with the capacity of will to pursue reconciliation. Furthermore, the reinstatement of local governance structures led many communities to feel that they were excluded from service delivery because of the interest of their clan not being represented in newly formed political structures (Crouch, 2018). The inability of pro-government forces such as AMISOM to account for the nuances of clan politics and its effects on the insecurity of Somalis has further harmed the mission's effectiveness. The majority of respondents interviewed by Crouch and Ali (2018) viewed AMISOMs military approach to Al-Shabaab as necessary but not sufficient, and as a detriment to Somalia's peace and security in the long run. Most viewed a political solution to the underlying social tensions in Somali society and politics as the only viable way forwards for restoring security and stability to the lives of civilians (Crouch & Ali, 2018).

VIII. Examining Multi-Actor Drivers of Conflict

Based on the evidence and analysis presented in this study, it can be concluded that one of the primary weaknesses of AMISOM has been its inability to identify and account for its role in shaping the outcome of the conflict through its relationship with key local actors. These relationships have contributed to the perpetuation of "pathologies of violence" as highlighted in the literature, with severe consequences for the security and well-being of civilians. The first relationship that this study highlighted was between AMISOM and its primary opponent in the conflict, Al-Shabaab. Contrary to simplistic and dichotomous narratives that have been employed to justify an aggressive position in eliminating Al-Shabaab, the group's existence is linked to political dynamics that pre-date AMISOM's arrival in the country. The antagonism between the TFG and its allies, and the ICU and its allies, which started in the early 2000s should be viewed as part of understanding the rise and persistence of Al-Shabaab. The group should be viewed as a reactionary phenomenon in light of the political marginalisation of Islamic elites in Somalia, at the behest of foreign interests. Consequently, the intervention by AMISOM failed to recognise its own role in further embracing the "war on terror" narrative and posture that initially spawned the rise of Al-Shabaab.

The mission's increasingly aggressive stance against the group further caused shifts in Al-Shabaab's own behaviour in ways that ultimately proved most detrimental to the security of civilians in both TFG/FGS-held and newly liberated territories. The way in which AMISOM positioned itself in relation to Al-Shabaab was further informed by the mission's relationship to the TFG/FGS state. This relationship closely reflects the problem of elite bargains and extraversion highlighted in the literature. The TFG/FGS was given implicit legitimacy and power by virtue of the support it received from AMISOM. This was despite the fact that, as has been shown in this study, the TFG/FGS lacked local popular legitimacy in many parts of south-central Somalia as well as the capacity or governance capability to unilaterally expert its authority beyond a select number of urban centres. This had several implications for the human security of civilians, exposing them to primarily indirect forms of violence, as conceived in Galtung's theory of peace. These indirect forms of violence manifest at an institutional level and include threats posed by an increasingly repressive Somalian state as well as the inability of the central state to provide local governance, law and order in recaptured territories. In these cases, AMISOM's militarised approach to state-building and emphasis on expanding the reach of an ill-equipped and ill-capacitated government failed to account for the implications that this would have on the lives of civilians that come under the rule of such a regime. Finally, the central role that clan politics played at both a local and national level in the political dynamics driving conflict in Somalia. In this regard, evidence suggests the AU has not reflected critically on how AMISOM positioned itself in relation to the clan-based society. The repressive consequences of the clan-based *4.5 Formula*, which AMISOM played a key role in enabling during the 2012 and 2016 selection processes, further calls into question the efficacy of the state that AMISOM's ongoing protection helped to build. While the "government by election" approach was deemed necessary by national, regional and international elites, it has also created a situation in which the FSG has no incentive to engage in pro-democratic reforms, weaponising narratives around the threat of Al-Shabaab to delay these. The clan-based nature of the *4.5 Formula* has further politicised the issue of clan identity, making its persistence a threat to peace and security in Somalia, where clan conflict has been a major driver of

conflict. This further highlights issues of extraversion and hybridity as mentioned in the literature and an overall lack of engagement with stakeholders on the ground. As a result, AMISOM contributed to fuelling clan animosities by creating a perceived zero-sum dynamic in the eyes of clan elites. By supporting some clans over others, in the hope of fighting Al-Shabaab, the narrow focus of the mission did not reflect on the nuances of how such support might be perceived by local actors. This has driven some clans to support Al-Shabaab, withhold support for the mission or even behave in a retaliatory manner, increasing the threat posed to civilians by cycles of inter-clan violence.

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Chapter 8

Localising Peacebuilding: The Role of the CJTF in Nigeria's Hybrid Counter-Insurgency

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Abstract

The Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) has emerged as a significant local security actor in countering the Boko Haram insurgency in Borno State, Nigeria. While existing scholarship on local security initiatives has examined various community-based responses to insurgency and hybrid security governance in conflict zones, limited attention has been given to the CJTF's specific role, challenges, and implications for state legitimacy and civilian protection. This chapter situates the CJTF within broader debates on local agency, bottom-up security governance, and hybrid security orders, highlighting both its contributions and complexities. Drawing on original fieldwork and a comprehensive review of academic literature, the study addresses a critical gap by documenting the dynamics of the CJTF's collaboration with state security actors and its impact on local security. This analysis not only deepens understanding of unconventional security strategies in insurgency

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contexts but also informs policy discussions on community security initiatives in Nigeria and similar conflict-affected regions.

Keywords: Civilian Joint Task Force, local, security actor, Boko Haram, insurgency, Borno State, Nigeria

Introduction

The emergence of the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in Borno State, Nigeria, since its formal establishment in 2013, represents a critical case in understanding how local communities are mobilised to address complex security challenges in fragile contexts. As part of the government's counter-insurgency strategy against Boko Haram, the CJTF has been empowered to support military operations, patrol communities, and provide intelligence in areas inaccessible to state forces. This form of local arming reflects a broader trend in conflict-affected societies where states partner with, or outsource security functions to, non-state actors in the face of weak governance and overstretched military capacity (Mac Ginty, 2011; Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015). Yet, while the CJTF has played a key role in disrupting insurgent activities and restoring relative security in some areas, it also raises significant questions about the implications of such hybrid security arrangements for peacebuilding, civilian protection, and state legitimacy (Bamidele, 2017a; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013).

The literature on community security and bottom-up peacebuilding increasingly emphasises the agency of local actors in shaping security outcomes (Mitchell & Hancock, 2012; Millar, 2016). Studies have explored how community-based groups engage in self-defence to fill protection gaps left by absent or ineffective state institutions (Orchard, 2014; Russo, 2022). However, such arrangements often exist in tension with concerns about vigilantism, accountability, and the potential for these groups to become predatory or politicised (Rubin, 2020; Macaspac, 2017). In Nigeria, for instance, while the CJTF has helped to reclaim territories from Boko Haram and provided vital intelligence, reports also highlight instances of human rights abuses, gendered violence, and the challenges of disbanding or integrating armed civilians post-conflict (Bamidele, 2020; Bamidele & Adefisoye, 2021).

Despite growing recognition of local security initiatives, gaps remain in understanding how groups like the CJTF operate within the broader security architecture of the state and how their activities intersect with community dynamics, particularly across diverse localities in Borno State where borders are porous, and insurgent movements are transnational. This study addresses this gap by investigating how communities perceive and engage with CJTF interventions, the gendered and generational dimensions of arming locals, and the implications for sustainable peace and state legitimacy in Nigeria's northeast.

Furthermore, while existing research has focused on the operational successes and failures of the CJTF (Bamidele, 2016; Bamidele, 2017b), less attention has been paid to the conceptual frameworks that explain the legitimacy of such groups and their integration within hybrid security orders. This chapter draws on theories of local ownership, hybrid peace, and community security to interrogate the roles, strengths, and risks of arming civilians in counter-insurgency contexts (Millar, 2018; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013). It examines how local knowledge and agency intersect with state-led security frameworks and how these dynamics affect the protection of civilians and broader peacebuilding efforts.

This chapter, therefore, makes three key contributions. First, it situates the CJTF within the literature on community security and hybrid governance, offering a nuanced understanding of their role in Nigeria's northeast. Second, it provides an empirically grounded analysis based on fieldwork and desk reviews of policy documents and academic literature (Bamidele & Pikirayi, 2022a; CJTF Report, 2022). Third, it highlights the intersectional dimensions of local security, particularly gender and youth inclusion or exclusion and how these shape outcomes in conflict-affected communities. By doing so, the chapter responds to calls for more contextualised, bottom-up analyses of security in fragile settings (Millar, 2016; Macaspac, 2017).

The following research questions guide the analysis: How do local communities perceive CJTF interventions in their areas? What challenges and opportunities arise from arming civilians as a counter-insurgency strategy? How do gender and youth dynamics influence the effectiveness and legitimacy of these

efforts?, and What lessons can be drawn for peacebuilding and civilian protection in contexts of protracted insurgency?

The chapter proceeds by first reviewing relevant literature on community security, vigilantism, and hybrid security orders. It then analyses the empirical case of the CJTF in Borno State, highlighting both its contributions and challenges. Finally, it reflects on the broader implications for peacebuilding, offering recommendations for policy and practice.

Theoretical Framework: Local Turn, Hybrid Peace, and the Protection of Civilians

This study draws upon key theoretical insights from peace and conflict studies to frame its analysis of the CJTF in Borno State. The central concepts informing this framework are the "local turn" in peacebuilding, the notion of hybrid peace, and the evolving discourse on the protection of civilians (PoC). Together, these perspectives provide a lens for critically interrogating the emergence, practices, and consequences of community-led security interventions in fragile and conflict-affected settings. This theoretical orientation recognises that peacebuilding and security provision in conflict zones are rarely linear processes; instead, they are shaped by contested interactions between local agency, state authority, and international norms (Mac Ginty, 2011; Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015).

The "local turn" in peacebuilding has emerged as a critical response to the shortcomings of externally imposed, liberal peacebuilding interventions. Critics such as Mac Ginty and Richmond (2013) argue that traditional top-down approaches often disregard the sociocultural specificities of conflict-affected societies, leading to superficial settlements and fragile institutions. The local turn advocates centring peace processes around the agency, capacities, and knowledge systems of communities themselves, who are frequently the first to confront violence and negotiate survival (Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015). In Borno, the CJTF exemplifies such local agency, arising as a grassroots security initiative in the vacuum created by the Nigerian state's faltering response to Boko Haram's insurgency. Yet, as Macaspac (2017) warns, the local turn requires critical engagement rather than uncritical celebration; local actors are not

monolithic and may themselves reproduce inequities, exclusions, and violence.

Although community-led initiatives like the CJTF reflect impressive resilience, they can also embody complex and contradictory dynamics. Mac Ginty (2015) emphasises that "the local" is not inherently benign; rather, it is embedded in social hierarchies and power relations that may marginalise women, minorities, and displaced persons. In the Nigerian case, while the CJTF has successfully disrupted insurgent networks (Bamidele, 2016), reports of extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, and gender-based violence perpetrated by its members (Bamidele, 2017b; Bamidele & Pikirayi, 2022a) illustrate how local security actors can become sources of harm. This duality emphasises the need to analyse whose interests are served by community security formations and how inclusive and accountable their practices are. As Millar (2018) notes in his ethnographic research, local peace initiatives often reflect "the messiness of real-world security governance," where acts of protection coexist with practices of exclusion and coercion.

Extending this critical interrogation, the concept of hybrid peace highlights the overlapping and negotiated nature of security governance in conflict zones. Mac Ginty (2011) argues that peacebuilding processes are rarely the product of coherent state or international interventions; instead, they emerge from hybrid arrangements where state, non-state, international, and local actors interact, collaborate, and contest authority. The CJTF reflects such hybridity. Initially emerging as a spontaneous community response, it has since been partially formalised through support and recognition by the Borno State government and Nigerian military (Bamidele & Adefisoye, 2021; CJTF Report, 2020). This partnership blurs the boundaries between state and non-state security providers, complicating traditional notions of the state's monopoly on violence and raising questions about legitimacy and accountability.

Hybrid peace frameworks are often lauded for their pragmatism, allowing for flexible, adaptive responses to complex conflict environments. In Borno, the CJTF's embeddedness in local networks has enabled effective intelligence gathering and improved responsiveness to community needs (Bamidele, 2017a).

However, hybrid arrangements are not without risks. As Rubin (2020) cautions in his study of rebel governance in the Philippines, integrating informal armed groups into security provision can entrench militarised logics, undermine civilian trust, and perpetuate cycles of violence. Similarly, the CJTF's relative autonomy and informal practices have at times resulted in abuses that challenge their legitimacy as protectors (Bamidele, 2020). These tensions highlight the normative and practical dilemmas of relying on hybrid security actors in fragile governance contexts.

The PoC has become a key normative framework in international peace and security discourse, rooted in international humanitarian law and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine. While initially associated with international peacekeeping and humanitarian interventions (Orchard, 2014), the PoC agenda has expanded to encompass localised efforts to shield communities from violence. In Nigeria, where state forces have, at times, been implicated in civilian harm, the CJTF's role as a community protector introduces a complex layer to civilian protection debates (Russo, 2022). Bamidele and Pikirayi (2022b) note the gendered dimensions of these challenges, documenting how women and IDPs in Borno face heightened risks of exploitation and violence, including from those purporting to safeguard them.

Critical PoC scholarship advocates a broader understanding of protection that goes beyond physical safety to include political, economic, and social dimensions of security (Macaspac, 2017; Russo, 2022). In the context of Borno, this means that recognising that the CJTF's efforts to provide immediate security do not automatically translate into long-term protection or peace. Structural factors such as poverty, displacement, and exclusion continue to render communities vulnerable, and local security actors may lack the capacity or the will to address these root causes. As Orchard (2014) argues, sustainable PoC requires more holistic strategies that integrate local agency with robust oversight mechanisms to prevent abuses and ensure inclusivity.

By integrating these theoretical perspectives, this study positions the CJTF within a complex web of local agency, hybrid governance, and normative protection imperatives. The local turn brings to the fore community resilience but also calls for

scrutiny of how power operates within local security formations. Hybrid peace frameworks draw attention to the negotiated, often messy interactions between state and non-state actors in security provision. Meanwhile, the PoC agenda provides a critical benchmark for assessing whether community-led interventions genuinely enhance civilian safety or reproduce insecurity. Together, these perspectives facilitate a nuanced analysis of the CJTF's dual role as both a protector and potential source of harm within Borno's fraught security landscape, offering insights into broader debates about the future of peacebuilding in contexts marked by protracted conflict and state fragility.

The CJTF in Context: Local Security, State Failure, and Community Protection

The emergence of the CJTF in Borno State must be understood within the broader context of Nigeria's protracted insecurity, state fragility, and the humanitarian crises generated by Boko Haram's insurgency. Drawing on the theoretical lenses of the local turn, hybrid peace, and PoC highlights the complex dynamics shaping the CJTF as both a vital security actor and a source of controversy within conflict-affected communities. This section situates the CJTF historically and politically, exploring its formation, operational practices, and interactions with state and civilian actors. It interrogates how local agency has been mobilised to fill security vacuums and critically examines the opportunities and challenges that this presents for peacebuilding and civilian protection.

The CJTF arose in 2013 as a grassroots response to the expanding territorial control of Boko Haram and the Nigerian military's inability to safeguard civilians (Bamidele, 2016). Initially comprised of young men from Maiduguri neighbourhoods, it operated as an informal vigilante group, armed with rudimentary weapons and motivated by a shared determination to expel insurgents. This bottom-up mobilisation embodies local agency in confronting existential threats, aligning with Mac Ginty and Richmond's (2013) concept of the local turn in peacebuilding. By making use of intimate knowledge of terrain and social networks, the CJTF effectively disrupted insurgent

activities where state forces had failed (Bamidele, 2017a). However, its spontaneous formation and lack of institutional oversight exposed vulnerabilities, including risks of arbitrary violence and unregulated use of force.

Over time, the CJTF transitioned from an informal vigilante movement into a semi-formalised security actor through partnerships with the Nigerian military and Borno State government. This evolution reflects the hybridisation of security provision as described by Mac Ginty (2011), wherein state and non-state actors jointly exercise authority in contested spaces. Official recognition brought material support, including stipends, uniforms, and limited training (CJTF Report, 2020; Bamidele & Adefisoye, 2021). Yet, such hybridity created ambiguities around the CJTF's legal status and accountability. While collaboration with state forces enhanced operational capacity, it also left civilians vulnerable to abuses by poorly regulated CJTF units, undermining public trust in both local and state institutions (Bamidele, 2020). This tension between pragmatism and normative governance emphasises the risk that embedding community actors in security structures may entrench militarised civilian spaces and erode prospects for sustainable peace (Millar, 2016).

The CJTF's role in protecting civilians presents a complex paradox. On one hand, its interventions have weakened Boko Haram's urban strongholds, facilitated the return of some displaced persons, and restored a degree of normalcy in affected communities (Bamidele, 2017b). On the other hand, reports of human rights violations, arbitrary arrests, torture, and sexual violence have raised serious concerns about the group's conduct (Bamidele & Pikirayi, 2022a). This duality mirrors critical perspectives on PoC, which warn against conflating the mere presence of security actors with meaningful protection (Orchard, 2014). Russo (2022) argues for a holistic conception of civilian protection, encompassing not only physical security but also socioeconomic and political dimensions. In the CJTF's case, its limited ability to address structural vulnerabilities highlights the challenges of relying on community security actors to achieve comprehensive protection.

Gendered dynamics further complicate the CJTF's impact on community security. Women and other marginalised groups often bear a disproportionate burden in conflict settings. Bamidele and Pikirayi (2022b) document how internally displaced women in camps, such as New Kuchingoro, face a double vulnerability: threats from insurgents and harassment by those tasked with protecting them. Feminist scholars have long critiqued the exclusion of women's voices from security governance, noting how local initiatives may reinforce patriarchal structures under the guise of community empowerment (Macaspac, 2017). While women contribute through intelligence-gathering and support roles, their exclusion from decision-making reflects Mac Ginty's (2015) caution that "the local" is not inherently progressive and often reproduces existing hierarchies.

As the conflict in Northeast Nigeria evolves, the sustainability and accountability of the CJTF have become pressing concerns. While its early successes in disrupting Boko Haram are notable, the absence of robust oversight mechanisms has allowed misconduct to flourish, undermining its legitimacy and threatening long-term peacebuilding efforts (Bamidele, 2020). Hybrid governance arrangements may offer pragmatic solutions in fragile states, but without clear frameworks for accountability, demobilisation, and reintegration, community security actors risk morphing into entrenched militias (Millar, 2018; Rubin, 2020). This dilemma aligns with international debates on balancing short-term security imperatives with rights-based, sustainable peacebuilding approaches (Mitchell & Hancock, 2012).

Most importantly, the CJTF exemplifies the promises and perils of community-led security in fragile contexts. Its emergence reflects the agency and resilience of local actors in responding to state failure, while its trajectory illustrates the dangers of unregulated hybrid governance. Any future engagement with such actors must grapple with these complexities, ensuring that strategies for protection do not inadvertently reinforce cycles of violence or marginalisation. Integrating local initiatives within broader peacebuilding frameworks requires not only pragmatic accommodation but also normative commitments to inclusivity, accountability, and human rights. The CJTF's experience offers

important lessons for understanding and addressing similar community security formations across Africa and beyond.

Social and Political Implications of the CJTF: Between Security and Contestation

The CJTF has become a key actor in the social and political life of communities across Borno State, embodying a local response to profound insecurity and state fragility. While often heralded as a grassroots solution filling critical security voids left by the Nigerian state, the CJTF's role is far more complex and ambivalent. This chapter explores the multifaceted ways in which the CJTF reshapes local power relations, influences civilian-state dynamics, and challenges established human rights norms. Through this lens, we examine the inherent tensions of community-led security initiatives in conflict-affected settings, where protection and contestation coexist.

The emergence and expansion of the CJTF have not only responded to violent insurgency but also transformed local power configurations. Existing community elites frequently intersect with CJTF leadership, using this new armed authority to reinforce their political and economic positions (Bamidele, 2017a). This phenomenon emphasises Mac Ginty's (2015) assertion that local actors are heterogeneous and often contesting groups rather than a unified peacebuilding force. Concurrently, the militarisation of youth through the CJTF has generated a new social stratum - armed, elevated in status, yet operating with minimal accountability. Such developments fuel rivalries and social tensions, complicating the very fabric of community cohesion.

This evolving power dynamic inevitably impacts civilian-state relations, with the CJTF occupying a hybrid space between grassroots mobilisation and formal security apparatuses. Collaboration with military forces has pragmatically extended state presence into otherwise inaccessible territories (Bamidele & Adefisoye, 2021). Yet, the CJTF's semi-autonomous operations and lack of institutional oversight create parallel security structures that sometimes undermine the legitimacy of official state actors. Civilians often experience this duality firsthand: while the CJTF offers protection, its unchecked actions breed

distrust towards both the group and the state institutions that tacitly sanction them (Bamidele, 2020). This ambiguity echoes the hybrid peace literature, which highlights the blurred and negotiated nature of governance in post-conflict settings (Mac Ginty, 2011; Rubin, 2020).

A pressing concern that shadows the CJTF's security role is the prevalence of human rights violations. Reports of extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary detention, and sexual violence have been widely documented (Bamidele & Pikirayi, 2022a), raising critical questions about the ethical implications of arming community militias without robust accountability frameworks. Millar (2016) cautions that such militarised local actors risk perpetuating cycles of violence under the guise of protection. Moreover, the Nigerian government's limited capacity or willingness to hold the CJTF accountable exacerbates these concerns, emphasising the fragility and contested legitimacy of hybrid security models.

Gender dynamics within the CJTF present another layer of complexity. Women, already disproportionately vulnerable because of displacement and insurgent violence, face heightened risks stemming from those ostensibly charged with their protection (Bamidele & Pikirayi, 2022b). Documented cases of sexual exploitation and harassment by CJTF members are coupled with the systemic exclusion of women from leadership and decision-making roles. This pattern of marginalisation aligns with broader critiques of "local" peace initiatives that often replicate entrenched patriarchal structures rather than challenge them (Macaspac, 2017). Consequently, the meaningful inclusion and protection of women emerge as indispensable prerequisites for truly effective community security.

The CJTF's impact extends beyond immediate security concerns to shape broader socioeconomic conditions and social fabric. The insurgency-induced insecurity and displacement, compounded by the militarised environment created by the CJTF, disrupt traditional livelihoods and community cohesion (Bamidele & Pikirayi, 2022a). While the group has facilitated the safe return of some displaced persons, its influence over local economies and informal governance structures risks deepening inequalities

and restricting marginalised groups' access to resources. The resulting militarisation of social spaces may also discourage civilian participation in peacebuilding and recovery, privileging securitisation over development.

Community perceptions of the CJTF are deeply divided, reflecting its contested legitimacy. While many regard the group as indispensable defenders against Boko Haram, others express fear, frustration, and resentment caused by heavy-handed tactics and the politicisation of their role (Bamidele, 2017b). These ambivalent attitudes highlight the precariousness of local security arrangements and caution against simplistic binaries of community actors as either protectors or perpetrators. Instead, they call for nuanced, context-specific analyses that capture the complexities of lived experiences (Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015).

The CJTF's trajectory offers vital lessons for peacebuilding and state reconstruction in fragile contexts. Community-led security initiatives may fill critical gaps left by weak state capacity, but their hybrid and informal nature complicates efforts to build sustainable, rights-based governance. As Mitchell and Hancock (2012) emphasise, peacebuilding success hinges on integrating grassroots mobilisations with formal political and legal frameworks. The CJTF experience starkly illustrates the risks posed by militarising civilian spaces absent robust accountability and inclusive governance, risks that could undermine long-term peace and reconciliation.

Addressing the challenges raised by the CJTF requires a multifaceted and comprehensive approach. Strengthening accountability mechanisms, ensuring meaningful participation of women and marginalised groups, and fostering constructive collaboration between local actors and state institutions are imperative (Bamidele, 2020; Macaspac, 2017). Peacebuilding frameworks must accommodate the complex realities of hybrid governance, adopting flexible, context-sensitive strategies that balance protection with human rights and empowerment. Only through such integrated efforts can community-led security contribute positively to sustainable peace and civilian protection in conflict-affected regions.

Operational Dynamics and Challenges of the Civilian Joint Task Force in Counter-Insurgency

A comprehensive understanding of the CJTF necessitates an in-depth analysis of its operational modalities and the multifarious challenges which it encounters within the volatile security landscape of Borno State. Fundamentally, the CJTF constitutes a loosely coordinated network of localised vigilante groups, primarily organised at the community level but connected through a central command structure. Recruitment strategies predominantly target young men from affected communities, motivated by a confluence of economic exigency, communal solidarity, and resistance to Boko Haram's insurgency (Bamidele, 2016). Nonetheless, recruitment processes are uneven and are often mediated by local power brokers, thereby shaping the group's internal cohesion and demographic composition. Despite its ostensibly grassroots character, the CJTF is encumbered by formalisation deficits, including inconsistent command hierarchies, limited standardised training, and variable disciplinary practices, which collectively undermine operational effectiveness and complicate integration within formal security architectures (Bamidele & Adefisoye, 2021).

The operational dynamics of the CJTF are further defined by its complex relationship with formal state security forces, including the Nigerian military and police. Although the group operates with tacit approval and in collaboration with these agencies, thereby functioning as a force multiplier in counter-insurgency operations, this relationship remains fraught with ambiguity and tension. The CJTF's informal status results in the absence of formal legal recognition, standardised rules of engagement, and systematic oversight. Consequently, coordination often occurs in an ad hoc and reactive manner, generating operational discontinuities, conflicting mandates, and increased risks such as friendly-fire incidents and lapses in civilian protection protocols (Bamidele, 2020). These challenges illustrate the inherent complexities of hybrid security governance arrangements in fragile contexts.

Resource scarcity constitutes a persistent impediment to the CJTF's operational sustainability. Although some members receive

stipends or allowances, the majority of logistical support including armaments, communication devices, and transportation relies heavily on community contributions or intermittent government assistance (Bamidele & Adefisoye, 2021). This precarious funding environment restricts the group's capacity to sustain prolonged operations, particularly in remote or highly contested locales. Moreover, resource constraints have deleterious effects on morale and discipline, with documented instances of members engaging in corrupt practices such as extortion and illicit economic activities as coping mechanisms. Such behaviours erode the CJTF's legitimacy and community trust, thereby complicating its protective mandate (Bamidele, 2017b).

The CJTF confronts a persistent tension between its dual roles as community protector and paramilitary actor, often prioritising security imperatives at the expense of human rights considerations. In the absence of comprehensive training and formal oversight, certain members have employed coercive tactics that contravene established human rights norms, including extrajudicial violence against suspected insurgents and civilians (Bamidele & Pikirayi, 2022a). This operational dilemma emphasises the critical necessity of institutional frameworks capable of ensuring that local security actors uphold human rights standards while effectively mitigating violence. The Nigerian government's limited oversight capacity and the CJTF's ambiguous legal status collectively foster an environment conducive to impunity (Millar, 2016).

A principal strength of the CJTF lies in its intimate knowledge of local terrain and social networks, which enhances its intelligence gathering and early warning capabilities (Bamidele, 2016). However, this localised advantage is inherently vulnerable to distortions arising from inaccurate intelligence or biased threat perceptions, frequently influenced by personal rivalries and intercommunal tensions. Such vulnerabilities have precipitated wrongful targeting of civilians, thereby exacerbating social mistrust and communal conflict. Addressing these deficiencies necessitates the establishment of robust mechanisms for independent verification and accountability, which remain underdeveloped within the CJTF framework (Rubin, 2020).

The CJTF operates under intense community expectations and pressures, including demands for immediate security results, equitable resource allocation, and retributive justice against insurgents. Failure to meet these expectations risks alienating the very communities that the CJTF purports to protect and undermines its social legitimacy (Bamidele, 2020). Furthermore, the group must navigate the complex and often competing interests of diverse community constituencies including youth, elders, women, and internally displaced persons. Effectively managing these internal dynamics requires political acumen and negotiation skills, capacities that are unevenly distributed within the CJTF's ranks.

The protracted nature of the Boko Haram insurgency imposes significant strains on the CJTF's operational viability. Extended deployments, recurrent exposure to violence, and psychological stress contribute to burnout, diminished cohesion, disciplinary lapses, and increased incidences of abuse or desertion amongst members (Bamidele & Pikirayi, 2021). These conditions inhibit institutional reform and capacity-building efforts, as immediate security exigencies dominate policy priorities. Consequently, the CJTF's sustainability remains tenuous in the face of ongoing conflict.

Looking forwards, the operational trajectory of the CJTF hinges upon the implementation of comprehensive reform measures. Formal legal recognition, standardised training protocols, and the establishment of effective accountability mechanisms could enhance professionalism and mitigate human rights violations (Bamidele, 2018). Strengthening collaboration with state security forces through clearly defined mandates and communication channels is imperative for achieving operational coherence. However, such reforms must be contextually grounded, respecting local agency while addressing entrenched power imbalances and exclusion. Inclusion of women, youth, and marginalised groups within CJTF structures may foster more representative and effective community security governance. Ultimately, the CJTF's operational dynamics exemplify broader tensions intrinsic to hybrid security arrangements balancing flexibility with control, community agency with state

authority, and security imperatives with human rights concerns necessitating sustained political will, resource allocation, and inclusive dialogue amongst stakeholders.

Policy Implications and Recommendations for Strengthening Community-Led Security Interventions

Building on the critical challenges identified regarding accountability, inclusivity, and human rights within the CJTF, this section presents key policy considerations and actionable recommendations aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, legitimacy, and sustainability of community-led security interventions in Borno State and comparable conflict-affected contexts. Addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring that such local initiatives contribute meaningfully to both immediate security needs and long-term peacebuilding goals.

First and foremost, the establishment of clear and enforceable accountability frameworks is crucial. The hybrid and informal nature of the CJTF's relationship with state institutions complicates formal oversight, creating vulnerabilities that allow abuses to occur with limited repercussions. Policymakers should prioritise the institutionalisation of transparent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including the formation of independent bodies responsible for investigating misconduct and human rights violations. Such measures would align with existing calls to integrate community security groups more fully into broader security sector reforms, thereby ensuring adherence to legal standards and protection of civilian rights (Bamidele & Adefisoye, 2021).

Equally important is the enhancement of inclusivity, particularly through the active engagement of women and marginalised groups. Given the disproportionate impact of insurgency and displacement on these populations, their meaningful participation in both decision-making and operational roles is not only a normative imperative but also a practical necessity. Implementing tailored recruitment policies, gender-sensitive training programmes, and promoting women-led security initiatives can improve community trust and expand the scope of protection offered by the CJTF. Empirical

research supports the premise that such inclusive approaches contribute to more effective and legitimate community security arrangements (Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015; Mac Ginty, 2015).

Moreover, embedding human rights principles into the CJTF's training and operational guidelines is essential to curtail abuses and align practices with international norms. Comprehensive instruction on rules of engagement, civilian protection, and conflict sensitivity should be mandated, alongside the development of accessible reporting and redress mechanisms. Collaboration with international organisations and non-governmental actors specialising in protection could provide vital technical assistance and oversight. Such partnerships would help to professionalise the CJTF while preserving its community-rooted character, balancing formalisation with local legitimacy (Orchard, 2014; Russo, 2022).

Beyond these targeted reforms, broader policy shifts are necessary to tackle the structural drivers of insecurity and state fragility in the region. Strengthening the capacity, accountability, and legitimacy of formal security institutions remains indispensable, ensuring that community-led initiatives like the CJTF serve to complement rather than replace state responsibilities. The international community, as Bamidele (2018) argues, must move beyond rhetorical commitments to actively support states in building resilient and rights-respecting security apparatuses capable of effective engagement with local actors and communities.

Additionally, multi-level coordination amongst state actors, community groups, civil society, and international partners is vital. Facilitating robust information-sharing, harmonising security strategies, and fostering mutual accountability can mitigate tensions between actors and enhance the legitimacy of hybrid security arrangements. Encouraging sustained dialogue and collaboration across these diverse stakeholders is key to achieving more coherent and sustainable peacebuilding outcomes (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013; Mitchell & Hancock, 2012).

Although the CJTF constitutes an innovative and locally grounded response to insecurity in Borno State, addressing its

attendant challenges demands comprehensive policy reforms. These reforms must be anchored in principles of accountability, inclusion, human rights, and coordination. By embedding these principles into the design and implementation of community-led security interventions, policymakers can harness the strengths of local agency while safeguarding civilian protection and advancing sustainable peace.

Comparative Case Studies of Community Security Models

Understanding the CJTF in Borno State gains significant depth when situated within the broader landscape of community security initiatives worldwide. Comparative case studies offer valuable perspectives on how diverse local security models function, the contextual factors shaping them, and the challenges and opportunities that they encounter. By examining examples from Colombia, Kenya, and the Philippines, this section draws lessons that highlight both the unique and shared experiences of the CJTF.

In Colombia, community security has been largely shaped by the complex interactions between local vigilante groups and formal state institutions, particularly in regions beset by guerrilla warfare and drug trafficking. Groups like the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) arose partly as responses to perceived state failures in providing security (Rubin, 2020). Much like the CJTF, these groups operated with either tacit or explicit state approval, blurring the distinctions between state and non-state actors a hallmark of hybrid peace arrangements (Mac Ginty, 2011). However, the Colombian experience also highlights significant pitfalls. While some vigilante groups contributed to local stability and disrupted insurgent networks, they were also implicated in widespread human rights violations and illicit economic activities. Their efforts at integration into official security frameworks were marked by challenges of legitimacy and long-term peacebuilding, reinforcing concerns present in the CJTF context regarding accountability, civilian protection, and the perpetuation of violence cycles (Bamidele & Adefisoye, 2021).

Kenya offers a contrasting model through its community policing initiatives, which emphasise formalised partnerships

between police forces and local communities to enhance security and build trust. These programmes seek to harness local knowledge within clearly defined legal frameworks and institutional oversight, reflecting Leonardsson and Rudd's (2015) "local turn" approach that advocates integrating local agency with formal peacebuilding structures. Unlike the more militarised CJTF, Kenyan community policing groups operate with clearer legal mandates and less autonomy. Nonetheless, they face challenges related to inclusion particularly the engagement of marginalised groups and the risk of political co-optation. This example demonstrates the potential advantages of formalising community security efforts while emphasising the necessity of robust institutional safeguards to prevent abuses and exclusion (Mitchell & Hancock, 2012).

In the Philippines, local self-defense groups have played an instrumental role in managing security in rural insurgency-affected areas. These groups, often composed of civilians with intimate knowledge of local terrain, contribute significantly to community defence and intelligence gathering (Rubin, 2020). Their grassroots approach reflects the pragmatism inherent in hybrid peace settings where state presence is limited. However, as with the CJTF, Philippine self-defence groups face persistent dilemmas around legitimacy, human rights, and integration with formal security institutions. The blurred lines between protection and violence, local autonomy and state authority, emphasise the fragile balance that community security models must maintain echoing similar challenges faced by the CJTF in fostering local trust and accountability (Bamidele, 2017a; Millar, 2016).

From these cases, several key themes emerge that are relevant for understanding and strengthening the CJTF. First, hybridity, a condition where local security actors operate with some level of state sanction but maintain considerable autonomy is a common adaptive strategy in fragile environments. While this hybrid model enables flexible and context-specific responses to security threats, it also raises significant concerns related to oversight, legitimacy, and respect for human rights. Balancing these competing dynamics is critical for sustainable community security.

Second, formalisation and institutional integration, exemplified by Kenya's community policing, can enhance accountability and inclusivity. However, such approaches require sustained political commitment and adequate resources. In contrast, informal models like the CJTF or Colombian vigilantes demonstrate the advantage of rapid mobilisation of local capacities but often face difficulties ensuring sustainability and adherence to normative protection standards. This trade-off highlights the complexity of designing community security initiatives that are both effective and rights-compliant.

Third, protecting civilians, especially vulnerable groups such as women, internally displaced persons, and minorities, remains a paramount challenge across all contexts. Incorporating gender-sensitive approaches and ensuring the inclusion of marginalised voices are essential to prevent the reproduction of social inequalities or exacerbation of vulnerabilities within community security frameworks (Bamidele & Pikirayi, 2022a).

Finally, the comparative perspective stresses the importance of context-specific security solutions that strike a balance between empowering local actors and providing necessary external oversight and support. The CJTF's operations in Borno should not be viewed in isolation but as part of a global pattern of community security initiatives negotiating the complex interplay between local agency and state authority.

This comparative analysis highlights the nuanced and multifaceted nature of community security models worldwide. Although the CJTF shares key characteristics with other local security arrangements, particularly its hybrid status and operational autonomy, its distinct contextual challenges necessitate tailored responses. Understanding the strengths and limitations of diverse models provides a valuable framework for reimagining and refining the CJTF's role in fostering sustainable security and civilian protection in Borno State.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the intricate dynamics of community security models through the case of the Civilian Joint Task Force in Borno State, situating it within broader theoretical and comparative frameworks. By engaging with key concepts such as

the local turn, hybrid peace, and civilian protection, the analysis has illuminated both the potential and the limitations of local agency in contexts marked by conflict and state fragility.

The CJTF represents a pragmatic community response to the challenges posed by violent insurgency and weak state presence. Its hybrid character, functioning with state sanction while maintaining significant autonomy mirrors global patterns observed in community security initiatives. Yet, this hybridity also generates tensions around legitimacy, accountability, and the militarisation of civilian spaces, which risk undermining both peacebuilding efforts and the protection of vulnerable populations.

Comparative insights from Colombia, Kenya, and the Philippines further highlight these complexities. They reveal that while community-led security efforts can address critical security deficits, their long-term effectiveness and legitimacy depend largely on formalisation, institutional oversight, and the inclusion of marginalised groups. Such factors are essential to preventing abuses and ensuring that these models contribute constructively to durable peace and security.

Additionally, the gendered and social dimensions of protection emphasise the necessity of nuanced, context-sensitive approaches that acknowledge the diverse vulnerabilities within communities. The CJTF's trajectory, characterised by both resilience and contested practices, calls for a careful balance between empowering local actors and instituting robust mechanisms for accountability and human rights adherence.

This chapter advocates for a critical but constructive engagement with community security frameworks. Rather than idealising local solutions or dismissing them outright, it is crucial to appreciate their complexities and to develop interventions that foster sustainable peace. In Borno State's context, the CJTF's evolving role provides valuable lessons on how collaboration between local and state actors can address security challenges while upholding the dignity and rights of civilians.

This analysis lays the groundwork for the following chapters, which will explore the CJTF's operational dynamics, its interface with formal security institutions, and the lived realities of the communities it seeks to protect.

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Part IV

Borders, Climate and Blue Economy

Chapter 9

Peacebuilding in Micro-Level Conflicts in the Cross-Border Ethnographic Communities of the Horn of Africa: Challenges and Remedial Policy Measures

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Abstract

This chapter investigates the often-overlooked form of peacebuilding in micro-level conflicts within cross-border ethnographic communities in the Horn of Africa, with particular emphasis on the Ethiopian and Kenyan Omo-Turkana Corridor. This cross-border region is characterised by its diversity, both in terms of its population and natural resources, and is inhabited by numerous ethnic groups, predominantly pastoralists. In the Horn of Africa, cross-border conflicts are dynamic, with a multitude of factors contributing to their persistence. The Omo-Turkana Corridor has been affected by the seasonal migration of pastoralists across the borderlands, a porous border, resource competition, cattle rustling and raiding, seasonal drought and famine, alleged development programmes, and the proliferation of small arms and light weaponry. Peacebuilding is a long-term endeavour and presents significant challenges, particularly given the persistent and protracted conflicts in the Omo-Turkana region. It is a complex process that necessitates thorough engagement. Currently, the peacebuilding strategy is intricate and ineffective. The implementation of plausible and

effective peacebuilding methods and practices is crucial. Coherent strategies, encompassing planning, implementation, and evaluation, along with effective coordination, are essential to its success. For a participatory peacebuilding process, collaboration with governments and the strengthening of civil society associations are imperative.

Keywords: Peacebuilding, micro-level conflicts, Omo-Turkana Corridor

1. Introduction

This chapter explores the neglected form of peacebuilding in micro-level conflicts within cross-border ethnographic communities in the Horn of Africa, using the Omo-Turkana region, located in south Ethiopia and northwest Kenya, as a case study. The article focuses on the following three leading objectives. First, it aims to explicate the nature and root causes of micro-level conflicts. Second, it aims to illustrate the efforts of peacebuilding activities that have been implemented to tackle micro-level conflicts. Third, it aims to explore the challenges of peacebuilding in micro-level conflicts and recommend some policy measures for their remediation.

Despite the technological advancements experienced by the international community, peace and security challenges remain unaddressed in many parts of Africa in the context of conflict prevention, management, and peacebuilding activities. Several countries in Africa have been heated by inter-state and intra-state violent conflicts (micro and macro-level) during and post-Cold War. Horn of African countries have been fluttering with structural violent conflicts; since their independence, they have faced armed insurgent and irredentist conflicts, civil wars, terrorism, politico-military turmoil, coups, and election-based violence. Most countries are now grappling with chaotic political developments. Such macro-level conflicts in the region urgently require home-grown, integrated, and inclusive peacebuilding initiatives. Nevertheless, most peacebuilding discourses in Africa are framed by foreign interests, ideologies, and practices that often marginalise community-based methods in addressing grassroots conflicts (Bukari, 2013). To address the glitches, Omoje (2019) advocated for "local sovereignty" in the African

peacebuilding process, which "must be foregrounded by African agendas, priorities, and interests."

Macro-level peacebuilding approaches are proposed by the International Peacebuilding Initiative to resolve conflicts, focusing on national and international impediments (Machakanja & Manuel, 2019). International practices in peacebuilding have not been effective at dealing with potentially emerging micro-level conflicts (Omeje & Hepner, 2013). Peacebuilding is a long-term, complex process that necessitates a thoughtful and inquisitive approach. In the study area, anthropological studies have traditionally been steered. Currently, external actors have been deployed in local matters to mitigate conflicts and maintain peace (Sagawa, 2010). Some of them include the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the governments of Ethiopia and Kenya, and local NGOs. The IGAD began the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) project in the border area in 2003. Since 2006, several local NGOs, including the Ethiopian Pastoralists Research and Development Association (EPRaDA), the Riam Riam Turkana, and later the Ethiopian Institute of Peace (EIP), began a collaborative project to mitigate conflicts amongst the Dassanach, the Nyangatom, and the Turkana. Nevertheless, it is challenging to achieve peace through intervention without understanding the local-level contexts of conflicts.

The Omo-Turkana region, for the purposes of this study, encompasses the Nyangatom of Ethiopia and the Turkana of Kenya. The Om-Turkana region, the South and West part of the Omo River gathering of small groups, clans, and "micro-cultures" has been attracting anthropologists' imagination for interrogating this mosaic heterogeneity and "how to account for the tenacity with which groups cling to and defend their distinct identities" (Markakis, 2011). The convergence of three African language families - the Nilo-Saharan language family (represented by languages such as Nyangatom, Surma, Mursi, Toposa, and Turkana), the Omotic language family (including the Dizi), and the Cushitic language family (represented by the Dassenech) - in a compact geographical area is another remarkable feature of the region. The adherence to their spectacular culture has been

protected through defending and protecting once-assumed territory, creating allies and cordial relations for their common good. The astonishing linguistic diversity of the region is "to produce and sustain cultural boundaries between communities living in proximity and interacting over a very long time" (Markakis, 2011).

The Turkana, a homogeneous Eastern Nilotic group belonging to the Karamoja cluster, consists of close ethnic groups that speak a mutually intelligible language (Dioli, 2018). Its components include Karamajong, Jie, Dodoth, Teso (Uganda), Toposa, Jiye (South Sudan), and Nyangatom (Ethiopia) (Gulliver, 1966; Lamphear, 1988; Lokuruka & Lokuruka, 2006). The Pokot, Turkana, and Karamojong are pastoral ethnic groups that cross the borderlands of Kenya and Uganda. The Karamoja sub-region is located in the northeast part of Uganda, comprising three main ethnic groups: the Jie, the Dodoth, and the Karimojong, as well as nine other main ethnic groups (Stites *et al,* 2007). Thus, the Karamoja cluster is inhabited by at least 13 pastoral and semi-pastoral communities spanning northwestern Kenya, southwestern Ethiopia, northeastern Uganda, and southeastern South Sudan, with cultural, ethnic, and linguistic similarities (Catley *et al,* 2021). The area is categorised as conflict-ridden, underdeveloped, and experiencing political and physical isolation (Catley *et al,* 2021).

Nyangatom is located in the South Omo Zone of southwestern Ethiopia and borders eight other groups. Two of them are adjacent to Turkana, and the Toposa live across the international boundary of Kenya and South Sudan. They are predominantly pastoralists and practice flood-retreat cultivation along the west bank of the lower Omo (Michael *et al,* 2005). They are maintaining peaceful relations with the Toposa, Kwagu, and Murle.

The Dassenech, also known as Geleb or Marille, inhabited the northern shore of Lake Turkana with Omorate as the district capital. The river runs through the centre of the district. It has created branches in the delta, which encourages residents to use flood retreat and irrigation cultivation, primarily of maize and sorghum, along the river's lowlands and plains. The Dassanetch

are divided into eight clans, with each clan occupying its territory and existing independently from the others (Markakis, 2011).

The cross-border area of the study is home to diverse ethnic groups and rich natural resources, which are predominantly pastoralist. The cross-border conflicts in the Horn of Africa are dynamic, and a range of factors, including cross-boundary issues, inadequate natural resources and shared resources, climate change, and environmental issues, orchestrate their existence. The issue of pastoralists along the Omo-Turkana corridor is no exception. It has been affected by the seasonal movement of pastoralists across the borderlands. The case of Horn of Africa countries has been marked by a long-running, neglected, problematic, and ineffective handling of micro (inter-community-based) conflicts; instead, countries in the region continue to grapple with macro-level conflicts increasingly. Micro-level conflicts refer to disputes between local in-groups and out-groups that can occur without state involvement. Thus, it is plausible to give due emphasis to dealing with micro-level issues in a peacebuilding approach. Within the above-mentioned macro-level conflicts, a myriad of micro-level violent conflicts is battling many countries of the Horn of Africa. Chiefly, natural resource and livestock-related conflicts defined the historic ethnographic pastoral communities of the Horn region, which were of an intra-state and cross-border nature, caused by a range of variables.

This study primarily employs a critical desk review methodology. It utilises qualitative research methods, including the examination of official documents, reports, informal interviews, personal observations, and the author's expertise in the subject matter and familiarity with the study area. The first section of the study provides a concise introduction to micro-level conflict peacebuilding and a description of the study region. Following a discussion of the conceptualisation of peacebuilding, the nature and causes of conflict in the Omo-Turkana region are examined. In the context of the studied area, the third section discusses peacebuilding and its challenges. The fourth section outlines the remedial policy measures and recommendations, concluding the discussion.

2. Conceptualising Peacebuilding: Peacebuilding in the Micro-Level Conflicts

The term "peacebuilding" was first introduced into the academic lexicon by Johan Galtung (1976) in his article *Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding*, which labels the theoretical and operational aspects of the concept. Galtung used the term to promote structures for sustainable peace by addressing the root causes of war and violent conflicts and facilitating alternative situations for conflict resolution and peacemaking. Galtung's coining of the word inspired Boutros-Ghali, the late UN Secretary-General, in the 1992 report, which embodied an *Agenda for Peace*. Boutros-Ghali proposed interrelated strategies to strengthen the UN's ability to tackle defiance of international peace and security through preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and ultimately, peacebuilding. His definition expands the concept and spectrum in academic discourses on the subject. Peacebuilding is a new strategy for the UN, and the report recommends it, defined by Boutros-Ghali as "action to identify and support structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflict" (UNSG, 1995). Cognisant of this, the (United Nations, 2007) conceptualises peacebuilding as a range of measures designed to reduce the risk of (re)lapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities across all stages of conflict management and establishing a foundation for sustainable peace and development. Thus, peacebuilding is institutionalised in UN strategies. Proceeding with this, in March 2005, the late UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan introduced a new UN Peacebuilding Commission in his report on *Greater Freedom* to assist nations in transitioning from war to enduring peace. By the conceptualisation, peacebuilding is the transformation of structural causes of conflict into peace through peace agreements using measurable yardsticks that contain the possibility of reverting.

At the local level, the grassroots community is the epicentre of any successful peacebuilding process. This can be achieved through different approaches. Interpeace identified five pillars for the success of peacebuilding: local ownership, building

trust, engaging all groups, long-term commitment, and process transparency. However, Omeje stated, "Peacebuilding enterprises focused on grassroots-based micro-conflicts and intercommunity feuding within and between states are largely discountenanced while little or no efforts are made at imagining and pursuing peacebuilding outside the neo-liberal framework" (2019). Hence, micro-level peacebuilding requires a new, inclusive, participatory, community-based approach.

3. Situating the Context: Nature and Root Causes of Micro-Level Conflicts in the Omo-Turkana Corridor

The preponderance of pastoralists in the Horn of Africa resides in multination state borderlands. The ethnicity, culture, and way of life of pastoralism are frequently transboundary. The Horn of Africa is home to one of the most significant pastoral communities in the world; their way of life requires extensive use of resources (pastureland and water) and freedom of movement. This population movement often leads to conflict (Carr, 2012). Numerous works of literature have indicated that pastoralists in the Horn of Africa have been socioeconomically and politically marginalised (Oxfam, 2008; Pavanello, 2009) attributable to a variety of factors, including the region's vastness and remoteness, their nomadic lifestyle, and their cross-border identities. Political marginalisation is the result of an imbalance in power relations between the state and pastoral communities, governance failures, ineffective institutions, and policymakers' reluctance to incorporate the interests of pastoralists into national policy (Oxfam, 2008; Pavanello, 2009), leading to conflict and disputes in the region. Cognisant of this, Mercy (2017) states that the borderland areas of Kenya, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Uganda have been marginalised by successive governments. From a security perspective, Markakis (2011) labels the area as neither demarcated nor patrolled. The study area witnessed Markakis's statement regarding the minimal engagement of government bodies and weak institutions (including border governance and management systems) along the Omo Turkana and the surrounding region.

In contexts of sub-Saharan Africa and the Horn of Africa, the micro-level grassroots communal conflicts are causally linked with land issues, colonial legacy, an old tradition of cattle raiding / cattle rustling (associated with pastoralists' herding), and blood feuds amongst the "tribes", inveterate quarrel along national borders usually leading to cross-border ethnic mobilisation (Omeje, 2019), the rampant and rapid proliferation of small arms and light weapons caused by decades of state failure and armed conflicts (Omeje, 2015; Mercy, 2017). Recurrent tensions and violent conflicts are amongst the significant cross-border issues in the Horn region. Studies suggest that this violence is concentrated across the borderlands of the region (Pavanello, 2009). The prominent, prolonged, and recurrent micro-level conflicts situated in the borderlands of the Horn region include those involving the Turkana of Kenya, the Karamoja Cluster, and the Topossa of South Sudan, attributable to the aforementioned factors (Omeje, 2015; Mercy, 2017).

The cross-border nature of conflicts in pastoral communities is comparable. There has been regional instability in the border periphery area of South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia. Weber (2012) indicates that security threats posed along the borders of Ethiopia-Kenya, Kenya-Uganda, and Kenya-South Sudan are predominantly caused by pastoralists' cattle raiding. The conflict situation in the study area is further complicated by regional cross-border issues and, most importantly, the easy availability and continuous inflow of small arms and light weapons from neighbouring states. There is an increased militarisation of the region by the Kenyan and Ethiopian governments, endangering the cross-border livelihood and exacerbating the conflict (Carr, 2017). Moreover, Carr (2017) states that there is a rapid geographic spread of armed conflicts in the cross-border region of the Ilemi Triangle, because of the unbridled availability of arms, which further subvert the region.

Another factor for micro-level conflict in the Horn region, Omo Turkana corridor pastoral groups is intensified by ecological vicissitudes underway; and elimination of the Omo flood deterioration of lakes for fish population (Carr, 2012), disputes along the boundary demarcations, deforestations,

arms smuggling, and unfair terms of trade (in livestock and grain) (Michael *et al,* 2005). Thus, because of these deleterious factors hindering the achievement of peace and security in the region, there is an increasing interest in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts.

4. Examining Peacebuilding in Micro-Level Inter-Community Conflicts in the Omo-Turkana Corridor

The academic literature on peacebuilding postulates two important key features. The activity of peacebuilding is primarily concerned with post-conflict issues of peacebuilding and development, according to the minimalist view of peacebuilding. From this perspective, peacebuilding entails a range of targeted actions that mitigate the risk of conflict recurrence, consolidate peace by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and lay the groundwork for sustainable peace and development (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). In comparison, the maximalist perspective explains that peacebuilding occurs at all levels of the conflict continuum, from pre-conflict to violent armed conflict and into post-conflict processes. Primarily, peacebuilding is implemented at the micro level in post-conflict environments. Practically, contexts in the ethnographic cross-border communities of the Omo-Turkana corridor experience a long, vicious conflict trap, which can be cracked by a minimalist approach to resolving the intricate conflicts and building sustainable peace. In the literature on peacebuilding, grassroots micro-level communal conflicts are not adequately described. These conflicts are not only destructive of large disputing communities but sometimes contribute to macro-level conflicts (Omeje, 2019).

In conflict-affected areas of the Horn of Africa, the promotion of peacebuilding initiatives prioritises intervention to sustain resilient pastoral communities (Pavanello, 2009). This resilience approach has been attempted in some efforts. For instance, Peace Committees play a crucial role in times of conflict by facilitating community-based, customary conflict resolution and dialogue to reconcile the conflicting parties (Pavanello, 2009).

Generally, the Peace Committee in Turkana, Kenya, has the role of promoting peaceful coexistence within groups and with cross-border communities in times of conflict through a broad spectrum of peacebuilding, dialogue, and arbitration (Adan & Pkalya, 2006). The Peace Committee has a hybrid, integrated structure that combines traditional dispute resolution mechanisms with modern dispute arbitration intervention mechanisms (Adan & Pkalya, 2006). It contributes significantly to the peacebuilding process, particularly in micro-level pastoral conflicts within the state. In the pastoral communities of the Omo Turkana groups, clan leaders and elders are highly regarded. These leaders can instigate conflict as well as cease and resolve it.

The 948th meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the AU indicated that conflicts and crises in Africa have had spillover effects across borders, influencing the security of the community and economic and political stability in neighbouring countries. Thus, there is a growing recognition that crisis management and peacebuilding efforts cannot be sufficiently addressed within the national context; instead, they need cross-border and regional frameworks for crisis-related peacebuilding initiatives. This expresses the context of pastoral communities of the Omo-Turkana corridor. Kenya's pastoral Turkana people are engaged in violent conflict with neighbouring communities in Ethiopia and South Sudan. The interaction of ethnic groups along borders is often determined by their livelihood security, which is frequently created through alliances or rivalries. The Turkana have a prolonged acrimonious conflict with their nearest neighbours, the Toposa, Pokots, Nyangatom, and Dassenech; the epicentre of the clashes is scarce pastureland and water resources. To curb such a problem, the indigenous conflict resolution mechanism used amongst the Turkana and with their neighbouring communities is the Council of Elders, the supreme body concerning conflict resolution in the community (Adan & Pkalya, 2006).

The conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts have been brittle and ineffective. Reports have revealed that the peacebuilding approach along the Omo-Turkana corridor is fragile. Community-based customary approaches, peace

initiatives, and bilateral border commission dialogues have been employed in the aftermath of a series of violent conflicts to promote peacemaking. However, this process has become untrustworthy, erratic, and increasingly violent, with the accords repeatedly broken by the Turkana (Gebre, 2011). In peacebuilding initiatives, local and high-level government officials, local NGOs, and clan leaders have been involved.

5. Challenges of Peacebuilding in Micro-Level Conflicts in the Omo-Turkana Corridor

Although building sustainable peace is one of the primary challenges in the aftermath of conflict, it is a crucial step in achieving lasting peace by preventing the recurrence of conflict. Omeje (2015) identifies the substantial impediments to the journey of sustainable peace and prompting of violent conflict in many African countries dominantly, sub-Saharan Africa is the deep-rooted legacy of violence, "state decay," propagation of micro communal conflicts (perennial and protracted which is linked with such as pastoralism, cattle rustling / raiding, traditional land tenure), the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, rapid demographic change and a large number of youth unemployment. The peacebuilding activity in the Horn region is reactive, and there are no functional conflict early warning mechanisms; instead, it leads to the unsustainable termination of hostilities. Thus, the structural cause of the conflict is not well understood, and as a result, peace remains fragile (Michael *et al*, 2005).

In the pastoral communities of the Omo-Turkana corridor, the foremost challenges to peacebuilding have been cattle-raiding and conflicts, which are deeply entrenched in the local culture, leading to a vicious cycle of violence, revenge, and counter-revenge. The young generation (not abiding by the traditional rules and unemployment), heroism and culture of killing, absence of compensation for human and material loss, and marginalisation of traditional practices are challenges to peacebuilding in the Nyangatom (Michael *et al*, 2005).

The other challenge of peacebuilding in micro-level conflicts along pastoral cross-boundaries is the involvement

of multiple actors with divergent interests. The involvement of local government officials and security forces further complicates the issue. The local community of Nyangatom alleged that the Turkanas are raiding our livestock with the support of formal security forces and local government administration, including unemployed youths (Michael *et al,* 2005; Gebre, 2011). This claim is evinced by the augmented data on the commercialisation of cattle rustling in the Horn of Africa. Shreds of evidence from works of literature frame, small arms in the pastoralists contribute to killings and degeneration of cultural institutions and values, leading to the "commercialization of cattle raiding and rise of unprecedented violence" (Okumu *et al,* 2023). This created a furious competition amongst groups to find allies to obtain weapons and ammunition.

The flawed boundary demarcation along the Ilemi Triangle is a locus of protracted conflicts. The cross-border pastoral ethnic groups under the study area are divided into different national and international territories. These pastoralist groups are not satisfied with such colonial boundary demarcations. They whispered that the existing boundary administration cannot fairly address their water and pastureland needs (Michael *et al,* 2005). This tenacious claim remains a simmering and actual cause of conflict in the area. For example, the Nyangatom practice transhumance in Topossa, which includes intermarriage, a fear of conflict with neighbours, mainly the Dassenech, and pressure from the Turkana on land in the Omo River (Turton, 1991; Mercy, 2017). Studies indicate that, in the absence of a boundary demarcation between Ethiopia and Kenya, the pastoral ethnic groups of the Nyangatom and Dassenech have a cordial relationship with the Turkana. Moreover, they believed the administrative boundary division by the federal government could not properly regulate their access to natural resources (pasture and water) (Mburu, 2003; Michael *et al,* 2005).

Upstream dam and sugar plantation development projects on the Omo River have alarming risks of reducing downstream water availability and pastureland. These create a natural deterioration in Lake Turkana and the availability of aquatic animals (a source of food for the Dassenech and

Turkana Communities), which in turn worsens desertification. This is a high concern for the pastoralists based along the Omo River. These exacerbate the situation and become one of the conflict-ridden issues in utilising scarce resources, posing challenges to peacebuilding efforts. Thus, recurrent droughts and climate change, coupled with resource degradation, exacerbate existing conflicts.

Undue emphasis on the pastoral community by governments created a sense of marginalisation, affecting the socio-economic and political significance to national governments. State strategies focus on coercive measures to manage micro-level communal conflicts. Conflict resolution by state intervention often fails because of a lack of government commitment and failure to understand the local context (Hagmann & Mulugeta, 2008). This is the result of framing pastoralists negatively and ineffective policy settings in the respective countries and cross-border localities. Policy incoherence in neighbouring countries obstructs the movements of pastoral communities in search of resources and markets. These incongruent policies create tensions amongst the pastoral community, which impede attempts at peacebuilding.

6. Remedial Policy Measures and Recommendations

The policy measures can be applied and achieved in the short-, middle-, and long-term courses of action. Because the problem in the pastoral corridor of the study is multifaceted, no single solution is provided; instead, an integrated approach is demanded. The policy measures began by establishing the normative and institutional frameworks to support cross-border mobility for the sustainable common good of pastoral communities, including the development of national-level legislations, regional and bilateral subnational agreements, subnational accords, and peace, boundary, and transhumance agreements. Framing policies based on the nature of the pastoralists for the common good (guaranteeing safe and viable cross-border movement) is an important agenda to alleviate the prolonged barriers.

It is essential to implement the following remedial policy measures to ensure the success of anticipated peacebuilding

initiatives in the cross-border pastoral communities of the Omo Valley-Turkana corridor.

Strengthen legitimate local governance systems through the establishment and sustenance of inclusive community governance systems. This local governance system helps to promote the identification and analysis of scientific conflicts for effective intervention and lasting peace. To protect the pastoralists' lives and their livestock from perpetrators, it is necessary to control the uncovered area thoroughly, strengthen the early warning system, establish and reinforce police posts and local militia, and introduce a community vigilance system.

Strengthen participatory peacebuilding process and Customary Institutions: Inter-community-based participatory peacebuilding supports better communication. These help to stabilise the conflict-ridden area and sustain the rapprochement process amongst the conflicting parties. It is also important to address and rebuild horizontal inter-community social capital. It cannot be applied minimally to conflict prevention and resolution, but it should also focus on the extended, comprehensive societal transformation of individual behaviour within the community. This helps to develop trust amongst the conflicting parties. Likewise, establishing and promoting cross-border Local Peace Committees (LPCs) is an approach to peacebuilding at the micro-level. Community-based peacebuilding is critical to resolving local conflicts through grassroots institutions. This is because locally owned institutions have a strong chance of bringing sustained peace to their mutual interests. Thus, it is important to consolidate LPCs to create a safe, enabling environment to facilitate community-based dialogue and mediation to lessen and halt disputes in the border regions.

Establishing local formal institutions and platforms to facilitate peacebuilding processes (like local-level border commissions). These are important to facilitate public forums, such as dialogues, mediations, and regular peace conferences, to review progress. It is essential to conduct joint forums, such as cross-border youth, women, and elders' Peace Forums. Moreover, follow a proactive approach to peacebuilding, designing a strategy to address the root causes rather than finding swift solutions for

the problem through security intervention. Organise collaborative, cross-social, and cross-cultural festivals and community peace radio to strengthen their common bond. Practicing intermarriage between ethnic groups can also promote social cohesion and produce cordial, adhesive relationships.

Strengthening cross-border common markets, promoting economic empowerment, undertaking development projects, providing social services, and enhancing infrastructure facilities foster cordial relationships amongst pastoralists, support cross-border movement and trade, and further promote regional cooperation and integration. This, in turn, is important for reducing tensions and violent conflicts. Additionally, peace education and the formation of peace clubs at school are essential infrastructures that support students and the community in learning and practicing peace elements to prevent violent conflicts and foster a culture of peace through interactive means. Furthermore, this approach helps to create climate resilience capacity and develop a mechanism for fairly utilising resources. Managing the roles of civil society associations and NGOs across all conflict spectrums is also important.

7. Conclusion

Peacebuilding in micro-level conflicts in the cross-border areas of Horn of Africa pastoralists, in general, and the Omo-Turkana corridor specifically, has been neglected, as it is a low-priority political and security issue for national governments. The situation in the study area manifested with the continuum of centre-periphery relations and politico-economic marginalisation from the hub. These areas often lack attention and are underutilised, with peacebuilding efforts frequently being allocated to local governments, civil society, and NGOs. Apart from the pastoralists' livelihood, the central government's low attention to the issue makes the micro-level conflicts in most parts perennial and protracted. These undermine the peacebuilding process, making it fragile and ineffective.

Increasingly, there is an alarming interest in preventing and mitigating micro-level conflicts or grassroots violent conflicts through the formation of community-based institutions and

peace committees at the local level, aiming to break the vicious cycle of conflict and foster virtuous ramification for sustainable peacebuilding. Ensuring coherent policies, strategies, and coordination of peacebuilding is critical for maintaining success. Through this process, collaboration with the government and strengthening civil society associations are imperative for the participatory peacebuilding process.

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Chapter 10

Climate Change and Security. Understanding Farmer Conflicts in Gambo, Angola: An Examination of Drivers, Implications, and Government Involvement

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Abstract

Farmer conflicts exert substantial influence on local communities and national economies. This study examines conflicts amongst Gambo communal farmers in Angola, drawing insights from local stakeholders. It identifies conflict causes, assesses actor roles, and explores consequences while emphasising the government's role in exacerbating or mitigating these tensions. Employing mixed methods, including surveys (110 respondents), key informant interviews (20), and focus group discussions (6), this research uses descriptive statistics and qualitative content analysis to unravel the conflicts' multifaceted nature. The findings highlight the government's active involvement in land allocation, resource management, and policy decisions, contributing significantly to heightened tensions. Conflict drivers include climate-related and non-climate-related factors, intensifying disputes amongst farmers, governmental bodies, and pastoralist communities. Climate-related factors act as potent catalysts, exacerbating tensions, resulting in socio-economic impacts, including loss of life and property. These findings emphasise the need for a holistic, inclusive conflict resolution and resource management approach in Gambo Municipality, advocating for reevaluating government

policies to foster equity and sustainability. The study emphasises the inadequacy of a one-size-fits-all conflict resolution strategy and advocates for an integrated, community-tailored approach, valuing local perspectives. This research contributes to localised conflict resolution, empowering the local community to achieve lasting peace and security.

Keywords: actors, causes, climate and non-climate, communal farmers, conflict, disputes, drivers, pastoralists, tensions

1.0. Background and Introduction of the Study

Conflict represents a multifaceted and pervasive issue, characterised by misunderstandings, disputes, or divergent ideologies, which, if left unaddressed, can culminate in confrontations of a detrimental nature. Invariably, these conflicts often escalate to the extent where coercive measures are employed, with each party fervently seeking triumph (Kimbrough *et al*, 2020). In the sphere of African agriculture, farmer conflicts have assumed a defining role, exerting significant influence on local communities while concurrently impeding the overall development of the continent. Such conflicts are typified by confrontations and disagreements amongst agricultural communities, fundamentally rooted in the competition for vital resources, including land, water, and conflicting interests (Chukwuma, 2020). The ramifications of farmer conflicts in Africa are profound, encompassing human casualties, forced displacement, economic setbacks, and environmental degradation. Notably, these conflicts erode the very fabric of African societies, contributing to instability and hindering progress.

The typologies and causative factors supporting farmer conflicts in Africa are both diverse and intricate. One recurring manifestation involves conflicts between farmers and pastoralists, a phenomenon deeply ingrained in historical and cultural contexts. These conflicts are frequently precipitated by various factors, prominently including the competition for finite resources such as water, land, and market access. Disputes over land ownership and resource utilisation consistently escalate to violent confrontations and property destruction. Moreover, the escalating demand for commercial agriculture compounds these conflicts, exacerbating the dispossession of rural communities

and exacerbating socio-economic disparities (Freeman, 2017). In this context, the consequences of climate change further exacerbate these conflicts, as changing weather patterns and resource scarcity intensify competition amongst farmers.

Within the geographical confines of Angola, the issue of farmer conflicts remains inexorable and is predominantly linked to land dispossession. Large-scale commercial cattle farming operations have encroached upon communal grazing lands, often sidestepping proper legal procedures, with pastoralist communities bearing the brunt of this encroachment in various regions of the country. Despite the vast fertile lands available in Angola for both crop and livestock cultivation, the diversion of arable land for commercial purposes has undermined the resilience of communal farmers, rendering them increasingly susceptible to climate-induced adversities such as droughts (Pinto *et al*, 2023). The extensive scale of land dispossession is regarded as a significant impetus behind substantial economic, social, and cultural transformations in rural Angola, a transformation catalysed since the cessation of the civil war in 2002.

It is imperative to acknowledge the government's efforts in addressing these conflicts. Nevertheless, persistent conflicts, as observed in places like the Gambo Municipality, raise perturbing concerns. These continued conflicts raise questions concerning their persistence, particularly when extensive literature exists on conflicts in general, including the civil war in Angola (Gomes, 2022), yet significant research gaps remain concerning conflicts amongst farmers. Notably, a substantial void exists regarding the identification and analysis of the multi-dimensional drivers of conflict amongst communal farmers in the Gambo Municipality, as well as the government's role in these conflicts.

This study embarks on a comprehensive examination of conflicts amongst Gambo communal farmers in Angola, drawing valuable insights from local stakeholders. Its fundamental objectives encompass the identification of conflict origins, the assessment of actor roles, and the exploration of ensuing consequences. This enquiry is guided by a series of critical questions: Why do farmer conflicts persist in the Gambo Municipality? What supports the primary drivers of farmer conflicts

in the region? What are the ramifications of these conflicts? What roles do local actors play, particularly the government, in either perpetuating or resolving these conflicts, and what measures should be implemented to effectively address them?

To answer these enquiries, this study adopts a methodologically diverse approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to construct a comprehensive dataset. The study entails a sample of 110 respondents, 20 key informant interviews, and 6 focus group discussions (FGDs). Qualitative methods take precedence, affording deeper insights into the perceptions and experiences of farmers. Key informants, strategically drawn from key institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Institute for Agricultural Development (IDA), the Confederation of Farmer Associations and Agricultural Cooperatives of Angola (UNACA), the Forum of Angolan Non-Governmental Organizations (FONGA) and community leaders, have been chosen purposefully to provide nuanced insights into the intricate web of conflicts.

This chapter's structure includes distinct sections: background and introduction, a theoretical review of pertinent theories, methodology, results, discussions, and conclusive insights with recommendations. It emphasises the significance of this study in African agricultural conflict research, focusing on Gambo Municipality, Angola. The research provides unique insights into conflict dynamics in an underexplored context, comprehensively addressing climate and non-climate factors, roles of actors, and their consequences. Stakeholders can use this understanding to design targeted interventions for sustainable agriculture, peaceful coexistence, and equitable resource allocation. The mixed-methods approach enhances comprehension of conflict drivers, aiding the development of tailored resolution strategies for regional challenges. Additionally, the study promotes sustainable agricultural practices for increased resilience, food security, and livelihood sustainability in the region.

2.0. Chapter Objectives

The main objective of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the drivers, actors, and implications of conflicts amongst Gambo communal farmers in Angola.

The specific objectives of this chapter are as follows:

- Identify the origins and underlying drivers of conflicts amongst Gambo communal farmers in the study area.
- Assess the roles played by local actors, particularly the government, in perpetuating or resolving conflicts in the study area.
- Explore the consequences of farmer conflicts in the Gambo Municipality.
- Recommend strategies for addressing the multi-dimensional drivers of conflict amongst communal farmers in the study area.

3.0. Literature Review

There exists a substantial body of literature on farmer conflicts globally, with a particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa (Boone, 2017; Kalabamu, 2019; Krätli & Toulmin, 2020). Scholars from diverse academic backgrounds have deeply engaged with this intricate phenomenon, endeavouring to untangle the complex web of factors that support and fuel such conflicts. Through meticulous analysis and empirical research, these scholars have presented a multitude of explanations, each aiming to illuminate the underlying causes of tensions and confrontations within farming communities. It is widely acknowledged that conflicts between farmers and herders are multifaceted and intricate, arising from a confluence of factors including resource scarcity, government policies, corruption, land rights, competition for water and land, crop destruction, as well as historical and socio-political dynamics (Almer *et al*, 2017). These conflicts typically emanate from conflicting interests amongst various groups and are often exacerbated by inadequate mechanisms for dispute resolution and the marginalisation of specific communities. To resolve these conflicts effectively, scholars have emphasised that comprehensive approaches are imperative, addressing root causes and engaging all stakeholders to ensure sustainable and equitable resource management (McGuirk & Burke, 2020)

In a case study by Saruni *et al* (2018) in Kilosa District, Tanzania, conflicts between farmers and herders were examined, challenging the notion that these conflicts solely stem from

resource scarcity. Instead, the study emphasised the importance of considering historical and political dimensions for a comprehensive understanding. While acknowledging resource competition as a contributing factor, the research highlighted two key amplifiers of conflict violence. Firstly, Tanzanian policies favoured agriculture over pastoralism, restricting herders' access to resources and promoting sedentary pastoralism through "pastoral villages." Additionally, allegations of encroachment on wetlands by farmers and disputes over grazing on cultivated lands fuelled tensions.

Secondly, corruption amongst government officials and stakeholders played a significant role. Local authorities, security personnel, and judges involved in conflict resolution were susceptible to bribery, eroding trust. This led conflicting parties to resort to force and violence to protect their interests (Saruni *et al*, 2018). Similar findings from research in Borno State, Nigeria, indicated that agricultural modernisation policies marginalised pastoralists, while corruption hindered conflict resolution between farmers and herders (Ahmed & Kuusaana, 2021; Benjaminsen *et al*, 2021).

Eke (2020) highlights the prevalence and escalation of farmer-herder conflicts in Northern Nigeria. These conflicts primarily stem from competition over natural resources, particularly water and land in regions with abundant water during the dry season. Population growth has intensified the demand for food, leading to the expansion of crop production into grazing lands and routes. Eke (2020:37) notes that Nigeria has 4,125 grazing reserves, with only one-third being utilised by pastoralists, while 270 have been converted into agricultural areas. He concluded that the absence of pastoralist land rights, year-round farming in fertile floodplains and river valleys, and the failure of security personnel and the justice system have all contributed to the escalation of these conflicts. Crop destruction has also emerged as a significant trigger of farmer-herder conflicts (Adeoye, 2017; Diallo, 2017; Mogomotsi *et al*, 2019). Usman and Nichol (2022) found that crop destruction is the primary cause of conflicts in Nasarawa State, Nigeria, as damaged crops breed animosity amongst farmers, often culminating in retaliatory attacks. These findings align with research conducted by Ugwueze *et al* (2022) in the agro-pastoral zone in Niger.

Issifu *et al* (2022) delved into the triggers of farmer-herder conflicts in the Upper West Region of Ghana, employing qualitative methods and non-parametric statistical techniques. The study unveiled 14 triggers, with crop destruction, both in storage and on farms, emerging as the primary cause of these conflicts (Issifu *et al*, 2022). The research highlighted that these conflicts have led to the loss of investments, reduced income, crop destruction, decreased cattle and milk production, and exacerbated food insecurity for various stakeholders. The researchers recommended comprehensive conflict resolution measures involving all stakeholders, including marginalised groups.

Nwankwo (2020) examined disputes between natives, migrants, herders, farmers, chiefs, and settlers in Kwahu Afram Plains. These conflicts revolve around access to land, land ownership, and pasture for herders. The researcher argued that in Ekyem Amanfrom, a village in the district, land disputes primarily stem from discriminatory and unfair conditions for acquiring land, issues related to land use, and unregulated activities of pastoralists. He cites an example of a fatal shooting during a land dispute in the Ewe community in 2002 (Nwankwo, 2020). Furthermore, Nwankwo (2020) points out that traditional rulers benefit significantly by allocating land to herders rather than farmers, resulting in more land being allocated to herders and greater support for their activities. This support and engagement of traditional rulers with herders are also documented in research conducted by Adeoye (2017) in Nigeria.

Scholars have also extensively examined the socio-economic impact of farmer-herder conflicts in Africa. These impacts encompass damage to farmlands and crops, as well as the killing of cattle in retaliatory acts by farmers. Such destruction leads to reduced agricultural productivity, affecting the income and food security of both farmers and herders (McGuirk & Nunn, 2020). Farmers face challenges in accessing credit and hiring cattle for farming activities, while increased costs of private security for traders contribute to higher food prices in urban areas. Moreover, these conflicts pose a significant threat to peace and security within the affected communities. Protests and demonstrations have been organised by local farmers and youth against traditional and local government authorities,

alleging their support for herders' presence in the communities (Krätli & Toulmin, 2020). These demonstrations sometimes result in clashes with security personnel, causing further disturbances.

While much research has focused on conflicts between pastoralists and sedentary farmers in Africa, it is important to acknowledge that conflicts amongst farmers themselves are equally intricate and multifaceted. These conflicts go beyond conventional understanding and involve a diverse interplay of various factors and actors. Interestingly, many existing studies have not fully delved into the government's role in either perpetuating or resolving these conflicts. In view of this gap, the present study aims to fill this void by conducting a comprehensive examination of farmer conflicts in Angola. Its objective is to investigate how the complex relationship between climate change and non-climate change factors contributes to the escalation of farmer conflicts, and how government policies and attitudes, along with other local actors, shape the occurrence, intensity, and outcomes of these conflicts.

4.0. Theoretical Framework

This chapter employs two fundamental theoretical frameworks: Conflict Theory and Conflict Resolution Theory, selected for their relevance to essential aspects of social life, including the psychological factors that shape human behaviour. These theories serve as the conceptual framework for understanding the origins and outcomes of recurring conflicts. The investigation into the multifaceted drivers of conflict amongst communal farmers in the Gambo Municipality of Angola relies on these foundational theories, enabling a comprehensive examination of the intricate elements contributing to conflicts within the agricultural domain. Through the integration of these theories, the study aims to unearth the underlying causes of conflicts, evaluate the roles played by local actors, particularly the government, and explore the resulting repercussions, all while proposing practical strategies for conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Conflict Theory, pioneered by influential sociologists such as Karl Marx and Max Weber, offers valuable insights into the origins of societal conflicts. At its core, Conflict Theory highlights the competition for scarce resources, power, and social status as

the primary drivers of conflicts. In the context of farmer conflicts in Angola, this theory proves highly relevant as it illuminates the struggle over limited resources, particularly land and water, often resulting in disputes and confrontations amongst communal farmers. By adopting Conflict Theory, this study delves into the underlying structural and systemic issues that sustain conflicts within the agricultural sector. According to Conflict Theory, tensions and conflicts arise when resources, social status, and power are unevenly distributed amongst different societal groups, frequently catalysing social change (Ferrare & Phillippo, 2023:19). Furthermore, Khaswara and Hambali (2021) posit that Conflict Theory identifies ongoing economic resource-based antagonism as the primary driver of conflict amongst economic agents, with farmers and pastoralists being key actors. Conflict typically emerges when multiple parties fail to reach a consensus regarding the allocation of these essential resources. Karl Marx, through Conflict Theory, emphasises the role of coercion and power in establishing social order (Ferrare & Phillippo, 2023). The theory contends that social order is maintained through domination and power dynamics rather than through consensus and conformity. Those who possess wealth and power endeavour to retain it by any means necessary, often by suppressing the economically disadvantaged. In this context, power encompasses control over material resources, accumulated wealth, political influence, and the institutions that constitute society.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognise that coercive power may not always be suitable for resolving conflicts in every context. In specific situations, participatory approaches prove to be more relevant and effective. This suggests that Conflict Theory, with its inclination towards the use of coercive power to address conflicts, has inherent limitations. Consequently, this study advocates for the incorporation of Conflict Resolution Theory, which prioritises peaceful conflict resolution methods, particularly in contexts where such an approach is more appropriate. From this perspective, it becomes evident that Conflict Theory may not adequately address situations requiring participatory approaches, highlighting the necessity to complement it with Conflict Resolution Theory.

Conflict Resolution Theory, often referred to as Peace and Conflict Studies, plays an indispensable role in this study as it

centres on understanding the origins of conflicts and proposing strategies for peaceful resolution (Khaswara & Hambali, 2021). Conflict Resolution Theory provides a structured framework for analysing the underlying causes of conflicts, which proves particularly valuable in the context of farmer conflicts in the Gambo Municipality. By embracing this theory, the study identifies the drivers of conflicts amongst communal farmers, encompassing both climate-related and non-climate-related factors. Furthermore, Conflict Resolution Theory emphasises the development of effective intervention strategies for conflict resolution. Through this perspective, the study can offer recommendations and policy interventions aimed at mitigating farmer conflicts and promoting peaceful coexistence. This approach not only enables the study to uncover the root causes of conflicts but also facilitates the design of practical and targeted solutions to address these issues. It is noteworthy that Conflict Resolution Theory prioritises peaceful mechanisms and participatory approaches in addressing conflicts. Consequently, when coercive approaches are deemed inappropriate, this theory becomes highly relevant.

Considering the array of potential conflict scenarios, this chapter asserts that advocating for a one-size-fits-all strategy is unrealistic. Instead, it recognises the need for adaptable approaches to suit varying situations. Coercive power may be essential in some cases, whereas participatory approaches prove more effective in others. In certain instances, a combination of both approaches may be the most suitable course of action. Consequently, this study posits that a simultaneous consideration of both Conflict Theory and Conflict Resolution Theory provides a comprehensive framework for the analysis and resolution of conflicts.

5.0. Materials and Methods

5.1. Study Area

The study was conducted in the Gambos Municipality, located in southern Huila province, Angola (Figure 1), bordering Chibia, Quipungo, Matala, Cahama, Curoca, and Virei. This semi-arid region experiences irregular rainfall, impacting the predominantly Nyaneka population, focusing on subsistence agriculture, pastoralism, and small-scale trade. The "Tunda dos

Gambos" Farming Region, a vital area for livestock production in the province, is situated here. Notably, the municipality features attractions like Bicuar National Park and Safari Parque da Fazenda 3N. The total population of the Gambos Municipality is 79,462, with the majority belonging to the Nyaneka ethno-linguistic group, concentrated in the central and northern regions (Pinto *et al*, 2023). Two communes, Chiange and Chibemba, influence the municipality's demographic composition.



Figure 1: Map of Angola, Huila Province and Gambos Municipality. Source: Angola Atlas (2019)

5.2. Research Approach and Design

This study adopts a social constructivism paradigm, aiming to gain deep insights into social phenomena through a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative methods provide statistical rigour, while qualitative methods offer detailed insights. Secondary data sources are used to reinforce findings, ensuring a comprehensive examination.

5.3. Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The research employs a multi-stage sampling approach. Purposive sampling selects the study area, while simple random sampling chooses respondents for the household survey in both communes, Chiange and Chibemba. The sample size for the household survey is determined using the formula n = N / (1 + N(e)^2), resulting in 110 farm units, with 55 from each commune. The sample includes 67% male-headed households and 33% female-headed households.

In addition to the household survey, the study incorporates 20 key informant interviews and 6 focus group discussions. Participants for focus group discussions are purposefully chosen for their local knowledge, including representatives from various segments. Key informant interviewees, selected based on expertise and willingness, include representatives from institutions such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Institute for Agricultural Development, the Confederation of Farmer Associations and Agricultural Cooperatives of Angola, the Forum of Angolan Non-Governmental Organizations and community leaders. This diverse approach enriches insights into the complexities of farmer conflicts.

5.4. Data Collection and Analysis

This study employed a comprehensive mixed-methods approach, with farm households as the primary unit of analysis to achieve a holistic understanding of the research topic. Quantitative data was gathered through semi-structured questionnaires administered in the local language to household heads and designated representatives, facilitated by research assistants. Qualitative insights into the root causes of conflicts were

acquired through five focus group discussions, each comprising six selected participants, and twelve key informant interviews. Additionally, secondary data sources were reviewed to provide context. In terms of data analysis, a mixed-methods approach was applied. Qualitative data underwent transcription, thematic analysis, and coding to identify patterns, themes, and categories, employing constant comparative analysis. Quantitative data from household questionnaires were analysed using Microsoft Excel to produce descriptive statistics. The integration of these methods allowed for data triangulation, reinforcing the research's validity, reliability, and its contribution to the field's knowledge.

6.0. Results and Discussion

This chapter aimed to address key questions about farmer conflicts in the Gambo Municipality, including their persistence, underlying drivers, ramifications, and the roles of local actors, particularly the government. The research findings highlight two primary categories of conflict drivers: climate-related factors and non-climate-related factors. Non-climate-related factors are identified as the fundamental causes of conflicts, while climate-related factors worsen the situation.

6.1. Non-Climatic Drivers of Conflicts

The study identified a variety of conflict drivers unrelated to climate as the root causes amongst Gambo communal farmers. These encompassed socio-economic factors, land disputes, government non-compliance with its laws, social disparities, and political victimisation. These findings originated from participant responses, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions.

6.1.1. Socio-Economic Factors

The research examined the socio-economic profiles of respondents concerning conflicts within the farming community. The socio-economic characteristics of respondents shed light on the factors contributing to conflicts in the farming community, including gender disparities, low education levels, dependence

on livestock, and limited access to basic amenities. Male heads led the majority of households (67%), while female heads constituted 33%. This gender distribution aligns with traditional roles observed in African societies. The age range of respondents predominantly spanned 45 to 80 years, with many residing in clustered mud houses and having an average family size of nine members. This implies that respondents were actively engaged in decision-making and productive work. Age plays a significant role in influencing productivity, wealth, and decision-making abilities. The data presented in Table 1 indicates that over 70% of participants had no formal education, potentially contributing to conflict persistence. Higher education levels were expected to facilitate conflict resolution through dialogue.

Table 1: Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents (n = 110)

Item	Category	N	Percentages%
Education	None	79	72
	Primary education	16	15
	Secondary education	9	8
	Tertiary education	6	5
Household head	Female-headed	36	33
	Male-headed	74	67
Marital status	Cohabitating	6	5
	Divorced	9	8
	Married	55	50
	Single	23	21
	Widow	17	16
Family Size	Average family size	9	-
Age	Average age	51	-

Item	Category	N	Percentages%
Livelihood	Cattle and goat farming	63	57
	Drought relief	4	4
	Gardening / crops	18	16
	Government pension	7	6
	Small-scale mining	2	2
	Government employees	11	10
	Others (like selling baskets, alcohol)	5	5

Source: Survey Results (2022)

Marital statuses varied, with 50% married respondents, along with single parents, widowed, divorced, or cohabitating individuals. Livelihoods primarily revolved around livestock production, with 57% relying on pastoralism. Others depended on gardening, crop cultivation, government pension, or alternative livelihoods. Goats were the most commonly kept livestock, followed by cattle and sheep. This heavy reliance on livestock made respondents sensitive to disruptions, which could escalate conflicts. On-brick houses were the prevalent housing type (97%), and most participants sourced drinking water from rivers, tributaries, or human-made outlets.

6.1.2. Land Disputes

The research uncovered that at the core of the conflict amongst the Gambos lay the issue of land loss and land disputes. This was confirmed by all the respondents, including key informants who were interviewed and participants in focus group discussions. The dispute revolved around the Angolan government and large-scale commercial Chinese cattle farmers. The former had been accused of expropriating and redistributing land to Chinese commercial farmers in 2016, who were accused of encroaching upon 67% of the

communal grazing land. This encroachment extended to the most fertile areas, which held deep historical and personal significance for pastoralist communities. Local farmers, both sedentary and pastoralists, held these lands in high regard, referring to them as "the cradle of cattle," "the valley of miracles," and "the place where food becomes abundant," signifying the importance attached to their land for livelihoods and sustenance.

The primary point of contention was that this land encroachment occurred without proper legal procedures, thus disregarding the historical value and emotional attachment that pastoralist communities had to this ancestral land. As articulated by a key informant, a community leader, and member of the local farmer association, "These Chinese were given our land without any formal documentation. A thorough examination would reveal their lack of legitimate ownership." This sentiment was echoed during FGDs, where a respondent asserted, "These Chinese bribed officials from the Ministry of Lands in order to grab our land." To provide context, government maps delineated that the prime grazing lands in Tunda dos Gambos covered a significant 3,928 km². However, official records showed that commercial ranchers had taken over 2,629 km², leaving only a meagre 1,299 km² for the pastoralists (Gomes, 2022).

The scale of this encroachment was particularly impactful as it targeted the most fertile lands. Reflecting on this situation, an employee of a local NGO posed a crucial question, "How could the Angolan government and the ranchers expect the pastoralists to endure when they historically relied on Tunda and Chimbolela to withstand recurrent drought cycles?" It became evident that the land was taken away from the communities without proper procedural safeguards, causing tensions and fuelling conflict in the area.

The loss of land had significant repercussions on two vital aspects: livelihoods and food security, fostering resentment towards the government and large-scale commercial farmers. The consequences of land loss extended to pastoralist livelihoods, with cattle production being their primary economic lifeline. Participants emphasised the multifaceted importance of cattle, beyond mere sustenance, describing them as crucial for education, transportation, healthcare, land fertility, and even as

family members. In the Gambos, pastoralism intertwined deeply with livelihoods, where economic survival relied on livestock and subsistence farming. One respondent succinctly put it, "Cattle were our solution to pressing problems," while another highlighted, "We relied on cattle for significant purchases."

The research uncovered the profound effects of these disruptions on food security. Pastoralist communities traditionally ensured food security through customary land tenure, combining subsistence agriculture with livestock rearing. However, commercial cattle farming and the loss of grazing lands disrupted this balance. Limited pasture availability led to undernourished oxen, incapable of effective ploughing and crop cultivation. Well-fed oxen were deemed essential for successful ploughing, as they provided the required strength. Consequently, challenges in food crop cultivation escalated. Women, primarily responsible for food crop cultivation, bore the brunt of these changes. Inadequate pasture, resulting from extensive land allocation to commercial ranching, led to malnourished cattle and reduced milk production. Families faced limited access to milk, resulting in hunger and malnutrition. The link between quality grass, milk production, and dietary habits was emphasised, with participants noting the visible consequences, particularly on children's health.

6.1.3. Political Victimisation

Within the intricate web of conflict drivers amongst Gambo communal farmers, political victimisation emerges as a potent catalyst for nurturing resentment towards the government. Insights gleaned from local interviews shed light on how respondents articulated a sense of victimisation based on their perceived allegiance to UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola), the principal opposition party in Angola. This perception of political bias deeply ingrained a sentiment of animosity towards the government, as respondents vividly conveyed various facets of their victimhood. One respondent vividly encapsulated the prevailing sentiment within the community, stating, "We have been unfairly singled out due to our support for UNITA, and it is tearing our community apart. While neighboring communities that support MPLA, the ruling party, with fertile soils and thriving livestock, remain untouched,

our lands are consistently subjected to adverse actions." This statement highlights the respondents' belief that their areas have been unjustly targeted for government interventions on account of their affiliation with the opposition party.

Furthermore, the respondents' contention that the study area serves as a stronghold for the opposition party, thereby drawing antipathy from the ruling MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola) party, adds a deeper dimension to the issue. This political divide exacerbates the perception of victimisation, as respondents perceive that they face hardships and resource deprivation as a consequence of their political affiliations. The consequences of this political victimisation extend far beyond individual farmers. It not only nurtures resentment but also perpetuates a cycle of distrust and animosity between the government and the farming community. The perception that their support for an opposition party has made them targets for unfavourable government actions fosters a sense of injustice and marginalisation, which, in turn, fuels conflicts within the community. The perception of political victimisation as a cause of conflict has also been documented in other studies across the continent (Nwankwo, 2020).

6.2. Climate-Related Factors

The research findings brought to light the exacerbating role of climatic factors in an already dire situation, with hunger and starvation emerging as the most acute human challenges faced by pastoralists in the Gambos. Study participants vividly portrayed the hardships endured by pastoralist families in their struggle to secure sustenance, both for themselves and their livestock. One participant aptly depicted the situation, remarking, "Food production has seen a significant decline owing to our region's semiarid climate and limited rainfall. This has rendered it increasingly challenging for women to rely on cattle manure, a traditional fertilizer for our fields. Furthermore, with the cattle themselves facing food scarcity, their production of manure has diminished." This firsthand account highlights the profound impact of climate-related challenges on food production and emphasises the intricate interplay between resource availability and agricultural productivity.

Furthermore, it was reported that climate change, particularly in the form of droughts, exacerbated water shortages in the area. A participant emphasised, "The scarcity of natural resources has become unbearable. Water sources have dwindled, and fertile land is becoming increasingly scarce." As water sources diminish and arable land becomes scarcer because of environmental challenges, competition amongst farmers intensifies. The struggle for these dwindling resources engenders resentment and sparks conflicts within the community. Instances of violent clashes between farmers and pastoralists were reported in the battle for scarce water resources. As one participant, a community leader, pointed out, "We have witnessed confrontations between farmers and cattle owners, sometimes leading to fatalities, all stemming from the competition for these scarce water resources." Another participant shared, "Droughts have become more frequent and severe. It is a constant battle to secure enough water for our crops and livestock." Droughts, exacerbated by climate change, have become an ongoing nightmare for farmers. The heightened frequency and severity of droughts disrupt farming activities and generate a prevailing sense of vulnerability. As farmers contend for limited water resources during these arid spells, tensions escalate, often culminating in conflicts. Likewise, studies conducted in various sub-Saharan African regions have also revealed that conflicts are exacerbated by competition for limited natural resources like pasture and water, especially in the context of frequent droughts (McGuirk & Burke,2020). This factor is commonly recognised as a key contributor to the escalation of conflicts observed in the study area.

In addition, the occurrence of floods, resulting in crop destruction, further stoked farmers' grievances against authorities and contributed to conflicts. A participant observed, "When the rains come, it's a double-edged sword. We depend on rain for our crops, but floods wreak havoc on our homes and fields." While rainfall is indispensable for agriculture, floods can bring about extensive damage, displacement, and crop loss. The aftermath of floods frequently triggers disputes over compensation and aid, adding strain to relations amongst farmers.

7.0. The Role of the Government in the Conflict

In the study area, farmer conflicts involve key actors: the government, large-scale commercial farmers, pastoralists, and sedentary farmers. The government is accused of unlawfully dispossessing land from local farmers, distributing it to commercial farmers without following legal processes or providing compensation. Despite criticism, the government maintains its authority to redistribute land for economic development, leading to tensions and even violence. The government's policies, approach, and attitude towards land and resource allocation are identified as central to the conflict's origin and continuation in the study area.

Government's Violation of Its Own Laws and Legal Obligations

Research findings indicate that the government not only violated but also neglected its own legal obligations, especially in the context of land dispossession and redistribution programmes. What irked the farmers, as expressed by both pastoralist and sedentary communities, was the government's neglect in conducting community consultations. According to Angolan environmental law (*the Lei de Bases do Ambiente*), public consultations were legally required for projects that had the potential to impact communities, ecological balance, and the utilisation of natural resources to the detriment of third parties. Changes in land use were supposed to undergo Environmental and Social Impact Assessment processes. However, pastoralists consistently reported that commercial livestock farmers had taken over their lands without any prior consultation, compensation, or environmental impact assessment.

A representative from a local civil society organisation emphasised this issue, stating, "The southern region had a unique way of life deeply connected to the land. What exacerbated the situation was that certain senior government officials appropriated community lands for private interests, misinterpreting the Constitution. There was no dialogue with the people or civil society before land was taken." Participants during FGDs also expressed their frustration, with one asserting, "Neither the government nor commercial farmers engaged in consultations with anyone, including traditional authorities.

Instead, the government only informed traditional leaders after decisions had already been made." Mudimu *et al* (2021) have reported similar findings, identifying land disputes as the root cause of conflicts in Zimbabwe during the early 2000s.

The findings of this investigation highlighted widespread dissatisfaction amongst pastoralist communities in Gambos. They strongly believed that the government had disregarded its own laws and international standards, particularly regarding land dispossession. Through interviews, it became glaringly evident that the primary source of anger for these pastoralists lay in the government's inability to enforce its own laws and uphold international standards. One participant concisely expressed this sentiment by pointing out that according to Angolan land law, rural communal lands were designated as non-grantable. She explained that expropriation could only take place for public, not private, benefit, and just compensation must be provided. Despite this legal framework, Tunda and Chimbolela were undoubtedly classified as rural communal lands that pastoralists from various provinces had relied upon for centuries. However, the government's actions, as highlighted by participants, directly contradicted this legal foundation by allowing commercial livestock farmers to occupy these lands without compensating the affected pastoralists, thereby violating their own laws.

The enquiry also revealed that environmental law required mandatory environmental and social impact assessments for projects that might disrupt the environmental and social equilibrium. These assessments played a crucial role in evaluating potential negative impacts on the affected population. Unfortunately, the Angolan government bypassed this requirement and permitted ranchers to occupy Tunda and Chimbolela without conducting any environmental or social impact assessments. Numerous studies on southern Africa have consistently revealed a common pattern where governments disregard their own environmental laws in pursuit of financial gains (Niño, 2018; Penu & Paalo, 2021)

Worse still, respondents reported that Angolan law, particularly *Lei de Terras de Angola, Lei nº 9/04*, respects and safeguards customary land tenure in rural areas. It explicitly states that lands of rural communities could be expropriated for public use or requisitioned, but just compensation must

be provided. However, respondents consistently reported that neither the government nor commercial farmers offered any form of compensation for the loss of their grazing land. One pastoralist explained, "The governor claimed all the land and resources belonged to the government, and it was up to him to decide what to do with it. They were indifferent to our suffering." This failure to adhere to the law left pastoralist communities in despair, as they received no compensation despite losing their vital resources. The pastoralist communities in Gambos experienced a profound sense of betrayal as they witnessed the government's failure to uphold its own laws and protect their rights in the face of land dispossession driven by commercial interests. The resulting disillusionment and anger within these communities were tangible, emphasising the gravity of the situation.

Government's Role in Sowing Seeds of Social Inequality

The government also faced accusations of exacerbating divisions and social inequalities amongst farmers. These disparities encompassed variations in resource access, service provision, and opportunities, all contingent on individuals' socio-economic status. The research participants provided compelling insights into how these inequalities played a key role in fomenting conflicts amongst farmers. In relation to socio-economic status, participants highlighted that some affluent farmers possessed stronger connections with local government and rural authorities, granting them privileged access to government-controlled water resources for their livestock and crops. Conversely, those lacking such connections found themselves denied access. One participant emphasised, "It transcends mere climatic conditions. It revolves around the disparate treatment and opportunities afforded to different members of our community. This is the crux of many of our conflicts." This observation accentuates the prevailing perception that unequal treatment and opportunities lie at the core of these disputes. Farmers who perceived themselves as unfairly treated compared to their peers harboured grievances that ultimately escalated into conflicts.

The issue of favouritism within the community also surfaced amongst participants. One farmer stated, "Favoritism is rampant here, and it is tearing our community apart." The

perception of favouritism, whether attributed to the government or local authorities, fostered resentment and mistrust within the farming community. When certain individuals received preferential treatment, it sowed seeds of injustice amongst others, leading to heightened tensions.

The study further unveiled that during the government's land redistribution initiatives in the study area, certain farmers received more extensive plots of land while others did not, and the criteria for differentiation remained opaque. One participant articulated, "Some families possess vast tracts of land, while others barely have enough to sustain themselves. This disparity is fostering envy and bitterness." The uneven allocation of land resources kindled envy and bitterness amongst those with smaller land holdings, intensifying competition for limited agricultural space. Relevant studies, such as those conducted by Mbih (2020) in Northwest Cameroon, have indicated that conflicts in the study area are intensified by social inequality, specifically favouritism.

8.0. The Role of Other Actors in the Conflict

Large-scale farmers have also become targets of intermittent attacks by local farmers, but they have not remained passive. They have bolstered their security measures by deploying armed private security personnel who have faced accusations of mistreating neighbouring farming communities. Furthermore, large-scale farmers have accused neighbouring farmers of cattle theft, which has further escalated the conflict. The government's perceived bias in favour of large-scale farmers has deepened the animosity between the parties. Despite local farmers' shared perception of the government and large-scale farmers as common adversaries, internal divisions endure. Accusations suggest that these entities have resorted to bribery to appease influential farmers and secure their collaboration. Reports stemming from focus group discussions reveal instances of specific farmers collaborating with the government and large-scale farmers, serving as informants against their peers. These favoured farmers purportedly gained access to government resources, such as water, further exacerbating divisions within the community. Efforts to resolve the conflict through community leaders and chiefs engaging in dialogue and mediation have encountered obstacles.

Many farmers accuse the chiefs of succumbing to influence from the central government through bribery, intensifying tensions and impeding conflict resolution. These initiatives aim to foster understanding, address grievances, and achieve mutually acceptable solutions. Nevertheless, deep-rooted mistrust amongst the farmers persists, leading to limited cooperation and a reluctance to accept proposed resolutions. Comparable practices have been documented in Adeoye (2017) and Diallo (2017), where pastoralists faced allegations of bribing village leaders to settle and graze cattle without the consent of the village assembly.

9.0. Consequences of the Conflict

The persistent conflict in the area has had far-reaching consequences, including violent clashes resulting in loss of life, injuries, trauma, and displacement of local farmers and pastoralist communities. Government actions, such as land redistribution without consultation and compensation, have disrupted livelihoods and severed cultural ties. Economically, the conflict has disrupted agriculture, reduced productivity, and hindered growth. Local farmers face challenges accessing markets and resources, leading to economic instability. Environmental degradation is another consequence, with large-scale farming and community displacement causing deforestation, soil erosion, and resource depletion. Unsustainable practices exacerbate these issues, posing a long-term ecological threat. Socially, the conflict has deepened divisions and eroded community cohesion, fostered mistrust and hindered collective action. Moreover, the conflict obstructs development and peace, deterring investments, impeding infrastructure development, and disrupting essential services. Its protracted nature perpetuates a cycle of violence, making sustainable development efforts challenging.

10.0. Contribution to Theory

This chapter contributes to the understanding of conflicts amongst communal farmers in the Gambo Municipality by examining their root causes, local actors' roles, and repercussions. Two primary categories of conflict drivers are identified: climatic factors (resource scarcity, drought, and floods) and

non-climatic factors (socio-economic challenges, land disputes, legal violations, social inequality, and political victimisation). The theoretical framework draws upon Conflict Theory and Conflict Resolution Theory. Conflict Theory emphasises resolving conflicts through coercive means and power dynamics, while Conflict Resolution Theory focuses on peaceful approaches and cooperation. Both theories are considered complementary lenses for analysing conflicts. The chapter argues for integrating both theories to gain a comprehensive understanding and emphasises the need for context-specific solutions. By amalgamating Conflict Theory and Conflict Resolution Theory, this research provides a holistic framework for analysing and resolving conflicts amongst communal farmers, highlighting the importance of tailored approaches for effective outcomes.

11.0. Conclusions and Recommendations

11.1. Conclusion

Conflicts amongst communal farmers in Angola's Gambo Municipality have significant implications for local communities and the national economy. This research highlights the complex nature of these conflicts, rooted in land disputes caused by government land allocation to large-scale Chinese cattle farmers. This has led to tensions because of the lack of community consultation and compensation, impacting sedentary and pastoralist farmers alike. The loss of land has particularly affected pastoralist communities, disrupting their economic sustenance by depriving them of cattle, a multi-purpose asset. This has also contributed to food insecurity caused by disrupted traditional livelihoods and limited access to grazing lands. Government actions, including disregard for legal procedures and international standards, have deepened disillusionment within affected communities. Social inequalities, political victimisation, and climatic factors further exacerbate conflicts amongst farmers. Key actors involved in these conflicts include the government, large-scale commercial farmers, pastoralists, and sedentary farmers. The consequences encompass violence, displacement, economic hardship, environmental degradation, and social division, hindering development efforts.

11.2. Recommendations

To effectively address the conflicts in the Gambo region, a multifaceted approach is recommended. Firstly, fostering an inclusive conflict resolution process that engages all stakeholders is crucial. This approach should prioritise adherence to legal obligations related to land rights and compensation while promoting social equity to reduce tensions. Ensuring political neutrality is essential to prevent any political victimisation, and developing climate-resilient practices can help mitigate the conflicts' exacerbation caused by climate-related factors. The implementation of impartial mediation and reconciliation processes, facilitated by neutral third parties, can contribute to the resolution of existing conflicts. Additionally, encouraging economic diversification initiatives within the community will help to reduce dependency on cattle production and subsistence farming. Rebuilding trust between farmers and community leaders is of utmost importance in achieving meaningful conflict resolution. Transparency measures, accountability of local authorities, and the involvement of impartial mediators can help to rebuild this trust. Addressing farmers' demands for compensation requires a comprehensive approach. Exploring alternative means of support, such as assisting with livelihood diversification, providing access to alternative agricultural lands, or implementing sustainable development projects, can create new opportunities for the affected community members. Resolving the conflicts in the Gambo region necessitates collaborative efforts between local authorities and the central government. Building trust, addressing corruption allegations, and seeking mutually acceptable solutions are vital steps towards fostering peace, stability, and sustainable development in the community.

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Chapter 11

Fostering a Smart and Sustainable Blue Economy in African Ports

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Abstract

The blue economy has grown in importance for lowering greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change as well as for enhancing the economic performance of countries. Additionally, it plays a significant role in advancing ecologically conscious and sustainable growth. In 2009, although the African Union initiated the Integrated Maritime Strategy for Africa as a blue economy strategy, ports in Africa face challenges in the governance of innovation policies such as smart ports, institutional and financial obstacles.

The chapter discusses how ports serve as the emerging blue economy's backbone, Africa's position as an advocate, whether the blue economy concept is being facilitated or hampered in Africa's ports, and reviewing approaches and integration in ports in developed countries. The chapter's methodology examines the current status of ports in Africa through SWOT and comparative analysis. In addition, the authors conducted interviews and

meetings, mainly with key experts and customers in Egypt, as a case study. The results highlighted show that there is much commercial potential for foreign investors in Africa's developing smart port business, however technically and operationally challenging. African countries must invest in technological, institutional, and human aspects; otherwise, they risk losing their competitive advantages. Smart port transformation must consider the voices and participation of various port-side stakeholders, particularly those whose livelihoods are directly impacted by port operations. These include port labourers, truckers, stevedores, women-led cooperatives, and fisherfolk who often operate in adjacent zones. Their insights are vital for understanding local realities, exclusion risks, and community responses to digitisation and expansion.

Keywords: African Ports, Blue Economy, Blue Growth, Maritime, Smart Ports, Sustainable Ports

1. Introduction

The blue economy has grown to represent a community-level peace initiatives in the expansion of ocean-based economic development in a way that is both environmentally sustainable and making local actors responsible. Without the development of particular guidelines or principles, national blue economies, or sustainable ocean economies, are feared to be more likely to concentrate on pursuing economic expansion with little regard for social fairness and environmental sustainability (UN, 2021).

The terms "Blue Economy," "Ocean Economy," and "Maritime Economy" have all been used in a variety of contexts, but none of them has a clear-cut, universal definition. The Blue Economy idea was formally defined at the UN in 2014 with the stated goals of "improving human well-being and social equity, significantly reducing environmental risks, and reducing ecological fragilities". The Blue Economy is also described by the World Bank (2017) as a sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of the ocean. A sustainable ocean economy is one in which economic activity is balanced with the long-term ability of ocean ecosystems to support this activity and stay resilient and healthy, according to the (Guerreiro, 2022). The oceans, seas, beaches, lakes, rivers, and subterranean water are

all included in the blue economy. Various productive industries are included in it, such as fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, transportation, shipbuilding, energy, bioprospecting, undersea mining, and associated activities; marine (blue) energy (fossil and renewable); the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries; genetic resources; and other sea-based products, as well as the blue carbon market, which were identified in 2014 as the key strategic areas for blue growth (ECA, 2016).

Maritime transport is one of the pillars of the blue economy; it is the artery of passengers that bears the responsibility for transport by 90% of the total volume of labour trade, and without maritime transport, transactions between different continents of the world cannot be completed, and it will not be possible to transport raw materials, foodstuffs, or manufactured products. Contributions also represent an important point in the movement of maritime activity and are different in their support of the national economy.

As a result of the growth that happened in the ports in recent decades as a hub for value-added operations, these ports require a central base for electronic information exchange in order to function as an integrated logistical point. Connecting the port community to an electronic network that gives port personnel accurate and quick access to all information and procedures has become urgently necessary. Electronic information systems are used at every level of port operations at the proper time, which has a favourable impact on ship traffic, gate management, shipping operations, customs procedures, and the exchange of papers. As a result, this raises the standard of services offered to everyone operating at the port. A port's efficiency will undoubtedly grow with the use of technology; the outcome, the amount of time that a ship needs to be berthed will decrease. With time, the port's productivity will increase because of the same potential. Information technology will, therefore, boost the port's competitiveness, and the significance of implementing the idea of smart ports has really evolved and is of considerable relevance to today's ports as it is the foundation for their future development and survival (Ismail & Mftah, 2022).

A port is the multimodal crossroads of regional supply networks on a global scale. It operates in a setting of complex

governance environments, intricate infrastructure, commercial activity, and rules (Molavi, Lim & Race, 2020). Ports are valuable to the areas that they are located in, offer substantial economic and social advantages, and are the foundation of the transportation system. The global economy would not be possible in its current form if all sea-dependent economic activity were combined. Yang *et al.* (2018) description of a visionary smart port as a fully automated port in which all devices are connected via the Internet of Things (IoT) and a network of smart sensors, actuators, wireless devices, and data centres forms the key infrastructure is one of the earliest attempts to define the concept of smart ports. According to Douaioui *et al.* (2018), the creation of a smart port is a creative endeavour that aims to boost port competitiveness and encourage entrepreneurial collaboration with port stakeholders in order to accomplish horizontal and vertical integration of supply chains (Philipp, 2021).

With the continuous development appeared sustainable smart ports that capitalise on the use of new data environments, the maritime industry's energy transition, as well as artificial intelligence and green technology-based solutions to improve port operational efficiency, promote energy efficiency, and the sustainability of clean and renewable energy, and tap into the potential for producing clean and renewable energy production and distribution (UNCTAD, 2023).

As a result of the need for maritime transportation in the global economy, ports are under increasing pressure to operate at their best in terms of economic, environmental, energy, and operational difficulties that have an impact on their sustainability (Molavi, Lim, & Race, 2020). In order to promote the environment, society, and quality of life, the United Nations (UN) introduced the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Because port operations and maritime trade are crucial elements driving the global economy, the UN's International Maritime Organisation (IMO) established these goals (Sankla & Muangpan, 2022).

Although increased technological advancements have benefited and catalysed global trade, they have also played a significant role in the problems caused by climate change. Greater pressure on ports has resulted from increased worldwide trade as more and larger ships are needed to satisfy client demand. The fuels needed to power these vessels, as shipping is the

preferred logistical option, have contributed to climate change. By increasing carbon dioxide (CO_2), nitric oxide, and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and spilling fossil fuels, hazardous waste, and waste materials, shipping corporations are known to pollute the marine environment. Air pollution caused by ships in port has an impact on nearby residents as well as the delicate marine habitats surrounding the ports These technologies' higher costs have made efficient performance more expensive, which is quickly changing the competitive environment (Grimett, 2022).

The global economy today is characterised by market liberalisation and rapid development, which have increased port competition and raised awareness of environmental issues. Because of these difficulties, ports now need to work harder at modernisation and transformation. These present and upcoming problems are resolved by the smart port idea. Many port administrations all around the world are making investments in smart ports (Belmoukari, Audy & Forget, 2023).

To deepen our grasp of the smart port idea, this chapter presents a thorough analysis of the scientific literature, aiming to identify the key elements and indicators of smart and sustainable port management as well as confirm the role of local actors in Africa in smart and sustainable port management applying to African ports. It also emphasises the importance of participatory governance and the role of local actors in driving sustainable change. In order to analyse the data, identify the causes and indicators, and create a conceptual framework for smart and sustainable port performance, qualitative research is used in the data collection process. The chapter has been structured as follows: The literature review is covered in Section 1 after this introduction, and the methodology, empirical analysis, and discussions are covered in Section 2. Section 3 wraps up with some policy suggestions for sustainable and smart ports in Africa.

2. Literature Review and Empirical Analysis

Ports are considered a crucial link in the logistical chain and have experienced numerous restructurings and developments throughout the years. Ports are required to evolve towards digitalisation and sustainability attributable to numerous economic, societal, political, and environmental issues. A brand-new idea known as the "smart

port" has emerged, aligning with the practices of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) to ensure their sustainability and enable various stakeholders, including terminal operators, cargo owners, and shipping lines, to make the best decisions, enhance procedures, and increase the effectiveness of port operations (Belmoukari, Audy & Forget, 2023). However, unified definitions of "smart ports" are not well established. It is worth mentioning that ports must go through four stages of technical development before being designated as smart ports, as shown in Figure (1).

To broaden this understanding, this chapter draws on insights from critical peacebuilding, urban political ecology, and environmental peacebuilding to explore how smart port development intersects with social equity, environmental justice, and conflict dynamics.

Furthermore, port cities have historically emerged as contested economic zones - spaces of opportunity and tension, where control over infrastructure, labour, and access often shapes community-infrastructure relations and port–city dynamics.

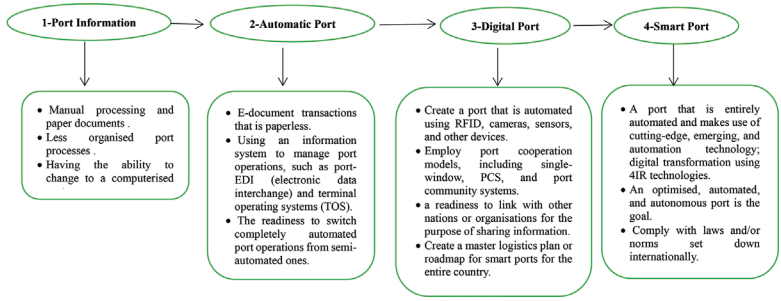


Figure 1: Stages of smart ports
Source: Grimett (2022).

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis has increased pressure on businesses and consumers to adopt digital technologies on a national and international level. It has also served as a catalyst for the public to become more reliant on online transactions and move away from traditional buying habits. Because of the difficulty of monitoring and evaluating cargo, increased commerce volumes have put ports in danger of increased levels of criminality by both domestic and international criminal syndicates. Ships are being

modified for compliance because of the evolving environmental landscape. Port officials are under more pressure as a result of growing worries over the quality of the water and its effects on delicate environments. Because of these pressures, smart ports have been developed. These ports are fully automated and utilise cutting-edge technologies like block chain and artificial intelligence (AI), as well as cutting-edge monitoring software and procedures, all while adhering to and encouraging compliance with the UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the most recent environmental protocols (Grimett, 2022).

Some studies provided a framework for a Smart Port Index (SPI) that ports may utilise to increase their sustainability and resilience (Molavi, Lim & Race, 2020). Key performance indicators (KPIs) obtained from the literature serve as the foundation for suggested SPI and are arranged around operations, environment, energy, safety, and security, which are the four main activity categories of a smart port, to evaluate the performance of some of the busiest ports in the world and to demonstrate how SPI can be used. A quantitative tool used to create smart port strategies, evaluate their smartness, and pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of the current operations in order to make improvements over time. Varied levels of comprehensiveness exist amongst smart port programmes around the world. The findings also implied that regional factors and governmental regulations may have an effect on SPI value. Ports and harbours must compete fiercely for market share while ensuring a more efficient and secure flow of products around the world. High-performing ports are putting smart technology to use to better manage operations and tackle new challenges, including maintaining secure, safe, and energy-efficient facilities that reduce their negative effects on the environment (Sankla & Muangpan, 2022).Because there aren't any ports in some developing countries that use the idea of smart port management, those ports are no longer competitive because they rely on paper management systems. This had a negative impact on the productivity and efficiency of ports, leading to significant losses over time (Ismail & Mftah, 2022). In order to determine the extent to which ports in developing nations could evaluate their existing performance as well as their level of readiness and adaptability to the use of smart practices and technology (Othman, El Gazzar & Knez, 2022),

the study relied on ten different stakeholders from the public and private sectors, as well as professionals in the field of port management. The results of the interviews highlighted the primary issues and barriers that could prevent ports from adopting sustainable practices and technologies from multiple perspectives (economic, social, and environmental).

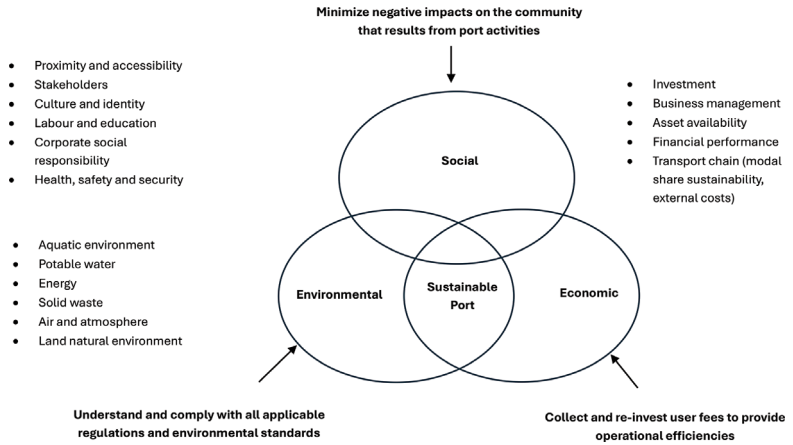


Figure 2: Main indicators for sustainable ports
Source: Denktas-Sakar and Karatas-Cetin (2012)

There is a strong relationship between smart port requirements and the sustainability of the economic dimension of supply chains (Ismail & Mftah, 2022). The more efficient the operations within the port through smart requirements, as illustrated in Figure 2, the higher the global port ranking index (economic dimension). It also proved that the greater the turnover in the port and the increase in its productivity through smart requirements, the higher the wages of workers in the port community (a social dimension), and the existence of a strong relationship between the application of the requirements of the smart port and the sustainability of the environmental dimension, i.e., the shorter the waiting time for ships in the port as evidence of the speed of trading and the efficiency of operations through smart requirements, the lower the percentage of greenhouse gas emissions in the port.

In the literature on small- and medium-sized ports, policymakers and scientists have primarily focused on the

importance of integration in developed countries. As a result, studies on green transport corridors highlight the importance of smaller ports for TEN-T sustainability and entrepreneurship, as well as the need for their sustainable integration. But given the advantageous circumstances of larger ports, it will be harder for medium-sized and small-sized ports in particular to keep up with the quick growth of the core ports. As a result, there is a possibility that the performance gap between large ports and small- and medium-sized ports will widen even further. Consequently, rivalries between the ports will become even more distorted, which will lead to lopsided development. Small- and medium-sized ports will, therefore, find it more challenging to develop and integrate their supply chains. In this regard, emphasises that the idea of a common single market for Europe improves competitiveness amongst European ports by forcing the least efficient ports to increase their efficiency, but it can also put undue pressure on smaller ports. However, linking these research gaps will help the EU Blue Growth Strategy, which aims to foster sustainable growth in the maritime industries. These gaps include missing models and concepts as well as the underappreciated role of small- and medium-sized ports (Philipp, 2021).

While the benefits of smart port development are well acknowledged, the literature also examines the risks of exclusion and marginalisation, especially in African and developing contexts, where inclusion gaps in port governance - such as forced displacement, limited community engagement, access denial, or labour exploitation - may lead to social resistance and conflict. These challenges call for inclusive governance and participatory infrastructure planning.

Concerning Africa, there is a shortage of studies that target how to develop African ports to be smart and sustainable ports and the role of local actors in port development. On the other hand, there is a significant lack of academic study using quantitative analysis in general because of data unavailability. This chapter responds to this gap by integrating port infrastructure analysis with critical social, ecological, and peacebuilding perspectives. So, this research targeted sustainable African ports by analysing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) and interviews to arrive at an applied strategy for smart and sustainable.

3. Highlights the Status of African Ports

The African continent has a 26,000-kilometre-long coastline dotted with over 100 ports (Maritime Studies, 2019). However, only a few of them can handle significant cargo and container traffic volumes (Ahmed, 2022). The largest African ports are Tanger Med and East Port Said in North Africa, Durban in southern Africa, Djibouti and Mombasa in East Africa, and Abidjan in West Africa.

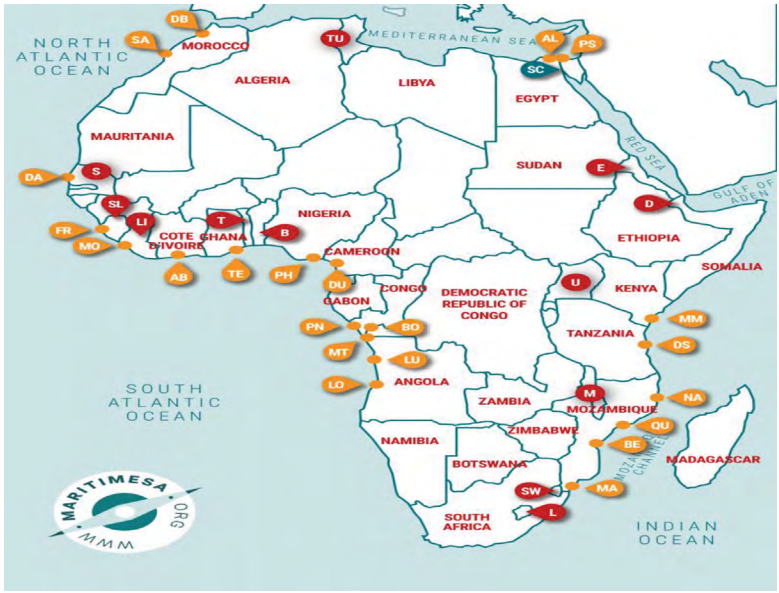


Figure 3: African Ports
Source: Maritime Studies (2019)

Countries: B – Benin; C – Cabinda (Angola); D – Djibouti; E – Eritrea; LI – Liberia; L – Lesotho; M – Malawi; S – Senegal; SL – Sierra Leone; SW – Swaziland (Eswatini); T – Togo; TU – Tunisia; U – Uganda

Ports: AB – Abidjan; AL – Alexandria; BE – Beira; BO – Boma; DA – Dakar; DB – Dar El Beida (Formerly Casablanca); DS – Dar Es Salaam; DU – Duoala; FR – Freetown; LO – Lobito; LU – Luanda; MA – Maputo; MM – Mombasa; MO – Monrovia; MT – Matadi; NA – Nacala; PH – Port Harcourt; PN – Pointe Noire; PS – Port Said; QU – Quelimane; SA – Safi; TE – Tema

Features: SC – Suez Canal.

Africa accounts for less than 5% of international trade and only 4.2% of world container traffic (unctadstat, 2022), despite its enormous size and growing potential market (PWC, 2018).

Table 1 shows that the low share of Africa ports in world container traffic, since total world container throughout was 851 million TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit) in 2022; Africa ports handled only 36 million TEU accounting for 4.2% of world container traffic in 2021. The following table shows the main African countries and ports in terms of container handling in 2021.

Table 1: World Container Throughput (TEU)

Continent / **Year**	**2020**	**2021**	**% of the world**
· **Africa**	33228035	36097009	4.2%
➢ **Northern Africa**	16317279	18241207	2.1%
➢ **Sub-Saharan Africa**	16910756	17855802	2.1%
– **Eastern Africa**	3784997	3,716,106.00	0.4%
– **Middle Africa**	2218878	2,292,612.00	0.3%
– **Southern Africa**	4218575	4,569,430.00	0.5%
– **Western Africa**	6688306	7,277,654.00	0.9%
· **Americas**	112189708	127315541	15.0%
· **Asia**	523522554	554710386	65.2%
· **Europe**	114162255	121065503	14.2%
· **Oceania**	12431614	11923414	1.4%
Total World Container throughput	795534166	851111853	100%

Source: UNCTAD (2022), UNCTAD's Review of Maritime Transport

Table 2) reveals that Morocco is the African country with the highest container throughput, accounting for 23.4% of Africa's container traffic in 2021, followed by Egypt (20.3%) and South

Table 2: Main Africa Countries in terms of Container Throughput (TEU)

Country	2021	Main Port
Morocco	8,457,129	Tanger Med
Egypt	7,321,888	East Port said
South Africa	4,415,223	Durban
Nigeria	1,566,109	Lagos
Côte d'Ivoire	1,015,624	Abidjan
Kenya	1,435,565	Mombasa
Tanzania	709,881	Dar es Salaam

Source: UNCTAD (2022), UNCTAD's Review of Maritime Transport

Africa (12.2%). The remaining countries' shares in Table 2 ranged from 4.3% in Nigeria to 2% in Tanzania.

Ports are gateways to African trade and are essential for sustaining and improving more robust and diverse growth in African economies (PWC, 2018). Even though Africa lags the rest of the globe in modernising its ports, some have already begun to change as follows:

3.1. Tanger Med Port

In 2016, Tanger Med Port is the first African port to obtain the "Ecoports" label which is awarded to European ports voluntarily adhering to "good practices" in the sustainable development field. This label issued by the ESPO (European Sea Ports Organization) (Maritime Africa Mag, 2019) .

3.2. Durban Harbour in South Africa

In October 2016 aerial and underwater drones were successfully applied at Durban port, as well as track and trace technology used to track port assets such as tugs and dredgers, have been piloted. Drones can be used in a number of ways including inspecting

infrastructure and the condition of the sea bed, which can be conducted safely without interrupting port operations. The drone technology can also assist in collecting information on port traffic (Ingpen, 2016).

3.3. Morocco: Tangier Med Port

Tanger Med, the largest Mediterranean and African container port, has a joint initiative with Wärtsilä for the delivery and installation a new port management information system (PMIS) that aims to improve operational efficiency, port safety, and environmental sustainability. This includes the delivery and installation of a Wärtsilä Navi-Harbour VTS (vessel traffic services) system, which contains the PortLink PMIS, IALA advanced coastal surveillance radars, VHF radio sub-system, automatic identification system, operator workstation, network systems, and ancillary equipment. This will contribute to the port's ability to support just-in-time (JIT) arrival operations, decreasing the need for vessels to wait at anchoring and, as a result, relieving congestion and lowering costs

3.4. Namibia: Port Walvis Bay

In August 2019, digital and automation technology was introduced to make Walvis Bay in Namibia more competitive against other ports in southern Africa. Technology is introduced, focusing on yard management. Smart Stack (i.e., a container position recording system) is being used to reduce errors in container placement. One of the automation initiatives applied is loading operations' speed, which would automatically choose the "shortest route between the container and its destination on the vessel or ground" (Bagwandeen, 2022) .

3.5. Tema Port in Ghana

Tema Port, Ghana's maritime gateway, has introduced a single window system for all port users. The paperless port system has significantly decreased human contact, turnaround time, duplication of examinations and inspections by numerous regulatory authorities, corruption, and overall port efficiency

The Tema Port's terminal operating systems (TOS), particularly the MPS terminal, are of world-class quality attributable to their substantial use of technology and automation in cargo handling operations and applying the truck appointment system (TAS)

3.6. Rades Port in Tunisia

The installation of the Smart Gate systems and TOS in the port of Rades is part of the implementation of investment projects included in the export development programme (PDE III). It is financed by the World Bank in order to improve services and increase profitability (logcluster, 2023).

3.7. Kenya Ports Authority (KPA)

KPA purchased energy-efficient mobile port cranes and developed a waste management system. Also solar panels were installed (Maritime Africa Mag, 2019).

3.8. Ehoala Port in Madagascar

The Port of Ehoala in Madagascar represents a USD260 million investment through a PPP (public-private partnership) contract involving the Malagasy government, the World Bank, and Rio Tinto Group (private sector / mining operator - local ilmenite and mineral sand extraction). Following the port's completion, major economic development was brought to the region, including increased demand for goods and services, employment in the new port, the establishment of numerous service providers, and an overall increase in trade. This case demonstrates the positive ripple effects of blue economy-related sector investment if conceived in an integrative fashion and with effective and sustainable financing arrangements in place.

Despite modernisation efforts, the spatial and social footprint of African port development remains uneven. Port expansions often lead to spatial inequality, land use conflicts, and livelihood disruptions, especially for small-scale traders, informal workers, and coastal residents displaced by infrastructure megaprojects.

Community-level perceptions of port-led development vary. In some cities, stakeholders express optimism about job creation, but in others, grievances emerge over displacement, loss of access to the waterfront, and exclusion from decision-making processes.

There is an urgent need to map and integrate local stakeholder ecosystems, including cooperatives, CSOs (civil society organisations), fisherfolk unions, artisanal traders, and urban informal networks, into port planning processes.

In many cases, there are limited participation mechanisms, and where consultations exist, they are often symbolic rather than inclusive. Participatory planning and grievance redress mechanisms are lacking in most African port governance structures.

4. Methodology

In the current digital landscape, port enterprises' ability to adapt to shifting business requirements is key to their sustainable development and competitive advantage. Despite the fact that numerous earlier studies have established a link between smart ports, technology, and sustainable performance, a research void is created by the port information systems' current performance evaluation mechanism. It is unable to successfully improve the design of information systems for port services and capabilities (Liu, Chang & Wen, 2022).

The study methodology began with conducting a SWOT analysis to evaluate internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external aspects (opportunities and threats) that could have an impact on African ports, in addition to conducting a structured interview with Egyptian local actors to measure the current situation and predict a strategy for applying smart and sustainable ports in African countries.

SWOT Analysis

Many African ports are aware of the urgent need to be a blue economy by adopting sustainable smart strategies. However, the adaptation of smart ports cannot be approached in a generic

manner, Local governance dynamics, social structures, and conflict risks differ significantly across African contexts. The level and performance vary from port to port (Bagwandeen, 2022); therefore, it is vital to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of applying smart ports in African ports, as clarified in Table 3:

4.1.1. *Strengths*

African ports are distinguished in that they are located along important global trade routes (the North-South trade route, the East-West trade route, and the South-East trade route), making them strategic assets for global supply chains and regional peace dividends through trade facilitation. With growing foreign investment and port management partnerships, African shipping has improved. Since 2009, China has been a significant investor in African ports, followed by the United States and India (Ahmed, 2022).

4.1.2. *Weaknesses*

One of the main weaknesses of African ports is the governments' bureaucratic processes. There is no unified system that shares all the required data and links different departments inside the ports, customs clearances, container terminals, and other stakeholders such as shipping lines, freight forwarders, exporters, and importers. There is a lack of integration, regular monitoring, and adjustable maintenance technologies (Othman, El Gazzar & Knez, 2022).

Moreover, many African ports suffer from insufficient equipment, berthing facilities, and depth to accommodate large vessels. Moreover, they are operationally inefficient, lack specialist terminal operators, and are not integrated with inland transportation linkages (road and rail linkages). Consequently, high-berth occupancies are common in African ports, resulting in an increasing average ship turn-around time. For instance, in August 2021, Lagos Port in Nigeria was severely congested, resulting in ships having to wait up to 80 days to access the port. Also, sub-Saharan Africa was one of the regions with the lowest ranks in vessel turnaround time, according to the Container Port Performance Index, World Bank & S&P Global Market Intelligence (2023) (UNCTAD, 2022).

Table 3: SWOT analysis concerning smart and sustainable port in Africa

Strengths (++)	**Weaknesses (-)**
S1: Geographic position S2: Government support in African states S3: Infrastructure improvements in many African ports.	W1: Political and economic instability W2: Government bureaucratic processes. W3: No unified system (lack of integration, monitoring, and maintenance technology). W4: Limits of Africa's maritime freight infrastructure and inefficient land-based logistics. W5: Lack of technological solutions and low levels of automation, especially in the operation field W6: African ports' shipment sizes are relatively tiny, resulting in an increase in the unit cost of a shipment. W7: Funding problem (high initial investment cost in the short run.) W8: Weak integration of local community voices and social inclusion in port governance.
Opportunities (++)	**Threats (-)**
O1: Regional and subregional integration O2: International support funding O3: Global awareness of climate change O4: Availability of renewable energy sources in Africa O5: Availability of future expansion	T1: Maritime piracy T2: Cyber attacks T3: Global competition T4: Challenging and high-risk business environments (high-risk regions). T5: Social grievances and resistance caused by exclusionary port expansions.

Source: Authors

Most ports in Africa are still dependent on manual, paper-based operation systems; this low level of automation causes delays and backlogs. Except at some efficient African ports, the average cargo dwell time reaches 20 days compared with three to four days at other international ports (Bagwandeen, 2022). Furthermore, African ports' shipment sizes are relatively small, resulting in an increase in the unit cost of a shipment; for example, a single container costs 1.5 to 3.5 times more than high-volume trade routes across a comparable distance. African ports are often fed by inland corridors that have their own infrastructure, delays, and cost issues. Together with poor operational performance, this creates a bottleneck, increasing logistics costs and reducing reliability (PWC, 2018) .

Thus African ports face numerous weakness at various levels, including operations (e.g., congestion, delays, operational mistakes, and a lack of information sharing), environment (e.g., air, water, and noise pollution, waste removal, building, and expansion activities), energy (e.g., heavy energy consumption and energy costs), safety (e.g., berthing effects and vessel crashes) (Othman, El Gazzar & Knez, 2022). There is always the perennial problem of funding, so as a result, African governments are heavily reliant on foreign investments and partnerships to modernise their ports.

Local stakeholders such as fisherfolk, informal traders, and CSOs are rarely consulted in port expansions, which often involve land acquisitions and access restrictions. These gaps can trigger livelihood disruptions, displacement, or protest, particularly in urban port regions with high spatial pressures.

4.1.3. *Opportunities*

The blue economy provides an opportunity for different types of cooperation and collaboration, including PPPs. They emphasise the value of cooperation in the exchange and strengthening of technical capacities such as maritime transport, green ports, port security, and terminals in ports for the cruise tourism industry, and marinas for leisure boat activity. In this regard, the continued need for capacity-building, technology transfer, and research and development is crucial and necessary. This will maximise the potential of PPPs (ECA, 2016). Inclusive governance

and community dialogue mechanisms can enhance trust, reduce local opposition, and contribute to post-conflict peacebuilding where infrastructure is a symbol of recovery and connection (Uhunamure & Shale, 2021).

Moreover, global awareness of climate change encourages looking for substitute energy sources by applying renewable energy options to port activities. Africa's ports have a great expanse of land and the ability to expand in order to cope with future capacity needs (Othman, El Gazzar & Knez, 2022).

4.1.4. *Threats*

African ports face numerous threats and challenges at global competition and security levels (e.g., armed thievery, cyber security issues, unlawful actions, maritime piracy and terrorist attacks) (Othman, El Gazzar & Knez, 2022).

One of the major threats is maritime piracy; it is prevalent off the coast of West Africa, especially in the waterways of the Gulf of Guinea, a marine region abutting the coast that runs from the Ivory Coast to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Along with the typical attacks on oil tankers and fishing vessels, bulk carriers, container, and cargo vessels are the new targets. In 2018, the International Maritime Bureau recorded 201 attacks at sea up from 180 in 2017. This increase is mainly evident in the Gulf of Guinea. For instance, on 27 October 2018, 11 crew members were abducted from a container ship 70 miles off the coast of Bonny Island, Nigeria. There is no doubt that piracy attacks impede maritime navigation and make the African coasts, particularly the western coast, high-risk regions, costing African countries and the international economy billions of dollars. Therefore, it is urgent to improve cooperation and exchange information between countries bordering the Gulf of Guinea in order to take effective action against piracy (Maritime Africa Mag, 2019).

Cybersecurity remains a potential threat. Most of Africa's ports are unprepared for major cyberattacks. African port authorities must continuously evaluate, identify, and manage risks to mitigate and prepare for potential cyberattacks. In recent years, a number of high-profile cyberattacks have occurred, such as in 2017, when the network of Maersk, the world's largest

shipping line, was hit by a virus called NotPetya that targeted multiple businesses around the globe. Maersk servers in India and Europe were hit, impacting port and tug operations, drilling services, oil tankers, and container shipping. So a 2017 Maersk virus attack on any one of the continent's major ports - Durban, Tangier, Lagos, or Mombasa - would result in significant damages. Therefore, African port authorities need to establish practices and processes for information technology and operational technology management. Cybersecurity training for system administrators, project managers, developers, security officers, harbour masters, and other key personnel should be made mandatory. Moreover, high-risk business conditions in many African countries would discourage foreign investors. However, they can mitigate such risks through joint ventures (Bagwandeen, 2022). Therefore, smart port strategies must account for local dynamics, peacebuilding principles, and equitable governance.

Interviews Data Analysis

The chapter is performed to figure out what the obstacles and challenges are in African ports towards being smart and sustainable. Given the difficulty of conducting interviews for all African ports caused by a lack of time and resources, an empirical study conducted interviews on Egyptian ports mainly with key decision-makers and customers to understand the current performance and situation in Egyptian ports, the primary challenges to sustainable Egyptian ports, and suggest some procedures or action plans that can be applied to African ports to foster smart and sustainable ports.

Egypt has a strategic location between three continents: Africa, Asia, and Europe. In addition, the Suez Canal connects the entire world and facilitates international trade. 25% of the world's trade and 30% of the global container traffic pass through the Suez Canal. The total length of the Egyptian coast is 3,000 km (1,000 km in the Mediterranean Sea and 2,000 km in the Red Sea). Egypt owns 55 seaports, of which 18 are commercial ports and 37 are specialised ports. About 90% of Egyptian foreign trade passes through commercial ports (Maritime Transport Sector, 2022).

Despite Egypt's logistical advantage, smart port transformation must consider the voices and participation of various port-side stakeholders - particularly those whose livelihoods are directly impacted by port operations. These include port labourers, truckers, stevedores, women-led cooperatives, and fisherfolk who often operate in adjacent zones. Their insights are vital for understanding local realities, exclusion risks, and community responses to digitisation and expansion.

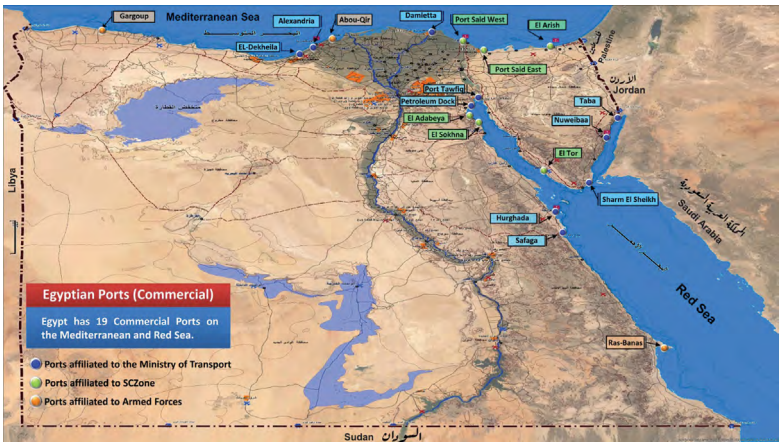


Figure 4: Egyptian Commercial Ports
Source: www.mts.gov.eg/en/category/

Egyptian commercial ports (Misr National Transport Study (MiNTS), 2019) handled about 176 million tonnes in 2022. The total number of vessels calling on these ports was 12,740 in 2022, whereas the total productivity of specialised ports was about 10.3 million tonnes in 2022, East Port Said Port has a world ranking of 15th in the world in terms of operating efficiency and saving time (Maritime Transport Sector, 2022).

The research design concerns the literature that emphasises qualitative studies. According to the role of local actors in achieving smart and sustainable ports in Egypt, the authors conducted interviews and meetings, mainly with key decision-makers and experts in Egypt, for Alexandria port, and Damietta port (see Table 4), as a case study, analysing the existing scenario, gauging how prepared and adaptable Egyptian ports

are to the use of smart practices and technology, and looking at the challenges and processes. However, the analysis currently omits direct insights from front-line port workers, informal traders, and small-scale operators - whose inclusion would provide a fuller picture of the social implications and risks of digital transformation.

Table 4: Interviews Count

	Count
Decision Maker	2
Expert/Academic	3
Company/Customer	5

In exploratory and descriptive research as well as survey designs, interviews are frequently used. Extremely structured, where participant replies are restricted to directly responding to questions.

> In a structured interview, the interviewer poses a series of uniform, pre-planned questions about particular subjects in a predetermined sequence. The respondents need to select their answers from a list of possibilities. The interviewer may provide clarification on some questions. Structured interviews are commonly used in surveys (Easwaramoorthy, 2006).

All the interviewees were assured of a clear strategy for implementing Egyptian smart ports. The role of the pre-registration system for shipments in facilitating trade procedures applying the single window system to reduce the time of stay of goods or containers inside the port or container terminal, technology systems applied at the port or container terminal include radio terminal data (RTD), electronic data interchange (EDI), and terminal operation system (TOS).

In contrast, there is obscurity about tracking cargo and containers inside the port; there is no use of solar energy or any other clean energy source inside the port, and how these systems impact truck drivers waiting outside port gates, or how women-led cooperatives dependent on port access for small-scale commerce are adapting. This absence indicates a gap in participatory governance and inclusive port design Figure 5 explains the problems facing customers in Egyptian ports.

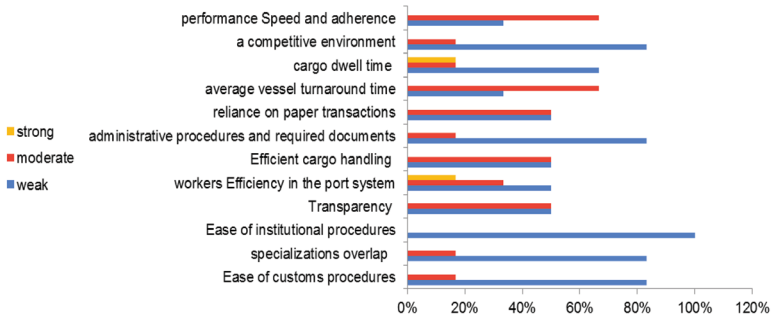


Figure 5: Problems facing ports customers in Egypt
Source: Authors depend on interviews data.

As Figure 5 illustrates, there is difficulty in institutional procedures, specialisations overlap, difficulty in customs procedures, no competitive environment, and a high cargo dwell time. On the level of sustainable port application, Figure 6 explains that obstacles to applying sustainable ports in Egypt are waste and water management systems, there are some procedures for air pollution, and noise.

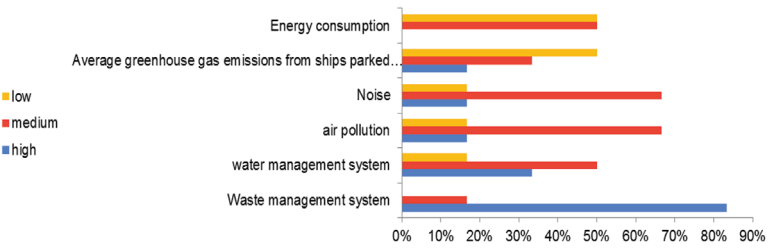


Figure 6: Obstacles to applying sustainable ports in Egypt
Source: Authors depend on interviews data.

Recently, Egyptian port development trends have shifted from focusing solely on infrastructure to incorporating applications and initiatives supporting the trend of smart and sustainable ports. Some of these initiatives mentioned in (Maritime Transport Sector, 2022) are as follows:

1. Egyptian seaport authorities have established emergency plans that have been approved by the Environmental Affairs Agency, as well as plans for the management of hazardous and non-hazardous solid and liquid wastes. In addition, equipment for responding to marine oil pollution has also been provided by all affiliated port authorities.
2. Activating the automatic registration system for trucks (RFID), this contributed to improving collection efficiency and entry speed for transport vehicles.
3. Manage waste and minimise emissions in the Damietta Port Authority by establishing waste incinerators that have environmental approval, improving air quality by increasing green areas, and providing devices to measure pollution rates inside the port.
4. Damietta Port Authority has implemented an international agreement to reduce gas emissions in accordance with International Maritime Organization requirements for the supply and use of marine fuel by 0.5% sulphur. In order to reduce thermal emissions, electricity was connected to the vessels from land to reduce harmful gas emissions resulting from vessel operation, in addition to using solar energy to generate electricity in the port.
5. Alexandria Port Authority activated the first Egyptian system (GIS/AIS) to track the movement of vessels, marine accidents, and the management of marine units on interactive maps that contain all the details and databases of the Alexandria Port Authority as well as all that is related to geographical tracking systems as of July 2021, and the Authority also activated the reservation of trucks online on customs releases and documents that define the purpose of the presence of trucks inside the port, which eliminated the phenomenon of the presence of trucks without work inside the port.

6. An information infrastructure network was implemented in West Port Said Port to connect electronically to the port community.
7. Electronic gates and an electronic payment system were established for East Port Said Port in order to reduce waiting time.

In conclusion, the Egyptian ports are still in the initial stages between port information and automatic ports of smart ports, as previously explained in Figure 1, and local actors must invest in technological, institutional, and human aspects otherwise they risk losing their competitive advantages. However, none of the initiatives were reported to involve consultation with port-adjacent communities, or integrate the needs of small-scale actors such as artisanal fishers or female port vendors.

Local exclusion in port planning risks fuelling resistance, informal bypassing of systems, or social unrest - as has been seen in other regions where digitisation displaced informal economies without transitional support.

A Strategy for Smart and Sustainable Ports Development in Africa

It is indisputable that Africa is working to develop a blue economy, and since 2009, it has taken steps to address this through an integrated maritime strategy as well as by creating specific policies and guidelines to advance the blue economy and incorporate the key objectives of the continent's long-term strategy, with the goal of adopting a cogent strategy. The blue economy has been dubbed the "new frontier of the African Renaissance", and governments in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) area are now aware of its potential to spur economic growth, create jobs, and improve social welfare (SADC, 2023), even in countries where the oil and gas industry is the main driver of GDP. Africa's coastal republics, however, lack the financial and technological capabilities to fully exploit the ocean's resources. The strategic use of the states' advantages in maritime resources for more locally beneficial development is constrained by a shortage of

professional human resources, a lack of adequate maritime security against piracy and other illicit activities, and political concerns, including corruption. The African Union Blue Economy Strategy for 2019 believes that the idea of the Blue Economy merges into a new strategy the commercial exploitation of marine resources and the preservation of aquatic ecosystems. It serves as a foundation for the wise and sustainable use of natural resources (both renewable and non-renewable), as well as the preservation of their natural ecosystems (Guerreiro, 2022).

Several political, environmental, economic, and port-specific issues, such as operation, security and safety, the human aspect, and energy, depending on its make-up and stakeholders, influenced the transformation towards a smart and sustainable port, so blue growth has been shown to have a significant impact on ocean governance at four different levels, including:

- **Governmental structures**: through predictive decision-making and schedule planning, it is apparent that African ports are still government enterprises under the supervision of quasi-governmental agencies. Development is consequently part of strategic government growth planning initiatives rather than a synergy between the public and private sectors.
- **Institutional frameworks**: a programme of training, education, and skills development must be created in order to guarantee the success of the smart port project and maritime sector development.
- **Legal frameworks**: application of international security laws, regulations, and initiatives, such as US port security improvement programmes (such as Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) and Container Security Initiative (CSI))
- **Economic frameworks**: as an investment in new infrastructure and facilities, Integration of the horizontal and vertical supply chains through creative, cooperative initiatives, joint venture business development, and partnerships (Belmoukari, Audy & Forget, 2023) through port operations, they may optimise their income and obtain the money required to finance

reform. Even though the port authorities collaborate closely with the government, this does not significantly increase the burden on governments to fund port expansion. The issue of where to obtain the financing is another significant one. The government will need to be more committed to public-private partnerships and how partners and service providers are selected. If carefully used, the global trend towards multinational port service providers can help with finances and raise performance standards. What is evident, though, is that the government will need to cede some control and ownership to domestic and foreign private sector players in order to manage the financial costs of digitisation (Grimett, 2022). Ports can become engines of peacebuilding and social equity - but only when local participation is embedded in every step of port transformation.

5. Conclusion and Policy Implications

Building a sustainable, green, and secure port has become an issue of concern in the current study because of the ongoing development of ports. Beyond technological upgrades, sustainable port development must also integrate principles of local ownership, equity, and social inclusion. Environmental responsibility is considered one of the most important considerations that ports care about in order to become more sustainable in their operations and ensure an increase in workers and the well-being of customers and stakeholders within the port. Therefore, smart ports seek to find innovative ways to reduce costs and eliminate waste, which increases the added value of operations.

Because of the advantages of smart ports - increasing production levels, lowering operational costs, improving security, raising safety standards, expanding service levels, and better utilising assets - African ports are making the switch. Smart port technology also connects the entire port ecosystem and gives port operators access to external partner ecosystems, including shippers, carriers, agents and forwarders, trucking and rail firms, customs, and governmental organisations.

However, for these systems to be truly effective and just, the digital transformation must also empower local port communities, including labourers, small-scale traders, and coastal residents, whose livelihoods are intertwined with port operations. Building trust and community engagement in smart port initiatives contributes not only to operational success but also to broader peacebuilding and social cohesion objectives.

The majority of African ports still use manual, paper-based operating procedures. However, very slowly, some people are starting to embrace digital and automated technology. However, there is currently a lack of publicly accessible infrastructure and high-speed broadband connectivity needed to accomplish the change. More importantly, finance is a constant roadblock that must be overcome.

Equity concerns also emerge, as digital transformation risks marginalising stakeholders who lack digital literacy, access to technology, or representation in governance structures. Ensuring fair access to training, jobs, and decision-making processes is essential to avoiding new forms of exclusion or resistance.

African ports face numerous threats and challenges at various levels, including global competition, security (e.g., armed thievery, cyber security issues, unlawful actions, maritime piracy and terrorist attacks) operations (e.g., manual, paper-based operating procedures, congestion, delays, operational mistakes, and a lack of information sharing), environment (e.g., air, water, and noise pollution, waste removal, building, and expansion activities), energy (e.g., heavy energy consumption and energy costs), safety (e.g., berthing effects and vessel crashes) and financing issues.

The study recommends that African countries invest in technological, institutional, and human aspects; otherwise, they risk losing their competitive advantages. But investment alone is insufficient - there must also be efforts to promote shared ownership of port development processes through inclusive planning, transparent governance, and participatory stakeholder engagement. The need to pay attention to information and communications technology in administrative processes and improve the environmental performance of ports to achieve the

integrated concept of the smart port and achieve sustainability, facilitate and automate procedures in ports, and provide tracking and tracing technologies for shipments.

Moreover, strengthening local capacities - through training, cooperative models, and knowledge sharing with underrepresented groups such as women's cooperatives and informal labour networks - can help to ensure that smart port transformation excludes no-one.

The study also emphasises the role of senior management in supporting performance evaluation and applying quality principles and the importance of using international experiences, while highlighting the urgency of creating a stable, inclusive political and security environment that fosters not only foreign investment but also local trust, ownership, and peaceful port-city relations.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Local Agency in Africa's Peace and Security examines how peace is imagined, negotiated and sustained from the ground up across African contexts. Moving beyond state-centred and externally driven models, the volume foregrounds the knowledge, practices and political agency of communities, local authorities, women, civil society actors, borderland groups and security networks. Its chapters engage key debates on the local turn in peacebuilding, gender and inclusion, migration governance, security sector reform, hybrid counter-insurgency, cross-border conflict, climate-related insecurity and the blue economy. Rather than romanticising the local, the book shows that local agency is shaped by power, exclusion, hierarchy and contestation. It asks when local actors enable peace, when they reproduce insecurity, and how national, regional and international frameworks can better respond to lived realities. This volume offers conceptual depth, empirical breadth and policy relevance for scholars, practitioners and institutions working on African peace and security and sustainable peacebuilding practice today worldwide.

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Dr Emmaculate Asige Liaga's scholarship is shaped by sustained engagement with peacebuilding from below and the politics of local agency in Africa. Her doctoral work examined the local turn in peacebuilding, with particular attention to South Sudan and the ways communities, civil society actors and local institutions navigate conflict, protection and peace. This focus has informed her wider research on inclusive peace processes, gender-responsive peacebuilding, youth participation, the effects of sanctions on local populations, and the interaction between domestic and international peacebuilding actors. She has since expanded this work through research and policy-level engagement on wider African peace processes, linking local realities to broader debates on mediation, peace support operations, security governance and post-conflict reconstruction. This volume reflects her commitment to centring African experiences, local knowledge and grounded agency in peace and security analysis, while challenging approaches that overlook everyday practices of peace.

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