The Shifting Landscape of Conflict and Security

There is a common perception that Africa is rife with violence and insecurity. While it is true that Africa is not short on armed conflict, it would be a mistake to overgeneralize. For every war-torn country like the Democratic Republic of Congo, there are stable, peaceful countries like Botswana and Tanzania. Even in the DRC, the vast majority of the country is at relative peace and was for most of the years of conflict. Moreover, some countries that were once at war have recovered superbly, like Mozambique. Nevertheless, it is true that political violence is a problem in several parts of Africa. It is also true that once-peaceful countries have been wrecked by political violence, like Côte d’Ivoire. It is thus essential to understand the nature, patterns, and causes of African conflicts, and what liabilities might expose some countries to violent decay.

More than seventy wars have been fought in Africa since the early 1980s. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, sixteen of Africa’s fifty-four countries were affected by armed conflict. The average length of African conflicts is twenty-two years, with a median duration of seventeen years (Huggins and Clover 2005:1). Across the continent, armed conflict has heightened insecurity and promoted the militarization of the state, which has often come at great social cost. As of 2006, Eritrea spent 6.3 percent of its GDP on the military, the highest in Africa and ninth in the world, while spending only 1.8 percent on health (CIA 2013). From 2005 to 2010, Angola spent about twice as much of its booming GDP on defense as on health, and Chad three times as much. Some have argued that conflict is among the most important factors in accounting for Africa’s economic performance (Bloom, Sachs, and Collier 1998; Addison, le Billon, and Murrell 2001).

What explains the outbreak of conflict in contemporary Africa? How has the nature of armed conflict changed since African independence? What are the different types of conflicts that have affected Africa? What are the
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A Typology of African Conflicts

Introduction

In recent years, the concept of conflict has gained prominence in both academic and policy circles. Conflict is not merely limited to violence, but includes a range of behaviors that have societal and economic consequences. This typology aims to categorize conflicts in terms of their origin, scale, and impact, providing a framework for understanding and addressing these complex issues.

1. Interstate Conflicts

These are conflicts between sovereign states, often characterized by territorial disputes, resource competition, or regime rivalry. Examples include the 1994 Rwandan genocide, which led to the displacement of millions of people from Rwanda to neighboring countries.

2. Intrastate Conflicts

Intrastate conflicts occur within a single state, involving rebel groups, ethnic or religious minorities, or non-state actors. The 1994 Rwandan genocide is also an example of an intrastate conflict, highlighting the complexities of internal wars.

3. Civil Wars

Civil wars are characterized by armed conflict between government forces and rebel groups within the same country, often involving significant civilian casualties and displacement. The 1994 Rwandan genocide is a tragic example of this type of conflict.

4. Resource Wars

Conflicts driven by competition over scarce resources such as oil, minerals, or water. The 1994 Rwandan genocide can also be seen as a resource war, as the conflict spilled over from the Burundi and Rwanda economies, affecting the entire region.

5. Ethnic/Religious Wars

These conflicts arise from differences in ethnicity or religion, often leading to mass displacement and violence. The 1994 Rwandan genocide is a prime example, where the conflict was driven by differences in ethnicity.

Conclusion

Understanding the different types of conflicts is crucial for developing effective strategies to prevent and mitigate their impacts. By categorizing conflicts, policymakers can tailor their responses more effectively, focusing on the root causes and potential solutions.

References


Appendices

- Data on interstate conflicts from 1945-2020
- Case studies of civil wars
- Resource wars analysis
- Ethnic/religious conflicts overview
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The year 1995 witnessed the beginning of a new era for South Africa, with the implementation of the new constitution and the establishment of a democratic government. This was a significant moment for the continent, leading to a period of relative peace and stability. However, the transition to democracy was not without challenges, and the region continued to face various conflicts and security issues.

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In contrast, “radical insecurity” are neither emotional nor mental states, but rather a condition of chronic and systemic vulnerability and threat. This perspective emphasizes the role of structural and systemic factors in shaping the experience of insecurity. It suggests that the traditional understanding of insecurity, which often focuses on personal and psychological layers, fails to capture the complexities and scales at play in contemporary global contexts.

Insurgency conflicts

2002: Ethiopian invasion

The Holy Spirit Movement in northern Mozambique, which was formed in 1985 as a response to the Portuguese colonial rule, became a significant armed group. Members of the movement, known as the Holy Spirit Movement, were disillusioned with the Portuguese government and its policies. They were promised independence but were left with poverty and marginalization. The movement gained strength and became a significant force in the struggle for independence.

2007: Bush administration

Under the Bush administration, the so-called U.S. war on terror was expanded to include countries that were not directly involved in the war in Iraq or Afghanistan. This expansion of the war on terror led to the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, which was tasked with protecting the U.S. from terrorism. The administration also intensified its use of military force and surveillance in countries such as Pakistan, Yemen, and Iraq.
The Cold War in Africa

Chasing Patterns

...
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After 1990: The Emergence of "New Wars."

Inside African Politics
Theoretical war in Africa

In the context of conflict and security, the shifting landscape of conflict and security has been significantly influenced by various factors. One of the key factors is the geopolitical landscape of Africa, which has been shaped by historical events, colonial legacies, and contemporary challenges.

For example, the legacy of colonialism has left a lasting impact on the region, with many countries still facing issues such as political instability, economic disparities, and ethnic conflicts. These factors have contributed to the persistence of conflict and insecurity in many African countries.

Another significant factor is the role of external actors, including international organizations and foreign governments, in shaping the conflict dynamics in Africa. These actors often intervene in conflicts, either through military interventions or diplomatic efforts, and their actions can have a profound impact on the outcome of conflicts.

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on the importance of prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa. Various initiatives, such as the African Union and the United Nations, have been instrumental in mediating conflicts and promoting peace in the region.

Despite these efforts, conflict and insecurity continue to be significant challenges in Africa, and addressing these issues will require a sustained and concerted effort from all stakeholders.
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The changing nature of political violence—recent events in the Middle East, the European Union, and other regions—has led to a rethinking of how we understand and respond to conflict and security challenges. The traditional focus on state-centric approaches to conflict resolution has given way to a more nuanced understanding that recognizes the role of non-state actors, including rebels, terrorist organizations, and transnational crime groups. This shift has been accompanied by a growing recognition of the importance of addressing the root causes of conflict, including economic inequality, political instability, and social injustice.

One of the major challenges in this new landscape is the increasing complexity of security threats. Traditional security threats, such as terrorism and armed conflict, continue to pose a significant risk, but they are often intertwined with other challenges, such as climate change, migration, and cyber security. This requires a multi-dimensional approach to security, which recognizes the interconnections between different threats and the need for cooperative solutions.

The global community is increasingly aware of the need to address these challenges, and there are ongoing efforts to develop new frameworks and mechanisms to support conflict resolution and peacebuilding. These efforts include initiatives such as the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seeks to address the root causes of conflict, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which recognizes the role of climate change in conflict and displacement.

As we look to the future, it is clear that the challenges facing the world will continue to evolve and require innovative and creative solutions. The key to success will be a commitment to collaboration, resilience, and adaptability, as well as a recognition of the interconnectedness of security threats and the importance of addressing them in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
Elite and factional competition.

There is a discussion of state collapse.

The interplay of economics, politics, and factionalism is discussed. The political economy of African states is highlighted, with a focus on the role of factionalism in state failure.

A different angle is taken by scholars who argue that the crisis is with the political economy of contemporary Africa.

Crisis of modernity.

The cooperation of conquered Africans is discussed.

The cooperation of conquered Africans is analyzed, with a focus on the role of modernity in state failure.

The cooperation of conquered Africans is highlighted, with a focus on the role of modernity in state failure.
The shifting landscape of conflict and security

Identity conflicts

Identity conflicts in Africa, South Sudan, Nigeria, and Kenya in 2020

ecuity in Africa, South Sudan, Nigeria, and Kenya in 2020. In many cases, the name of an ethnic group or a region in the African continent is characterized by the presence of multiple ethnic groups. These groups have a history of tension and conflict. In many cases, the presence of the European colonial powers led to the creation of artificial borders, which have resulted in conflicts between groups that share a common culture but are divided by borders. The European colonial powers also sought to control the resources of these areas, which has led to further conflict. The European colonial powers also sought to control the resources of these areas, which has led to further conflict. The European colonial powers also sought to control the resources of these areas, which has led to further conflict. The European colonial powers also sought to control the resources of these areas, which has led to further conflict.
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The shifting landscape of conflict and security is characterized by a complex interplay of domestic, regional, and international factors. In recent years, the role of military coups in seizing power has become more pronounced, particularly in countries where democratic institutions are weak or nonexistent. This phenomenon has been observed in Africa, where coups d'etat have occurred in several countries, often leading to prolonged periods of instability and economic decline.

Recent research suggests that the frequency of coups d'etat is influenced by various factors, including weak institutional capacity, political polarization, and the presence of external actors with strategic interests. The economic motivations behind coups are also a significant factor, as coup leaders often seek to control resources and influence economic policies for personal gain.

International actors, including the United Nations and regional organizations, have responded to the increasing prevalence of coups with initiatives aimed at promoting democratic governance and stability. However, these efforts face numerous challenges, including limited resources and the complexity of the underlying conflicts.

In conclusion, the shifting landscape of conflict and security is characterized by a dynamic and multifaceted set of factors that require a nuanced approach to understanding and addressing. The role of military coups in seizing power is a critical aspect of this landscape, and ongoing research is needed to identify effective strategies for promoting democratic governance and stability.
The shifting landscape of conflict and security

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International interventions

Election supervision and post-conflict reconciliation

By multinational forces and/or conditional funding, humanitarian assistance, and the Community of West African States (ECOWAS), such as the Ecowas Peacekeeping Mission in Liberia (ECOMOG), intervention by regional organizations in support of the UN peacekeeping effort in the Central African Republic, and the AU peacekeeping mission in Somalia, the UN has been active in efforts to prevent and stabilize conflicts, particularly in Africa. These efforts have included peacekeeping missions, elections, and economic reconstruction. However, the effectiveness of these interventions is questionable, and many conflicts remain unresolved.

In recent years, there have been efforts to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions, particularly in terms of their ability to prevent violence and promote stability. The UN has been working to increase its capacity to respond to conflict and to provide more robust support to countries such as the Central African Republic.

Peacekeeping and conflict resolution

Peacekeeping missions have been criticized for their inability to prevent conflict from escalating and for their limited ability to provide sustainable solutions to conflicts. However, they have also been successful in some cases, such as the mission in Sierra Leone, where they helped to bring an end to a long-standing civil war.

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In some cases, peacekeeping missions have struggled to achieve their objectives, particularly in countries with weak governments and rampant corruption. However, in other cases, they have been successful in bringing an end to long-standing civil wars, such as the mission in Sierra Leone.

The UN Peacekeeping Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) has been active in efforts to prevent violence and promote stability, particularly in the region around Bangui, where conflict has been particularly intense.

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Regional Organizations and Solutions

All working at cross-purposes, the Regional Organizations, including the African Union, have been slow to deliver. The regional organizations are often seen as part of the problem rather than the solution. They often lack the resources and authority to effectively address conflicts.

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The shifting landscape of conflict and security
In Chapter 8, we explained the concept of 'obstructing justice' in the context of criminal proceedings. The ICC has jurisdiction over cases where the primary matrix within which judicial proceedings are conducted is theICC. This allows the ICC to investigate and prosecute individuals for crimes occurring anywhere in the world. The ICC's mandate is to ensure that justice is done, regardless of where the crime occurred. This is achieved through the implementation of international law and the promotion of international cooperation.

The ICC's jurisdiction extends to situations involving crimes committed in connection with armed conflicts. These crimes include war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The ICC can also investigate and prosecute individuals for crimes that are not related to armed conflicts, such as corruption and money laundering.

The ICC's role is to uphold the rule of law and to ensure that individuals who commit crimes are held accountable for their actions. The ICC's jurisdiction is based on the principle of universal jurisdiction, which means that the ICC can investigate and prosecute crimes committed anywhere in the world, regardless of the nationality of the accused.

Despite the ICC's significant powers, there are several challenges to its effectiveness. One of the main challenges is the lack of cooperation from states. Many states are reluctant to refer cases to the ICC, and there is concern about the ICC's ability to prosecute crimes that occur in countries where there is a lack of political will.

Another challenge is the ICC's limited resources. The ICC has a small budget and relies on contributions from member states to fund its operations. This can limit the ICC's ability to investigate and prosecute cases in countries with high levels of corruption or where there is a lack of political will.

In conclusion, the ICC plays a vital role in upholding the rule of law and ensuring that individuals who commit crimes are held accountable for their actions. However, the ICC faces several challenges, including lack of cooperation from states and limited resources. Despite these challenges, the ICC remains an important institution in the fight against impunity.
Critique of Conflict Resolution

The shining landscape of conflict and security

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Email: [email protected]
Near and Far

International Relations

WHAT IS AFRICA'S PLACE IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM? HOW HAVE...