



UPPSALA  
UNIVERSITET

## **FROM CIVIL WAR TO STRONG PEACE IN AFRICA: THE THOMAS OHLSON MEMORIAL CONFERENCE**



Summary Report from the Opening Session of the  
Thomas Ohlson Memorial Conference 2013

Department of Peace and Conflict Research  
Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden

18–20 April 2013

Editors: Johanna Ohlsson & Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs  
Authors: Veronika Staudacher & David Ermes

DPCR Research Report no. 101  
ISBN: 978-91-506-2370-3  
ISSN 0566-8808

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	1
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS .....	2
CONFERENCE ORGANISATION AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT .....	3
A NOTE ON CONFIDENTIALITY.....	3
INTRODUCTION: FROM WEAK STATES TO STRONG PEACE.....	4
THEME 1: GOVERNANCE & ELECTIONS.....	8
THEME 2: REGIONALISATION & GLOBALISATION OF ARMED CONFLICT.....	11
THEME 3: CLIMATE CHANGE & NEW ENERGY SOURCES.....	13
THEME 4: IDENTITY & CONFLICT.....	15
FINAL WORDS.....	18
CONFERENCE SCHEDULE.....	19
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS MEMORIAL CONFERENCE.....	22
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS MEMORIAL DINNER .....	23

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

This conference was organised in honour of the memory of Professor Thomas Ohlson, (born 1954) who passed away on 14 April 2012. Thomas Ohlson was deeply involved in issues of peace, security and development with particular concern for African affairs. His last major research project focused on the conditions for building sustainable peace after the endings of civil wars in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the conference primarily addressed topics of relevance to this theme.

We were delighted that so many excellent researchers working in this field – some who were good friends of Thomas – kindly accepted our invitation, and we were able to put together an inspiring and creative conference programme. During the conference, discussions of on-going research within a range of topics, including questions relating to mediation and negotiations, third party involvement in civil war peace processes, electoral violence, military reintegration, political economy after civil war, and communal conflicts and their resolution, were taking place. On Friday 19 April, a Memorial Dinner was held with invited colleagues, professional acquaintances, friends and family of Thomas. It was a joyful and emotional event, and an evening of remembrance and celebration, reunions and new meetings, and sharing of memories and recollection of stories from across continents, working places and time periods.

This report is based on the content of the opening session of the Thomas Ohlson Memorial Conference on April 18, 2013. A Round Table Panel on the theme “From Civil War to Strong Peace in Africa: Prospects and Challenges” was arranged in the Main University Building. Senior Professor Peter Wallensteen chaired the panel, and the session was open to the public. The participants were Professor *L. Adele Jinadu*, University of Lagos, Nigeria and former Claude Ake Visiting Professor at the DPCR; Professor *Dirk Kotzé*, University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria, South Africa; *Carin Norberg*, former Director of the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, Sweden; *Tor Sellström*, Honorary Doctor, Uppsala University and former Researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden; and Professor *Amadu Sesay*, Obafemi Awolowo University in Ife-Ife, Nigeria, a former Claude Ake Visiting Professor at the DPCR.

Johanna Ohlsson, Research Assistant at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, and Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs, Assistant Professor at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, edited this report, which was authored by David Ermes and Veronika Staudacher, both students at the Department’s Masters’ Programme and responsible for taking notes during the opening session. This report presents a compilation of the opening remarks made by the five participants, and the discussion that followed.

## **CONFERENCE ORGANISATION AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

The Thomas Ohlson Memorial Conference was organised by the Department of Peace and Conflict Research (DPCR) at Uppsala University. The organising committee consisted of Senior Professor Peter Wallensteen, Assistant Professor Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs, and Research Assistant Johanna Ohlsson. The main conference venue was Norrland Nation Fest & Konferens. The opening session was co-organised with the student organisations Pax et Bellum, Uppsala Peace and Development Students' Association (U-PaD) and Uppsala Association of International Affairs (UF).

The conference was made available with financial support from Thomas's last major research project "*From War of the Weak to Strong Peace: On the Conditions for Sustainable Peace in Sub-Saharan Africa*" funded by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation (Riksbankens Jubileumsfond) as well as the Claude Ake Visiting Chair, jointly funded by Uppsala University and the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI) in Uppsala. Thomas was project leader for the Claude Ake Visiting Chair Committee from the time of the inception of the Chair in 2003.

### **A NOTE ON CONFIDENTIALITY**

As is customary, the deliberations of the opening session were held under the Chatham House rules of confidentiality. No references are therefore made to individual statements made by the panellists in this report. The programme and the list of participants for the conference are attached to this report, as well as the list of participants at the Memorial Dinner.

## INTRODUCTION: FROM WEAK STATES TO STRONG PEACE

Peace research as a discipline has emerged gradually yet strongly over the last few decades. During this time period, the African continent in particular has witnessed both a large number of armed conflicts and a plethora of attempts to manage or resolve these conflicts through peace process, which may at least partly explain why a substantial amount of peace and conflict research has focused on the developments in Africa. The key research question discussed at the Round Table, as well as during the Memorial Conference as a whole, concerned under what circumstances strong peace can be established after prolonged and destructive civil wars on the African continent. What defined such a strong peace, and what are some of the key prospects and challenges for its emergence?

In the majority of studies on conflicts and conflict resolution in Africa, there are three main points that stand out. The first one is connected to the state and concludes that African conflicts are often related to the crisis of the African state and to unsuccessful or incomplete statebuilding processes. The second point is that peace is more than the absence of war. The third and final point is that scholars of African conflicts, particularly in the post-Cold War period and in their search for remedies to the state weakness problem, somewhat paradoxically have been moving away from the previously dominating state-centric perspective.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, the research debate on the transformation from war to peace has often taken its point of departure in the distinction between strong versus weak states. Some have argued that this might be a misused terminology. The critics have suggested that talking about 'weak states' may be seen as delimiting since it renders states into being either strong or weak, with few alternatives in between. It is also a vague terminology that does not contribute to clarify and understand the underlying explanatory factors. The notion of 'weak' (be it states, governments and/or other actors) might however be easier to understand than 'strong'. Weakness denotes the lack of authority, legitimacy, and resources, which may cause exclusion and give rise to conflict. Due to these limitations, some have preferred to use other concepts to describe the African state, such as soft, a concept associated with the Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal. Largely based on macro- and socio-economic data, however, and on the asymmetric relations both between Africa and the rest of the world and within the African states, many scholars and practitioners have now agreed to use the concept weak, in spite of its limitations.

It is not only the concept of weak states that have been subject to debate. Johan Galtung's well-known concepts of negative versus positive peace, where negative equals the ending, or the absence, of war, and positive a more holistic vision where the root causes of conflict - such as

---

<sup>1</sup> Ohlson, T. (2012) Ed. "From Intra-State War to Durable Peace: Conflict and Its Resolution in Africa after the Cold War" Republic of Letters Publishing: Dordrecht.

poverty, illiteracy and poor health - are no longer present, have been equally under scrutiny. The concepts of weak and strong peace complement these concepts and may be used to assess whether conflict resolution in a given context is on the right track or not. Peace, in this definition, focuses more on agency than on structures and it is not seen to be about definite values but about development and directions. Another way to describe this was suggested by one of the speakers, suggesting that: “the concept of strong peace does not consider if the glass is half empty or half full, but it describes if the glass is getting filled or emptied.”

Another key issue in the debate on the conditions for strong peace in Africa has been the role played by economic factors. Today, it is encouraging to note the positive economic trends in many parts of Africa. When afro-pessimism turns into afro-optimism, it is, nevertheless, important to realistically bear in mind Africa’s point of departure and the challenges ahead. For example, the 48 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa represent around 1.5% of the global GDP and only ten of the Sub-Saharan African countries have a GDP higher than Uppsala County. In order to face the structural and long-term challenges that follow this scenario, there is a request for sustained peace, good leadership, responsible governance, legitimacy, popular participation, and absence of corruption. When viewing African countries from a macroeconomic perspective, Southern Africa is the least weak of the African regions. South Africa may even by some standards be considered a strong state. Yet gender-based violence and rapes are shockingly common, xenophobic violence and police brutality is widespread, criminality and the number of assassinations is similar to those of countries at war, and the level of personal safety is extremely low in South Africa. This is largely a legacy of colonialism and Apartheid, and partly due to ANC’s transition from liberation movement to ruling party, which has created new fault lines in society. Albeit economically and politically relatively stable, in the absence of truly inclusive vertical and horizontal governance, there are reasons to raise a warning flag.

Another aspect that has been discussed in connection to weak and strong peace is the state’s functional capabilities. A capable state is, according to scholars, a state that is governed through legitimacy and political stability as well as structural subsidiarity.

After a mixed history of successful as well as failed peacebuilding attempts on the African continent, the question must be asked how to build strong peace in a society where a people and its government have been shaken by the atrocities and the suffering of civil war. The answer is not easy. Short-term peacemaking activities such as peace agreements need to be complemented with efforts to establish long-term sustainable peace. But how is this best done is a matter of debate. It seems to be easier to identify the causes of its absence, than to explain its presence.

There are a few African countries that, against these general odds, have managed to achieve relatively strong peace since independence. It might be fruitful to closer analyse the progress by these countries. Notable examples include Botswana, Mauritius or the Seychelles. All three are

amongst the leading countries in most development rankings. Both Botswana and Mauritius have sustained regular multiparty elections and spectacular economic growth since independence in the 1960s. It might however be possible to argue that both the Seychelles and Mauritius are a mere construct of colonialism, as they were previously uninhabited islands and as such also remained largely isolated from spill over effects from neighbouring civil wars. As such, it may be difficult to generalise from these two cases. In contrast however, Botswana was surrounded by volatile countries at war for a long-time period, and yet succeeded in establishing a strong peace. The country certainly holds the potential for future research on this topic.

In sharp contrast, successful economies such as those of Angola, Nigeria and Tanzania have failed in the past or still struggle to deal with rising levels of corruption connected to their natural resource wealth, weak and divided opposition parties, growing youth unemployment, mono economies and increasing inequality as a result of the revenues not being used to the benefit of the citizens.

From an overall perspective of all countries on the African continent, there have been both advances and regressions concerning strong peace. Although many elections are still far from objective, the quality of electoral commissions' increases and a normative consensus emerges as to what represents an unconstitutional change of governance or an acceptable constitution. The ramifications of the Arab Spring have called the distance between the people and the political elite to the attention of the leaders and pointed them towards the need to increase domestic accountability. Strong peace is far from guaranteed in several of the countries in Africa, but successful positive examples should inspire future research on how to maintain strong peace within a country.

One important lesson learnt from past experiences is that threats to strong peace are manifold and arise from conventional threats to overall peace and security. The most preminent ones on the African continent being the following:

First, the emerging threat to strong peace posed by electoral violence. Although elections are meant to normalise the political situation of a country emerging from conflict, they constitute a sensitive moment in the political transition process, especially if a political leader refuses to accept the election results after its announcement. There is great need to further develop the necessary infrastructure and preparatory measures to deal with such situations, both at a general and a context-specific level.

A second type of security threat is connected to regionalisation and globalisation of armed conflict. Rebel movements sponsored by external and/or neighbouring countries illustrate this threat. For example, the M23 rebel group in the DRC which has received support from Rwanda plays a key role in contributing to the continued insecurity in the northern regions of the country.

Similarly, secessionist movements can trouble the peace in single regions or whole countries, such as the separatist movements in the Coast Province around Mombasa in Kenya or in the Zambezi Region (formerly known as the Caprivi Strip) in north-eastern Namibia. Regionalisation and globalisation have also brought other actors to the arena and issues connected to the role of foreign investors, like China or India, which also pose a latent threat to security on the continent. However, it should be pointed out that the presence of China also appears to be of benevolent nature and a viable alternative to the infrastructural development prescribed by the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank. But the economic competition that it entails may negatively impact the local industry and spark economic insecurity.

Third, climate change and the discovery of new energy resources have lately emerged as new potent threats to security in Africa. Amongst the affected countries are for example Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia, Kenya, Mozambique and Ghana. Although initially a positive economic development in the region, the discovery of natural resources has multiple potentially negative ramifications through the increased pressure on new governments, external interventions by global players and the involvement of rebel groups in the control of the resources. Climate change is another potential security threat with many aspects. A major one being human security through the augmentation of draughts and water scarcity in already strained regions of Africa.

A fourth type of security threat arises from issues concerning identity and ethnicity, which may assume different shapes and forms. One example is the ethnic diversity that led to the split of Sudan, or the xenophobic violence and discrimination in Zimbabwe. A majority of conflict issues are related to ethnicity and identity through for example strives for minority rights, territorial self-determination or access to power. The divide between indigenous and non-indigenous people has also contributed to the outbreak of violence in several areas across the continent.

Below, each of these four areas will be discussed in greater detail.

## **THEME 1:**

### **GOVERNANCE & ELECTIONS**

One key focus in the debate on how to establish strong peace concerns the issue of governance in general, and the accomplishment of peaceful transitions between governments through democratic elections in particular. Many times government institutions and their legitimacy require acute post-war reconstruction in order to prevent a relapse to conflict through electoral violence, corrupt elites and executive forces, faulty legal frameworks or lack of equity and inclusion. From the world of development economics, the term good governance emerged in the post-Cold War period, setting the benchmark for capable states and a precondition for many international organisations to supply development aid. Although good governance in itself does not prescribe a certain regime type, but rather the principles of a responsive, accountable, transparent and consensus-oriented government, the application of the term is often biased towards an understanding of governance closely related to political democracy and economic liberalism. In the transition from war to peace, a number of challenges need to be overcome in order to establish a legitimate government. The capable state could be seen as consisting of six primary features or political goods, whose quantity and quality contribute to stability and development in the post-war setting.

The first of these is democratic political succession with fixed presidential term limits. This is within the framework of competitive party politics and the periodic conduct of free, fair and credible elections, managed and conducted by independent electoral management bodies. The second consists of affirmative-action type policies to promote and protect various forms of diversity, such as cultural, ethno-regional, gender, political party, religious, and other identity-based diversities in representation on elective and other public political offices and in public institutions. The third feature concerns strengthening of the separation of powers, to enable the judiciary and the legislature to play their respective roles of oversight and investigation more effectively. Fourth, the promotion of political devolution of political power to multiple power centers in the state on the basis of the principle of limited home rule for sub-national levels of government and shared rule at the national level, informed by considerations of subsidiarity. The fifth feature is about reforming the party system as a democracy- and diversity-promoting institution to ensure competitive party- and electoral politics. Finally, the sixth feature concerns the establishment of horizontal governance institutions to serve, in effect, as a branch of government to ensure accountability and transparency in public life, by making them insulated from the deployment of political influence.

Many times these characteristics, which define stable and resilient institutions, become inflated with expectations about all kinds of 'good' policies that should arise from them, (e.g. poverty reducing growth and development) which risks overloading the development agenda of a country

recently emerging from civil war. At the same time, good governance is often a precondition for the reception of development aid. Post-war reconstruction of institutions need to take into account the weakened state's capabilities and be sensitive to conditions of the peace agreements. Ideally, the process of reconstruction leading to good governance involves the previously conflicting parties and incorporates the public in order to ensure local ownership of the process.

Even after the establishment of stable institutions in post-conflict societies, elections remain a sensitive point in the transition from one government to the other, especially in countries that maintain some kind of authoritarian elements within their democratic structures. Electoral violence may emerge if political power is not yet entirely institutionalised, but personalised, and one or more of the competing parties employ violence as a means to manipulate the electoral process or contesting its outcome. The thresholds to use violence is especially low if a country has recently emerged from a period of civil war and former rebels, guerrilla forces or radicalised youth wings are still willing to employ such measures in support of their party. Most of the time these parties have developed from former warring groups during the peacebuilding process, in an attempt to maintain power and influence in the future of their country.

Furthermore, perpetrators of such violence bargain for impunity in the face of weak judicial systems, especially if they expect their party to win the elections. Generally, poor governance and weak institutions abet the occurrence of electoral violence. There are also incentives for the ruling party to pursue violent strategies, as losing an election means the loss of almost all power. In ethnically divided societies, this might result in negative ramifications for entire ethnic groups. Even more importantly, this may serve as a motivation to pursue strategies that mobilise such groups across societal divides and encourages antagonisms leading up to renewed large-scale violence or even a return to war.

Recent research has shown that the quality of elections matters for the risk of violence, as lack of transparency and signs of vote manipulation motivate mass protests and ensuing governmental repression.<sup>2</sup> Such outbreaks might also be caused by an unexpected election outcome. Meanwhile, there is little to no conclusive research on whether it matters for successful post-conflict transitions if the elections aim at power sharing or single-winner-voting systems. There are examples of successes as well as failures on the African continent.

Both low-intensity violence, such as intimidation, harassment and the threatening of violence, and high-intensity violence, such as violent clashes, assassinations, repression, and riots, are common features in the context of contested elections and may be aimed at voters as well as candidates. The intensity and probability of violence is partly affected by the level of the elections, whether

---

<sup>2</sup> Norris, P. (2012) "Why Electoral Malpractices Heighten Risks of Electoral Violence" APSA 2012 Annual Meeting Paper Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2104551>

they are local or national elections, presidential or parliamentary. In general, the probability and intensity of violence may vary greatly within a country, but are higher the more is at stake and if the public perception holds that there is a real chance for changing existing power structures. The occurrence of electoral violence is further promoted through existing patronage systems and exclusionary politics.

An example of a country that has experienced electoral violence is Kenya. Kenya has experienced various degrees of electoral violence regularly since the introduction of multi-party politics, but the 2007 clashes were on an exceptional scale. Violence arose already in the pre-election phase, fuelled by mobilisation along existing ethnic cleavages and a generational divide, where large groups of Kenyan youth, disappointed by broken election pledges of President Kibaki, mobilised in favour of the opposition leader Odinga and his Orange Democratic Movement. The elections were very competitive and escalated to high-intensity violence after Kibaki was announced president. Various factors played into the post-election violence, notably that Kibaki was hastily sworn into office within an hour of the announcement, while Odinga still claimed victory. Odinga's supporters had expected a different outcome according to the election polls and there were widespread suspicions about structural irregularities and election fraud. Frustrations over general inequalities and unresolved land issues also played into the violence and left scores of people dead, thousands raped and tens of thousands displaced.

In March 2013, one of the persons indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for initiating the electoral violence, Uhuru Kenyatta, was voted for President and another, William Ruto, became his Deputy. Although these recent elections passed comparatively peacefully, many of the underlying issues of corruption, land grievances, ethnic cleavages, inequalities and institutional weaknesses remain unresolved which suggests that this is not the last we have seen of electoral violence in Kenya.

Incidents of electoral violence are not limited to Kenya. For example, countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Zimbabwe have all experienced highly violent elections with instability and insecurity as a consequence. Other countries such as Liberia, the DRC and Uganda have instead experienced a more common scenario where low-intensity violence, such as intimidation, harassment and riots, has taken place. Both high- and low-intensity electoral violence is frequently a result of misgoverned societies, that is, where the principles of good governance are absent.

## THEME 2:

### REGIONALISATION & GLOBALISATION OF ARMED CONFLICT

Another significant threat to strong peace that has risen lately relates to processes of regionalisation and globalisation of armed conflicts. The importance of relations with neighbouring countries as well as good connections around the world becomes more and more central. Traditional boundaries become less important when the role of for example the Internet increases. During the past decades, the transnationalisation of the world economy has created an interdependent world.<sup>3</sup> However, at the same time, state boundaries remain our primary political entity and nation-states still controls taxation and customs services under their jurisdiction. The direction and path of regionalisation and globalisation is therefore complex, and can work both in favor of peace and in favour of conflict. In order to capture the relationship between local, national, regional and international aspects, we need to understand the phenomena of regionalisation and globalisation further.

After the end of the Cold War, actors have changed their behavior and priorities on the international arena, but the asymmetries in terms of economic power, growth and productivity remains. The trend towards more integrated world markets has opened a wide potential for increased growth, however, the positive effects seems to be more or less absent. Instead, globalisation in terms of global security seems to have contributed to the rise of conflicts in the wake of the global dynamics. This could be illustrated by five dimensions in where the global dynamics has contributed to a worsened security situation in many weak states. These dimensions are marginalisation, economic reform, political reform, fragmentation, and integration. These are all processes that are neither inherently good nor inherently bad. It is difficult to generalise on the basis of these general dimensions, and context-specific features and considerations are crucial.

The idea of a state as an entity responsible for what is happening within its own boundaries has to some extent been challenged by the concept of regionalisation. Regionalisation is the process where governments, corporate sectors and civic societies share interests and combine resources in order to reach a common goal. This has shown that cross-boundary issues, whether it concerns trade, goods, people or conflicts that spread over nation boundaries, could lead to both positive and negative consequences. One positive consequence is increased economic development. But economic development may also have negative consequences, where for example marginalisation could lead to increased dissatisfaction, which might in turn lead to conflict. Both regionalisation and globalisation could be seen as a further step away from the state centric idea, where the focus instead lay on the collaboration between states and peoples. However, it is also important to remember the role of sovereignty.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ohlson 2012

The regionalisation processes that have taken place across the African continent are not solely connected to security problems and conflict. There are also several cooperation initiatives that centre on collaborative economic development and trade. Organisations such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have emerged as a result of the cooperation of countries in specific regions. The AU and ECOWAS play an increasing role in many African peace processes while IGAD has established its role in food security and environmental protection as well as in economic cooperation and integration. SADC is primarily focusing on promoting sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development in Southern Africa.

It might be problematic to discuss regionalisation and globalisation in Africa without considering a historical perspective. Many of the countries previously colonized by European powers still have marks from that period of history. One direct effect of the colonial boundaries is the spread of ethnic groups over more than one country. Some conflicts tend to take place in specific regions, not being affected by post-colonial borders and this seems to be linked to the ethno-social landscape. This is common in several regions in Africa and has for example contributed to small-scale conflicts between indigenous and non-indigenous people, which sometimes have escalated into civil war or war by proxy.

Research has shown that several civil wars started as communal conflicts.<sup>4</sup> This could be exemplified in several of the conflicts that have been (or still are) waged in Sudan. The crisis in Darfur consists of several types of conflicts, both communal conflicts and strong rivalries between various elites as well as centre-periphery conflicts and marginalization of different groups. Darfur is also characterized by cross-border conflicts due to problematic relationships with neighbouring countries. One important factor is the livelihood of the people in this region. Many are pastoralists or nomads and are moving around in order to take care of their animals. This makes the question of land very important, both within the borders of Sudan but also in connection to neighbouring countries such as South Sudan, Chad, the Central African Republic, the DRC, Uganda and Kenya.

Another example of the effects of globalisation is the foreign investment of money and businesses in various African countries. Measured on the proportion of investments, China is one of the largest external actors that have been on the increase lately. Even though China's foreign aid activities are considered to be state secrets, the growing amount of projects since 2000 is clearly visible on the continent. Most projects are focusing on developing transport and infrastructure as well as energy initiatives, but there is also a lot of money invested in health and

---

<sup>4</sup> Brosché, J, Elfversson, E. (2012) "Communal conflict, civil war, and the state: Complexities, connections, and the case of Sudan" *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, Volume 12, Issue 1.

education projects. Next to traditionally strong actors on the continent such as the UK, the US and France, emerging actors such as India and Brazil are taking on an increasing role as important investors, stakeholders and partners across Africa.

Another threat to strong peace and global security that has arisen in connection to the process of globalisation is the need for access of key minerals and metals, such as coltan, for the production of mobile phones, batteries and laptops. The industrialised and technological world has increased its demands for electronic products in which coltan is a crucial component. A lot of coltan comes from mines located in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the illegal trade of the valuable mineral has spurred the conflict located in and around the areas of North and South Kivu. This is also an example of an extremely complex context where several other countries also have an interest, which has contributed to the regionalisation of the conflict. Both Rwanda and Uganda have been involved in the conflict and have given the Congolese rebels support against the Congolese government, in order to continue to access the precious minerals.

### **THEME 3:**

## **CLIMATE CHANGE & NEW ENERGY SOURCES**

A third security threat that has become visible in recent years is connected to climate change and the discovery of new energy sources. Environmental issues have been on the rise on national and international agendas since the past decade when the consequences of climate change and the exploitation of natural resources became increasingly tangible. Still, the effects remain under researched. One reason is because their ramifications have in large part yet to occur, but also because they rarely constitute a source of conflict or state failure in and by themselves. Both these processes are closely interlinked with economic, social and political concerns, often overshadowing their impact on strong peace.

Although the causal relationship between climate variability and conflict is not yet firmly established, empirical research tends to identify natural disasters as well as variations in temperature and rainfall as chief environmental causes to conflict. Especially in African regions highly dependent on pastoral farming and rain-fed agriculture, severe droughts and floods directly affect national economies, governance and development. Amplified through bad governance and weak institutions, previous grievances and vulnerabilities may impair the ability of governments and local communities to adapt to climate-induced deficits on socio-economic and political levels.

Within a context of unstable governmental- or community structures, resilience to the adverse effects of climate change is particularly low, as those affected receive little to now support in the face of viable threat to their livelihoods and rising grievances. This lack of resilience may easily

lead to violence and conflict, primarily emerging on local levels, where the ramifications of climate change are felt first and affect low-priority populations such as those in rural areas and the urban-poor. Examples of such tendencies are local conflicts amongst pastoralists and between pastoralists and farmers competing over scarce land- and water resources, as for example in regions of Somalia, Kenya, Sudan and Ethiopia. Such agricultural pressures have also increased on the local populations of Mali and Chad, bordering the Sahel and experiencing shorter rain seasons. On the other hand, intensified rainfall during rainy seasons has led to floods and landslides resulting in the destruction of cultivated land and inhabited areas, not only aggravating food insecurity, but also triggering developmental setbacks and social unrest through migration of environmental refugees to already strained neighbouring areas.

Further threats to sustainable peace arise from the drying up of lakes and rivers, as is the case in Kenya and countries surrounding Lake Chad. Contrary to the abovementioned examples, where a rise in local conflict or non-state violence is most likely, competition over shared water resources may fuel conflict across national borders. This is the case for trans-boundary aquifers such as the Nubian Aquifer System and the Iullemeden or major international rivers such as the Congo or the Nile Basin, which runs through eleven countries. Conflict is less likely if access is largely equal, as for example along the Zambezi River for Zimbabwe and Zambia. But in the case of the Nile, downstream countries are significantly disadvantaged towards upstream countries in the face of decreasing water levels, increasing pollution and expansion of arid and semi-arid zones through desertification.

Climate change thus may intensify or trigger disputes over already scarce resources such as access to water, pasture, arable land or areas fit for settlement, although research still needs to establish a conclusive and robust relationship between the two.

Contributing to climate change is also the increasing consumption of energy resources, as a vital factor of development causing global warming. The strife for economic growth and the global demand for fossil and nuclear fuels have driven the hunt for and exploitation of such natural resources in Africa. This has led to recent discoveries of uranium, oil and gas primarily in Southern and Western Africa. A main concern with such discoveries is a seemingly paradox phenomenon known as the resource curse or the Dutch disease, where the discovery of new energy sources (or mineral wealth in general) does not lead to expected economic growth, but rather impairs other export industries (such as manufacturing or agriculture), degrades the environment through excessive mining and pollution, erodes institutional capacities through corruption, increases inequality, gives rise to secessionist movements, and raises the risk of civil war and prolongs conflicts. Collier and Hoeffler are the most prominent advocates of this

concept and provide a comprehensive overview of the repercussions following the discovery of new energy resources<sup>5</sup>.

Especially fragile states and countries emerging from civil war need to be aware of the risks of mineral wealth discoveries and should incorporate necessary precautions into their peacebuilding processes in order to prevent relapse to conflict. A prime example of the resource curse is Nigeria, where oil was discovered in the 1950s and that since then has been marked by high poverty rates, high unemployment, low living standards, political instability and periodical exposure to violent conflict. One of the main mechanisms of the resource curse can be seen at work here, as the government retrieves most of its taxes through the oil revenues and not through the population, whereby it is not dependent on the latter and increasingly lose accountability. Revenues do not trickle down to the population and the actions of the patronage elite lack transparency, democratic leadership and are characterised by corruption and repression, further fuelling public discontent. This raises fears that states with large discoveries of new energy sources like Angola (which already mirrors many of Nigeria's symptoms) and Mozambique face similar fates and might not be able to sustain strong peace within their countries. Nevertheless, there are countries such as Botswana that have largely resisted the resource curse and have succeeded in building strong peace. However, it should be noted that Botswana's resource commodity is not an energy resource, but diamonds.

#### **THEME 4:**

#### **IDENTITY & CONFLICT**

A fourth theme discussed in connection prospects and challenges to strong peace in Africa African countries is the role played by identity. Identity in its broadest sense includes identification through a common heritage, a common language, culture, religion and/or ideology. It might also be correlated to specific geographical areas and political affiliations can play a significant role in affecting social structure on a regional, national and/or communal level. The prominence and politicisation of ethnic identities are widely believed to be an important cause for conflicts, but perhaps also a cause for peace.

Identity issues more generally and ethnicity more specifically have been deemed very important for the emergence and dynamics of armed conflict in many African countries. One example is Nigeria, Africa's most populous country inhabited by more than 250 ethnic groups. The religious divide between Christians and Muslims has been the cause of numerous outbreaks of violence, particularly in the northern region. The Hausa ethnic group is one of the largest ethnic groups in

---

<sup>5</sup> Collier, P., Hoeffler, A. (2012) "High-value natural resources, development, and conflict: Channels of causation". In "*High-Value Natural Resources and Peacebuilding*", ed. Lujala, P. and Rustad, S. A., London: Earthscan.

West Africa, originally from the area of northern Nigeria and southeastern Niger. However, the group is scattered across countries such as Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Ghana, Chad and Sudan. This division has led to several conflicts of both state-based and non-state nature across the sub-region.

Research has shown that many warring parties use ethnicity as a mobilising factor to pursue its political aims in the context of an armed conflict. Appeals to identity issues are used in order to endorse or create a perception of threat and mobilise civilians to join the rebel group or support its actions. However, by what we know from history, differences in identity and ethnicity are rarely the main cause for why a conflict breaks out in the first place. Instead, existing differences in identities and socio-economic divisions in society are used by rational political leaders in order to pursue the armed struggle. The consequences of such means of mobilisation may, however, have disastrous consequences that may take generations to eradicate. Identity conflicts are more likely than others to lead to genocide or mass killings.

This is exemplified by the Rwandan genocide in 1994 between Hutus and Tutsis, which is one example of where a constructed identity and colonial history from the 19th century was used to foster tensions and mobilise fighters who committed the genocide. The ensuing displacement of large portions of the population carried the conflict into neighbouring countries and created new tensions between at least partly belligerent groups. The Great Lakes region with Congo, Rwanda and Burundi, have experienced an artificial narrative of identity that still have a major influence on the politics of the sub-region.

Some scholars have argued that the notion of identity has been used as a label to cover up a much more complex picture when it comes to violent conflicts. In these discussions, scholars have argued that many scholars working in the field of ethnic conflict tend to both overstate and oversimplify the phenomena and fail to capture the highly complex and endogenous phenomena of ethnic conflict. This has led to a broadened scholarly debate where the questions of interest to researchers have been growing towards covering a wider range of social phenomena.<sup>6</sup>

Another factor that has played a significant role in the discussion about identity and conflict is religion. An increasing number of scholars have begun to explore the relationship between various religious dimensions of a society and its propensity for escalation, duration and termination of armed conflict. In this literature, religion has been seen both as a potential cause for conflict and as an important contributor for conflict resolution. Research has shown that when the actors, may it be governments or rebel groups, have made religious claims in an explicit way, the conflict is less likely to be terminated through negotiations, compared to other

---

<sup>6</sup> For a deeper discussion on this, see Forsberg, E., Duursma, A. and Grant, L. (2012) "Theoretical and Empirical Considerations in the Study of Ethnicity and Conflict". Summary Report from an International Workshop at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research

conflicts.<sup>7</sup> An interesting finding is that religion seems to play a more prominent role in some conflicts than in others, although we do not really know why this is the case. Other studies have shown that there is no correlation between conflict propensities or terrorism and religion, in the sense that neither does the predominance of one religion make a country more prone to conflicts, nor does the religious diversity give rise to any “clash of civilisations”.<sup>8</sup>

Once again, the example of Nigeria is applicable. The country has experienced all three types of violence that are being recorded by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), and the non-state conflict between Christians and Muslims has been active in four different episodes and in six years in total.<sup>9</sup> This conflict is part of a larger context of ethnic and religious tensions that are present in the Nigerian society. Spurs of violence are often sparked by a seemingly trivial incident that subsequently escalates to widespread violence along religious lines. The fact that the northern parts of Nigeria are mainly Muslim, and the southern parts are mainly Christian, seems to make the mobilisation process easier.

Similar dynamics is partly recognised in Côte d’Ivoire. Compared to Nigeria, however, it has not been equally easy to assign the violence to the “Muslims vs. Christians” divide. In Côte d’Ivoire, the role of religion has been more integrated in the whole concept of identity, and the division of the Muslim northern parts and Christian southern parts has not had the same dynamics. “Ivorit ” was introduced as a way of creating an Ivorian identity and policies building upon the concept distinguished sharply between Ivoirians of "authentic" native origin and those of "mixed" or foreign descent. This led to an effective marginalising of both the Muslim North and the immigrant community. It is very important to remember the complexity of situations like this, and that the religious tensions are not the sole explanations for neither the mobilisation strategies nor the occurrence of conflicts.

From a methodological perspective, it is important to be careful with the use of identity to explain onset and duration of war. Several attempts to quantify identity, like the ethno-linguistic-fractionalisation index and the indices measuring religious and ethnic fractionalisation, have shown interesting figures but still needs to be developed theoretically. Identity issues in conflict situations will thus remain an interesting research field with several important questions yet to be answered.

---

<sup>7</sup> Svensson, I. (2007) “Fighting with Faith Religion and Conflict Resolution in Civil Wars” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Volume 51, Number 6.

<sup>8</sup> M ller, B. (2006) “Religion and Conflict in Africa” Danish Institute for International Studies, DIIS Report 2006:6

<sup>9</sup> The data is recorded since 1989, read more about this conflict in the UCDP Encyclopedia, available at [http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdata/gpcountry.php?id=119&regionSelect=2-Southern\\_Africa#](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdata/gpcountry.php?id=119&regionSelect=2-Southern_Africa#)

## FINAL WORDS

During the opening session of the 2013 Thomas Ohlson Memorial Conference as well as during the ensuing conference, several of the prospects and challenges connected to the emergence and establishment of strong peace in Africa discussed in this report were highlighted and discussed in great detail. Attention was paid to some of the critical success stories on the African continent and some of its most notable failures.

There is great diversity among and within the countries on the continent, providing the research community with an endless amount of new and pertinent research questions. Some questions are per definition local in nature and require context-specific knowledge and tailor-made policy solution. At the same time, general patterns and trends on the continent are clearly visible. The outcome of the conference showed that there is a lot of relevant research on this topic across several research disciplines. The transition from intra-state war to durable peace in Africa is a multifaceted area that is likely to remain in the focus of the research community for some time to come.

The editors of this report and the organising committee would like to take this opportunity to thank all the participants in the Opening Round Table discussion, the Memorial Conference and the Memorial Dinner for interesting and thought-provoking discussions and for your contribution to the remembrance of Professor Thomas Ohlson, 1954 – 2012.

## CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Thursday 18 April 2013

18.00–18.15

*Welcome Address*

Senior Professor Peter Wallensteen, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University (DPCR) and Assistant Professor Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University (DPCR)

18.15–20.00

*Opening of the Memorial Conference: Round Table on the theme “From Civil War to Strong Peace in Africa: Prospects and Challenges”*

Chair: Senior Professor Peter Wallensteen

Panellists:

L. Adele Jinadu, Professor, University of Lagos, Nigeria

Dirk Kotzé, Professor, University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria, South Africa

Carin Norberg, former Director of the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden

Tor Sellström, Honorary Doctor, Uppsala University and former Researcher, the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden

Amadu Sesay, Professor, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife-Ife, Nigeria

This event was co-organised with the student organisations Pax et Bellum, Uppsala Peace and Development Students' Association (U-PaD) and Uppsala Association of International Affairs (UF), at Uppsala University. The event was open to the public.

Friday 19 April 2013

09.00–09.30

*Registration*

Norrlands Nation, Strömholms Sal

09.30–09.45

*Welcome Address*

Senior Professor Peter Wallensteen & Assistant Professor Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs

09.45–10.00

*Memorial Address*

Professor Stephen J. Stedman

10.00–10.15

Coffee Break

10.15–12.00

*Panel 1. Framing Talks, Facing Transitions and Intensity of Fighting: Negotiations and Third Party Politics*

Chair: Associate Professor Desirée Nilsson

Presenters: Professor Dirk Kotzé, Associate Professor Isak Svensson & Senior Professor Peter Wallensteen, PhD Candidate Mathilda Lindgren, Professor I. William Zartman, and Professor Erik Melander, Senior Professor Peter Wallensteen, Research Assistant Marcus Nilsson & Research Assistant Mihai Croicu.

Discussants: Professor Stephen J. Stedman and Professor Amadu Sesay

12.00–13.00

Lunch at Norrlands Nation

13.00–14.45

*Panel 2. “Managing Resources, Mastering Impunity and Merging Militaries: Governance in Post-War States”*

Chair: Associate Professor Anna Jarstad

Presenters: PhD Candidate Angela Muvumba Sellström, Professor Roy Licklider, Professor Marie-Joëlle Zahar, Professor Amadu Sesay and Professor Erik Melander

Discussant: Professor Terrence Lyons

14.45

Coffee break

16.00

*Arrival of Dinner Guests*

16.15–16.30

*Memorial Address*

Senior Professor Peter Wallensteen

16.30–18.00

*Round Table on the theme “Strong Peace after War? Current State of Research on Civil War Conflict Resolution”*

Chair: Assistant Professor Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs

Presenters: Professor I. William Zartman, Professor Terrence Lyons, and Professor Marie-Joëlle Zahar

18.00–18.30

*Welcome Drink & Mingle*

18.30

*Thomas Ohlson Memorial Dinner*

Norrlands Nation, Västra Ågatan 14

Saturday 20 April 2013

9.00–10.45

*Panel 3. "Politricks of the Powerful, Patronage Networks, and Political Violence: Electoral Politics and Security Threats"*

Chair: Professor Erik Melander

Presenters: Professor Terrence Lyons, Associate Professor Anna Jarstad, Assistant Professor Anders Themnér & Associate Professor Mats Utas, PhD Candidate Nynke Salverda & PhD Candidate Sara Lindberg Bromley, and Associate Professor Desirée Nilsson & Assistant Professor Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs

Discussants: Professor Marie-Joëlle Zahar and Professor Victor A. O. Adetula

10.45–11.00

Coffee Break

11.00–12.15

*Panel 4: "Conflicts Within, Communications Across and Catalysts from Below: Communal Conflicts and Their Resolution"*

Chair: Associate Professor Isak Svensson

Presenters: Professor Victor A. O. Adetula, PhD Candidate Emma Elfverson, and PhD Candidate Johan Brosché

Discussants: Professor I. William Zartman and Professor L. Adele Jinadu

12.15–12.30

*Closing Remarks*

Senior Professor Peter Wallensteen and & Assistant Professor Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs

12.30–13.30

Lunch at Norrlands Nation

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS MEMORIAL CONFERENCE

<i>Name:</i>	<i>Affiliation:</i>
Victor A. O. Adetula	University of Jos
Johan Brosché	Uppsala University
Mihai Croicu	Uppsala University
Emma Elfversson	Uppsala University
Anna Jarstad	Uppsala University
L. Adele Jinadu	University of Lagos
Dirk Kotzé	University of South Africa (UNISA)
Roy Licklider	Rutgers University
Sara Lindberg Bromley	Uppsala University
Mathilda Lindgren	Uppsala University
Terrence Lyons	George Mason University
Erik Melander	Uppsala University
Angela Muvumba Sellström	Uppsala University/Accord
Desirée Nilsson	Uppsala University
Marcus Nilsson	Uppsala University
Nynke Salverda	Uppsala University
Amadu Sesay	Obafemi Awolowo University
Stephen J. Stedman	Stanford University
Isak Svensson	Uppsala University
Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs	Uppsala University/Nordic Africa Institute
Anders Themnér	Uppsala University/Nordic Africa Institute
Mats Utas	Nordic Africa Institute
Peter Wallensteen	Uppsala University
Marie-Joëlle Zahar	Université de Montréal
I. William Zartman	SAIS Johns Hopkins University

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS MEMORIAL DINNER

*Name:*

Victor A. O. Adetula  
 Georg Andrén  
 Nenne Bodell  
 Johan Brosché  
 Gökhan Ciflikli  
 Chris Coulter  
 Mihai Croicu  
 Björn Dickson  
 Ninni Dickson  
 Emma Elfversson  
 Marika Fahlén  
 Ragnhild Ferm Hellgren  
 Helena Grusell  
 Björn Hagelin  
 Christofer Hägg  
 Ulrika Haglund  
 Gerd Hagemeyer-Gaverus  
 Sophia Hatz  
 Tor Erik Hellgren  
 Gunilla Herolf  
 Stina Högladh  
 Lisa Hultman  
 Anna Jarstad  
 Andrés Jato  
 L. Adele Jinadu  
 Niklas Karlén  
 Dirk Kotzé  
 Roy Licklider  
 Mathilda Lindgren  
 Liana Lopes  
 Terrence Lyons  
 Pamela Mbabazi  
 Erik Melander  
 Anders Möllander

*Name:*

Angela Muvumba Sellström  
 Desirée Nilsson  
 Marcus Nilsson  
 Carin Norberg  
 Anna Norrman-Hedenmark  
 Bertil Oden  
 Johanna Ohlsson  
 Louise Olsson  
 Nynke Salverda  
 Susanne Schaftenaar  
 Tor Sellström  
 Amadu Sesay  
 Christopher Shay  
 Elisabeth Sköns  
 Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs  
 Jacob Sommer  
 Stephen J. Stedman  
 Ralph Sundberg  
 Isak Svensson  
 Samuel Taub  
 Anders Themné  
 Lotta Themné  
 Mats Utas  
 Lars van Dassen  
 Sayra van den Berg  
 Nina von Uexküll  
 Connie Wall  
 Lena Wallenstein  
 Peter Wallenstein  
 Lennart Wohlgemuth  
 Marie-Joëlle Zahar  
 I. William Zartman  
 Magnus Öberg