



## The future of intrastate conflict in Africa More violence or greater peace?

### INTRODUCTION

Many African countries experienced violent transitions after independence, which included civil wars and mass killings. This is not surprising considering the divisiveness of the original boundary-making processes, the coercive nature of colonial rule and the messy process of independence. Created in haste, postcolonial states often exhibited the same characteristics as their colonial antecedents. In some instances, these problems were compounded by non-inclusive political settlements, governance failures and natural catastrophe.

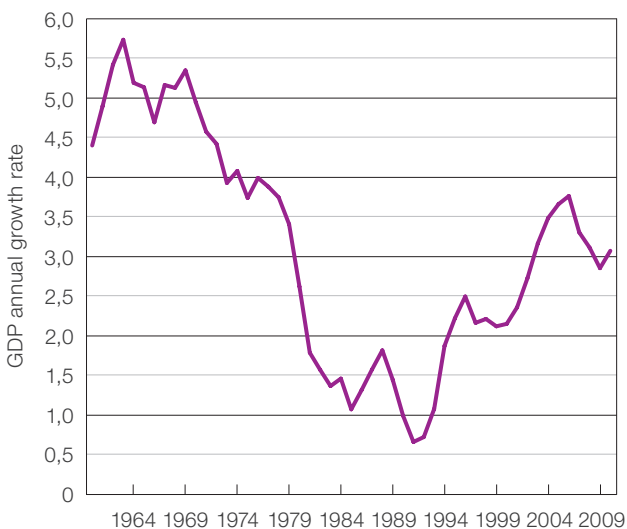
Generally, the newly independent African nations had to find their way in a bipolar world order that provided limited alternative policy choices beyond those linked to the West or members of the opposing Warsaw Pact. A number of

African countries experienced initial rapid economic growth after independence and then underwent a period of general decline and decay, as living standards dropped and poverty levels increased. Although average annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates remained slightly positive (see Figure 1), they fell far short of the 6–7 per cent generally required to reduce poverty in a rapidly increasing population. The GDP growth rates fell to historical low levels during the late 1970s, only recovering two decades later.

Following this period of stagnation, excitement about Africa's economic growth prospects has reached fever pitch early in the 21st century. Today many African countries present an optimistic economic outlook that contrasts strongly with the previous characterisation of Africa as a region beset by chronic instability, poverty and marginal importance to the global economy.

Recent publications by the African Futures Project, using the International Futures (IFs) forecasting system, have explored the gains in human development that are becoming possible and the potential for positive changes to the development trajectory of Africa.<sup>1</sup> These include benefits from investments in education, water and provision of sanitation; the potential for a green revolution in Africa; and gains to be realised from the eradication of malaria. Collectively, these changes present the potential for greater life expectancy, better education and higher income in most countries. A number of factors provide the basis for continued positive change in Africa in the 21st century. Examples are the growth of South–South trade, particularly with China; improvements in the capacity of African governments and progress with the conflict-management capabilities of regional organisations, such as the African Union (AU); and the steady increase in the number of democracies.<sup>2</sup>

Figure 1 Historical GDP growth rates for Africa (five year moving average)



Source: IFs version 6.69 (see [www.ifs.du.edu](http://www.ifs.du.edu) as well as endnote 1 for additional information)

In addition to these positive developments, the number of violent conflict-related deaths has been declining steadily over several decades. This decline has preceded and perhaps allowed for the more recent upturns in Africa's development prospects. A reduction in a country's incidence of armed violence corresponds with improved development outcomes.<sup>3</sup> This trend started shortly after the end of the Cold War, although there has been an uptick in global instability in the last two to three years.<sup>4</sup>

Rapid economic growth and improvements in most human development indices are expected to continue and go hand in hand with further declining levels of armed conflict in Africa.<sup>5</sup> However, as argued below, it is also expected that instability and violence will persist and even increase in some instances – reflecting the changing nature of armed conflict in Africa and new dynamics that appear to supersede those of the Cold War period.

This paper describes emerging trends and patterns of conflict and instability in Africa since the end of the Cold War. It also discusses seven key correlations associated with intrastate violence on the continent and presents a number of reasons for the changing outlook regarding conflict. These reasons include increased international engagement in peacekeeping, improved regional capacity for conflict management, and Africa's continued growth and positive prospects for development.

Africa has always been deeply affected by external influences, from the days of slavery to the present-day scramble for the continent's resources and even its consumer market. Therefore, this paper also explores how emerging multipolarity may impact on stability. In conclusion, the IFs model is used to forecast trends of intrastate conflict.

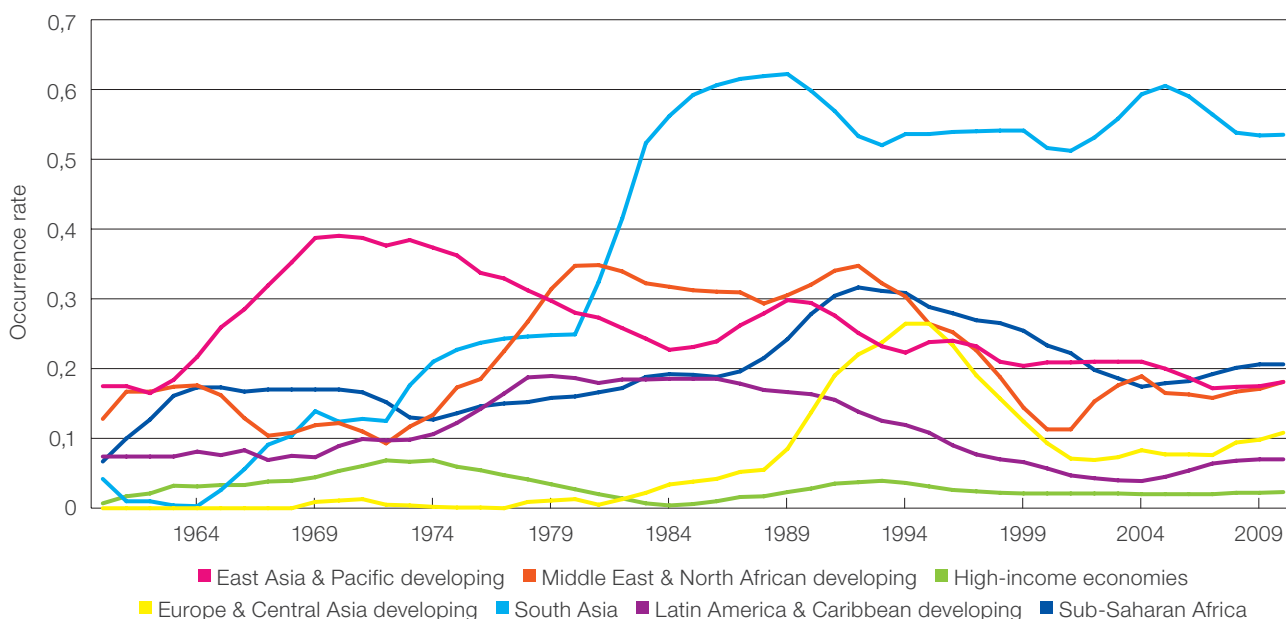
## ARMED VIOLENCE IN AFRICA: TRENDS AND PATTERNS

Civil or internal wars remain the dominant form of conflict in Africa. However, the number of wars has halved since the 1990s and the nature of the conflicts has changed significantly with the lines between criminal and political violence becoming increasingly blurred. As the *World Development Report 2011* states, "the remaining forms of conflict and violence do not fit neatly either into "war" or "peace", or into "criminal violence" or "political violence".<sup>6</sup> The 2011 *Global Burden of Armed Violence*, therefore, challenges compartmentalised approaches to armed violence. It provides a global overview of different forms of violence, tries to understand how violence manifests in various contexts and how forms of violence interact with one another.<sup>7</sup> Scott Straus provides the following crisp summary on the changing nature of conflict: 'Today's wars are typically fought on the peripheries of states, and insurgents tend to be militarily weak and factionalised.'<sup>8</sup>

The latter part of the Cold War was a particularly violent period characterised by protracted proxy wars fought by protagonists in Southern Africa, the Horn of Africa and South-East Asia over several decades. According to both the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)<sup>9</sup> and the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer,<sup>10</sup> there were steady increases in the number of armed-conflict incidents, casualties and civilians affected during this period.

After the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, some previously frozen conflicts in Africa reignited violently, including those in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). After this pent-up conflict pressure was released, a steady decline ensued. In a number of instances, insurgencies that had been externally funded before, and therefore had benefitted

Figure 2 Intrastate armed conflicts by region (five year moving average – occurrence is from 0 to 1)



Source: Source: IFs version 6.69

financially from the Cold War, turned inward for resources. They used diamonds (UNITA and the RUF in Angola), coltan (various factions in the eastern DRC), coffee and cacao (in Côte d'Ivoire), and even charcoal (in Somalia) as alternative sources of revenue. Generally, these 'resource-based insurgencies'<sup>11</sup> were unable to grow into large-scale fighting forces and lacked the strength to challenge the dominant party in the capital. However, there have been exceptions in recent months, such as the extreme cases of Mali and the Central African Republic (CAR), where the weakening of the armed forces was significant.

Figure 2 graphs the number of internal wars by region (as defined by the World Bank), using data from the Political Instability Task Force.<sup>12</sup> Taking into consideration the increase in the number of countries – from 55 in 1946 to 179 in 1992 (the year the wars peaked) – the probability of a country being in conflict is now similar to that at the end of the 1950s and (after substantial peaks) lower than during the Cold War.<sup>13</sup>

Today conflict in Africa appears to be increasingly fragmented and the number of actors, particularly non-state factions, involved in conflicts is rising.<sup>14</sup> This is evident in regions such as Darfur, in Sudan, where the peace process that was finalised at the All Darfur Stakeholders' Conference in May 2011 (in Doha, Qatar) was significantly complicated by divisions among various rebel factions. More recently, the Séléka coalition in the CAR (whose advance on the capital, Bangui, was temporarily halted by the intervention of other African countries) eventually consisted of five separate groupings. Three of these signed a peace agreement with President François Bozizé on 13 January 2013. Bozizé was eventually ousted when the coalition resumed their advance a few months later.

In the armed conflict in northern Mali, previous allies, Tuareg and Islamist rebels, fought each other in the latter stages of Operation Serval in January 2013 when French forces recaptured Mali's north. Also, in the eastern provinces of the DRC, the M23 rebel movement has recently split into different factions ahead of the decision to deploy a neutral intervention force as part of the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DRC.

Therefore, scholars recognise 'the reality of a messy empirical record in which non-state groups are frequently racked by internal differences and struggles',<sup>15</sup> which complicates the picture of state versus non-state actors.

In addition, several of today's insurgent groups have strong transnational characteristics and move relatively easily across borders and between states. However, few present a significant military threat to governments or are in a position to seize and hold large strips of territory. Some fight on the periphery of fairly well-consolidated states, as in Senegal, Mali and Uganda, whereas others exploit the weak central authority of countries such as the DRC and Sudan.<sup>16</sup> Another well-known example is al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, which originally fought to overthrow the Algerian government while consolidating its activities across the Sahel region, particularly in northern Mali.

A number of recent publications by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) indicate the tendency towards convergence and connection between networks of organised crime as well as their illicit activities, including money laundering, kidnapping, drug trafficking, terrorism, etc.<sup>17</sup>

Violence directly associated with elections has increased in line with the rise in political contestation<sup>18</sup> before, during and after polls. This is particularly common in settings where democracy has not been entrenched, such as during the elections in Zimbabwe in 2005, or where the government has been actively factional in benefitting one ethnic group above others. In Kenya, in December 2007, this culminated in post-election violence – a fate avoided during the more recent elections in 2013. In Zimbabwe's 2008 presidential elections, more than 200 people died, at least 10 000 were injured and tens of thousands were internally displaced due to election-related violence. Other elections that were accompanied by varying levels of violence include those in Nigeria (2011) and Côte d'Ivoire (2011). In general, the push for multi-party elections in the 1990s led to an increase of associated violence across much of Africa – a pattern that has been sustained over time.<sup>19</sup>

To some extent, the era of democracy and elections has seen violent competition move from armed opposition in marginal rural areas to violence around the election process itself. In this regard, Straus points out:

The onset of multi-party elections meant that, from a would-be insurgent's point of view, governments were at least nominally vulnerable outside the context of armed resistance. Moreover, the weight of international funding flowed toward sponsoring elections and civil society organizations. For talented opposition figures, the opening of the political arena – combined with the change in international funding streams – created a strong pull away from the battlefield toward the domestic political arena.<sup>20</sup>

As democracy continues to deepen and spread in Africa, in the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring, election processes can turn violent in contexts characterised by latent conflict and tensions surrounding political competition and power-sharing arrangements. In post-conflict situations, elections are crucial for deciding who will control state institutions, and may either affirm existing patterns of power or bring in new elites, thereby transforming state–society relations.<sup>21</sup> On this subject, Bekoe illuminates the fact that electoral violence seems to be related to more widespread systemic grievances and tensions, including land rights, employment and ethnic marginalisation.<sup>22</sup> More systematic research is needed to explore these issues as well as the role of external stakeholders in electoral processes and their potential contribution to building resilient and legitimate states. Sisk asserts that the way in which elections are conducted is critical. He argues that sequencing, design and the extent

of international monitoring of elections are the key variables that determine whether electoral processes contribute to capable, responsive states or reinforce captured, fragmented and weak states.<sup>23</sup>

Localised violence over access to livelihood resources, such as land and water, is also on the increase and this includes farmer–herder conflicts.<sup>24</sup> There is evidence that resource competition at community level is relatively prone to violence.<sup>25</sup> In 2010 and 2011, conflicts over resources accounted for approximately 35 per cent of all conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa and 50 per cent of conflicts in the Americas. On the other hand, only 10 per cent of all conflicts in Europe, the Middle East and Maghreb, and Asia and Oceania featured resources as a conflict item.<sup>26</sup> In cases of resource conflict, the possession of natural resources and/or raw materials, and the profits derived from them were determining factors in the conflicts. Globally, in this period, almost half of the resource conflicts were violent. In contrast, only 14 per cent of the conflicts over territory or international power<sup>27</sup> turned violent. The conflict item most prone to violence was secession – 73 per cent of the cases – while demands for (greater) autonomy were articulated violently in only a third of the cases recorded by the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer.<sup>28</sup>

Looking ahead, climate change will inevitably affect competition over livelihood resources, and will act as an accelerator and, in extreme events, a direct cause of violence and instability. Climate changes influence both crop and livestock farming, and can be crucial to food production. According to the *World Development Report 2011* the occurrence of a civil conflict in sub-Saharan Africa is more likely after years of poor rainfall, reflecting the impact of one type of income shock on stability.<sup>29</sup> The rate of change in climate extremes is now increasing significantly faster than in previous generations, with the result that extreme events, such as drought and flooding, are more common than in the past.

According to the World Meteorological Organization, the decade from 2001 to 2010 was the warmest since records were first kept in 1850. Global land- and sea-surface temperatures were estimated at 0,46°C above the long-term average (1961–1990) of 14°C.<sup>30</sup> The results of a new study supported by the world's largest climate modelling system show that global temperatures may warm by 3°C by 2050, taking into consideration the current rates of global greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>31</sup> Many plant species, animals and even large human settlements will struggle to adapt to the current speed of climate change. This may lead to widespread displacement of people, increased conflict and suffering, particularly in countries and regions with limited adaptive capacity and resources. In 2009 various papers presented at an Oxford University conference, '4 Degrees and Beyond', forecast a collapse of the agricultural system in sub-Saharan Africa in such a scenario.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, there is an ongoing debate on the potential of competition over scarce natural resources (particularly

food, water, energy and rare earth metals<sup>33</sup>) to become a major source of future interstate, regional and even international conflict. Defence industry researchers have been particularly vocal about the 'resource wars of the future', as have respected think tanks such as the Royal Institute for International Affairs.<sup>34</sup> As populations grow, competition for food, water and energy inevitably increases. However, the projected transition from conflict over livelihoods to major interstate war over control of scarce resources remains untested. The most recent global trends report published by the National Intelligence Council of the US, *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*, argues that in 20 years scarcity could be national or regional in nature, but not global, although the trade-offs between food, water and energy may impact upon one other. The report argues that fragile states in Africa and the Middle East are most at risk for food and water shortages, but China and India are also vulnerable.<sup>35</sup>

The *Global Trends 2030* report goes on to state that, by 2030, the world will require 35 per cent more food, 40 per cent more water and 50 per cent more energy to cater for a global population of around 8,3 billion people (approximately 1,2 billion more than the present population).<sup>36</sup> By that point, the process of global warming will already have had a measurable and durable impact on livelihoods across many communities, most affecting those with the least ability to adapt. Extreme heat, especially if accompanied by drought, may reduce or destroy agricultural yields. This is particularly relevant in Africa, with its rapid population growth and violent local clashes over grazing land, water, minerals and other scarce commodities and resources. Therefore, the longer-term prognosis (beyond 2030) of human-induced climate change is uncertain.

In summary, the ongoing violent intrastate conflicts in Africa tend to be on a smaller scale than in previous decades, feature factionalised and divided armed insurgents, and occur on the periphery of states. These conflicts are difficult to end because of the mobile, factionalised nature of the various armed groups; the strong cross-border dimensions; and the ability of insurgents to draw funding from (transnational) illicit trade, exploitation of local resources, banditry, and/or international terrorist networks rather than principally from external states.<sup>37</sup> There are numerous examples for this in sub-Saharan Africa, including those in Uganda, Chad, the CAR, Ethiopia, Sudan, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Angola, Nigeria and the DRC. To some extent, it appears as though these conflicts represent a form of 'resistance to the global liberal economy'.<sup>38</sup> According to this view, conflict serves to protect the interests of those who would otherwise be dispossessed by globalisation, and to preserve the increasing influence of finance in determining the allocation of global power and resources.<sup>39</sup> This matter will be discussed further in the section about future trends.

## IMPORTANT CORRELATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH INTERNAL CONFLICT

The relatively high levels of internal violence experienced in Africa (and other low-income regions) in comparison with more prosperous regions can largely be explained by seven long-standing relationships, or correlations.

The first, and most important, is the relationship between (a) poverty and instability. Internal armed violence is significantly more frequent in low-income and lower-middle-income countries than in upper-middle-income or wealthy countries. Times of change are inevitably disruptive and the evidence shows that (b) transitions from autocracy to democracy or adverse regime changes are often unstable and prone to violence. As demonstrated in regions such as North Africa, (c) a large democratic deficit (lack of democracy) has the potential to trigger instability. A strong correlation, also often characteristic of poor countries, is (d) that countries with a relatively large youthful population that is affected by widespread exclusion tend to be more prone to violence. This becomes particularly acute if education levels, rates of urbanisation and unemployment are comparatively high. Moreover, once a country has experienced large-scale violence, (e) the tendency towards repeat violence is strong. Similarly, there is (f) the 'bad-neighbourhood' effect of being close to or bordering on other countries experiencing conflict. Finally, many of these factors are associated with the provision of (g) poor governance, self-serving leadership and the impact of excessive dependence on commodity exports, and the associated implications.

The literature on conflict provides statistical evidence for additional significant correlations. In particular, these include the relationship between high rates of infant mortality and intrastate conflict; trade openness and a reduced tendency for intrastate conflict; and a high incidence of ethnic cleavages as an indication of greater propensity for intrastate conflict.<sup>40</sup> This paper applies the view that these variables are proxies for quality of governance and levels of poverty, as opposed to having independent explanatory value.

In general, the existence and direction of causality is difficult to identify in the social sciences and proof is elusive. However, the associations outlined in (a) to (g) do suggest causal relationships, even though the relative contribution of specific factors (and even the direction of causality) may differ from one situation to the next. Societies are complex, and the various correlations discussed in this paper cannot simply be added – they engage, reinforce and complement one another in a multifaceted manner. For example, there are a number of nations that have a relatively high score in terms of human-development indicators (as well as good regime security and governance capacity) but have recently experienced violent conflict – North Africa is a case in point. Merely moving up the income ladder without other social and political changes does not protect countries from intrastate conflict, except in those rare instances where income derived from high-level commodities, such as oil,

provides the means to effectively buy acquiescence. Globally, this is most evident in Saudi Arabia, but can also be seen in a number of oil-exporting countries in Africa.

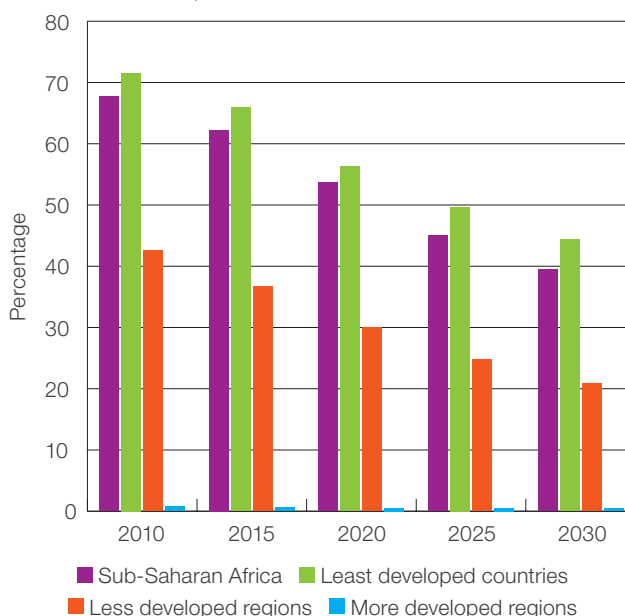
Details of each of the seven correlations are discussed in the sections that follow.

### Poverty and instability

There is strong evidence in the conflict literature that poor countries with low GDP per capita and weak institutions are far more likely to experience internal armed conflict and civil war.<sup>41</sup> Generally, poor countries experience greater instances of instability, including internal war, than middle-income or wealthy countries – and poverty is intensified by persistent inequality and social stratification. Poor countries are often characterised by weak governance, non-inclusive political systems, high levels of corruption, and limited capacity to provide their citizens with basic social services (including (human) security) and address the manifold developmental challenges that they face. This often results in a lack of legitimacy. And legitimacy is central to statebuilding,<sup>42</sup> which can be defined as a 'process of strengthening the capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state–society relations'.<sup>43</sup>

Conflict, in turn, fuels poverty and compromises development. Up-to-date poverty data reveals that poverty is declining for much of the world, but countries affected by violence cannot keep up. For every three years a country is affected by major violence (i.e. deaths incurred in war or high rates of homicide), poverty reduction lags behind by 2.7 per cent.<sup>44</sup> On average, a country that experienced major violence from 1981 to 2005 had poverty rates 21 per cent higher than a country that saw no violence.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, development is also compromised in subnational areas

**Figure 3** Percentage of people living on less than \$2 per day: Sub-Saharan Africa versus regions as defined by the United Nations (log-normal function)



Source: IFS version 6.69

affected by violence in wealthier and more stable countries.<sup>46</sup> According to the *World Development Report 2011*, a major episode of violence ‘can wipe out an entire generation of economic progress’ given that ‘the average cost of civil war is equivalent to more than 30 years of gross domestic product (GDP) growth for a medium-size developing country. Trade levels after major episodes of violence take 20 years to recover.’<sup>47</sup>

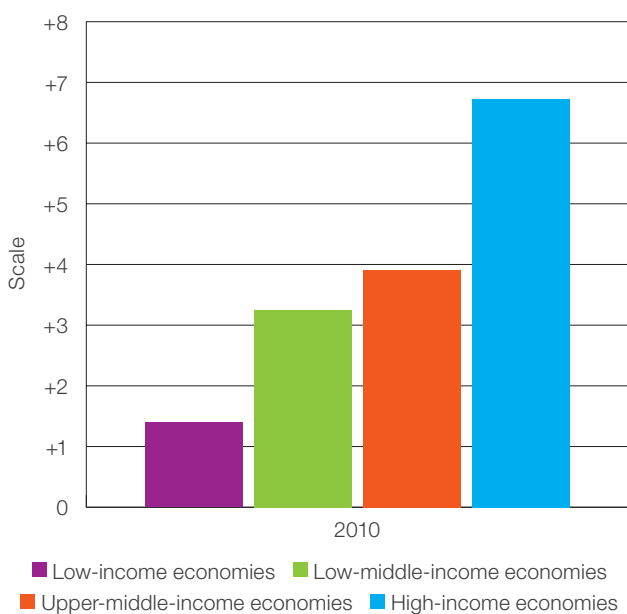
Figure 3 presents the percentage of people living in Africa on less than \$2 a day, forecast until 2030 and compared with three other regions, which are defined by the UN as least developed, less developed and more developed. Africa is included in these categories, but is also depicted separately. The graph shows the high levels of poverty currently experienced in Africa and the steady, but not noteworthy, decrease in relative poverty levels as global development trends are expected to unfold over the coming two decades. West Africa, Eastern/Horn of Africa and Central Africa have the largest proportion of people living on less than \$2 income a day. North Africa and Southern Africa have much lower proportions, although poverty rates in Malawi, Swaziland, Mozambique and Zambia are also high.

### Transitions from autocracy to democracy

States that experience stalled transitions from autocracy to democracy or adverse regime changes tend to be more prone to conflict and instability. An adverse regime change, as defined by Goldstone et al., implies ‘major, adverse shifts in political institutions that involve the sudden loss of authority of central state institutions and/or their replacement by a more radical or non-democratic regime’.<sup>48</sup>

The relationship between wealth and democracy is well established. Generally, high-income countries are democratic and low-income countries autocratic. However,

**Figure 4** Levels of democracy in different regions as defined by the World Bank (Polity scale is from -10 to +10)



Source: IFS version 6.69<sup>50</sup>

there is some evidence that this relationship has weakened in recent years. This might be a result of the global push for democratisation and the associated extent to which electoral democracy may have outrun substantive democracy. It also illustrates the inherent complexities and pitfalls of measuring democracy levels (in quantitative terms).

As always, there are exceptions, such as the concentration of wealth in the hands of a small group in Equatorial Guinea. This is technically Africa’s richest country by a substantial margin on a per capita basis but, in practical terms, one of its most unequal and repressive, inevitably at risk of large-scale internal conflict. Usually the shift from autocracy to democracy occurs at GDP per capita levels upward of \$8 000 (2010 values) and, statistically, Equatorial Guinea already has twice that level of income. In societies with greater levels of equality, democracy becomes largely irreversible at per capita income levels of \$12 100 (2010 values).<sup>49</sup>

Figure 4, based on the Polity IV data for 2010, reflects the standard relationship between democracy and income, indicating the average level of democracy for each of the World Bank regions ranging from low-income to high-income countries.

The global shift towards democracy is ongoing and seemingly irreversible as levels of education and wealth increase. At high levels of income, democracies commonly become immune to a reversal in their political fortunes. However, the large number of African countries trapped somewhere in between these two extremes – neither fully autocratic nor fully democratic – is a source of concern. Work done by the Polity IV Project<sup>51</sup> indicates that these so-called ‘anocracies’ are more likely to experience new outbreaks of intrastate war (about six times more likely than democracies and two and a half times more likely than autocracies). Anocracies are highly unstable, with over 50 per cent of them experiencing a major regime change within five years and over 70 per cent within ten years.<sup>52</sup>

However, Goldstone et al. (relying on other authors) point out that the ‘anocracy’ category in the Polity IV scale is too ambiguous when trying to understand the dynamics of transitions into and out of democracy because ‘a range of combinations of characteristics can place countries in the middle-range or “anocracy” category’.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, they expanded the Polity IV regime type to include five, instead of the previous three, categories, namely full autocracies, partial autocracies, partial democracies, partial democracies with factionalism and full democracies.<sup>54</sup> They conclude that ‘not all “anocracies” have similar properties’ and that ‘the relative risks of instability vary depending on specific combinations of regime characteristics’. Most importantly, their analysis reveals that partial democracies with factionalism (that is, where one particular group is advantaged), is an exceptionally unstable type of regime.<sup>55</sup> According to Polity’s definition, factionalism is politics with parochial (possibly, but not necessarily, ethnic-based) political factions that regularly compete for political influence to promote their own agendas and favour heavily group members to the detriment of a common agenda.<sup>56</sup>

This type of context – characteristic of many young African democracies – also seems to be more conducive to electoral violence. As Goldstone et al. state, the ‘winner-takes-all’-approach to politics is often accompanied by confrontational mass mobilization ... and by the intimidation or manipulation of electoral competition’.<sup>57</sup> According to Bekoe, the manner in which tensions concerning political opposition (possibly tied to authoritarian legacies or deep ethnic cleavages) are managed can make the difference as to whether an election process proceeds peacefully or turns violent.<sup>58</sup>

### Democratic deficit

Based on the extensive work by the Polity IV Project, the expected demand for democracy (based on levels of income, education and similar factors) can be compared with the actual supply of democracy for 2010. This analysis presents the notions of a democratic deficit and a democratic surplus (see Figure 5). In sub-Saharan Africa, two countries are particularly at risk because the expected level of democracy is vastly at odds with the supply – Equatorial Guinea and Swaziland. Other countries (in order of declining deficit) include the Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Angola, Gambia and Somalia. In order of declining deficit) include the Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Angola, Gambia and Somalia.

In many other African states the level of democracy is higher than one would expect, given the level of GDP per capita and levels of education. This is partly due to the push for democratisation among Africa’s development partners and the fact that in an interconnected world a domestic situation can be compared with others more readily. There has been much less effort to look at the implications of a state having more democracy than it, perhaps, is

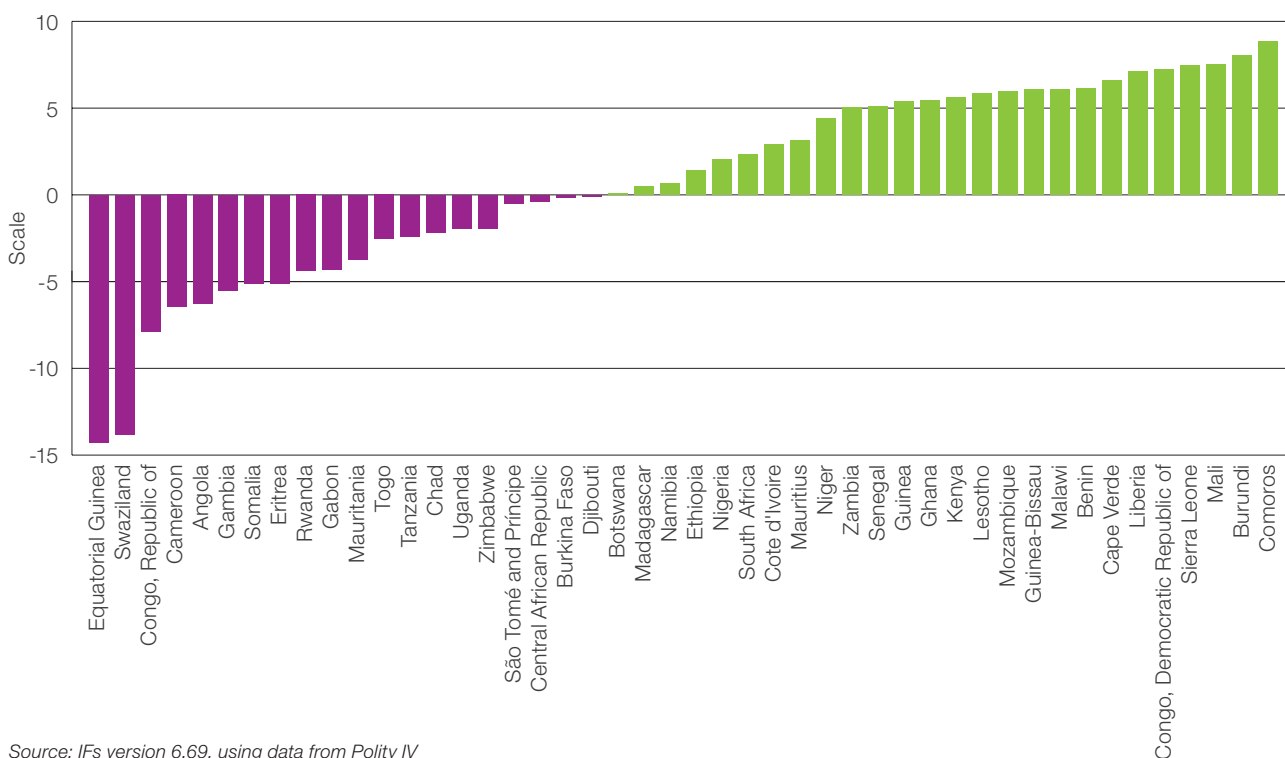
institutionally capable of absorbing. This field of analysis is important in weak and newly established countries, such as the Republic of South Sudan.<sup>59</sup> Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced a sharp increase in democracy since 1990 and this finding raises issues about the potential vulnerability of its current, relatively high levels of democracy.

### Youthful populations

A fourth relevant relationship is the high correlation between violence and large youthful populations suffering from widespread exclusion combined with rapid urban population growth. Generally, a demographic transition – a population’s shift from high to low rates of birth and death – is associated with reduced vulnerability to civil conflict.<sup>60</sup> Much of sub-Saharan Africa is currently experiencing this transition. However, the magnitude of the potential stability benefit appears to depend on the ability of an economy to absorb and productively employ the extra workers. The relationship between marginalised young men and crime has been well established within the academic literature,<sup>61</sup> but the correlation between age structure transition (that is, size of youthful populations or ‘youth bulge’) and civil conflict has only been explored more recently.

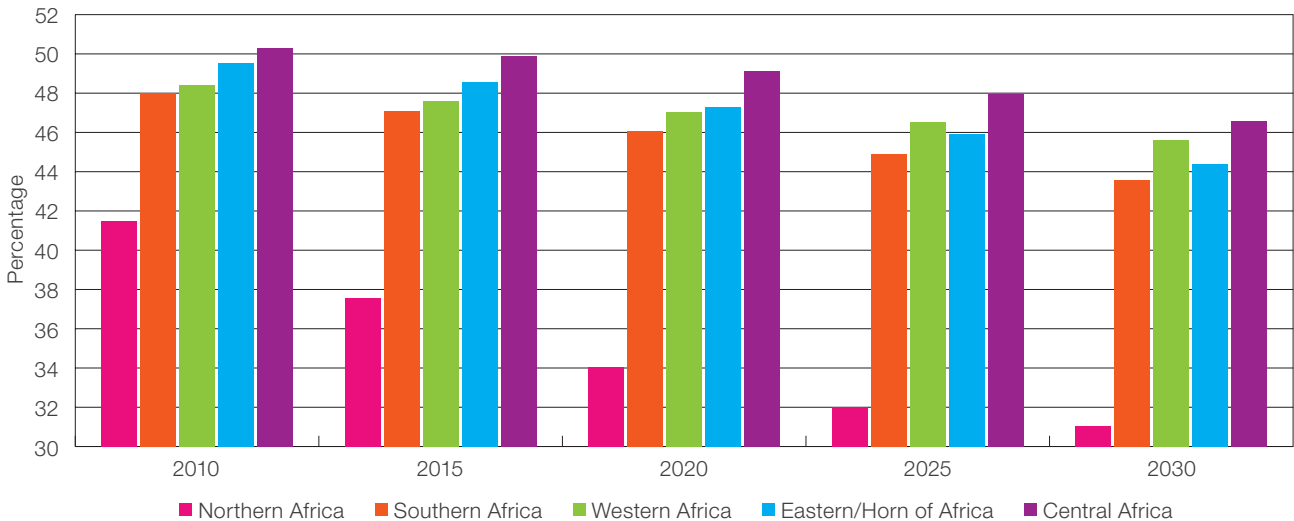
Youth bulges in poor countries are robustly associated with increased risk of conflict and high rates of homicide, particularly when young people lack opportunities, for example; failing economic development; high youth unemployment rates; limited education and training opportunities; and low access to participation in governance.<sup>62</sup> Hegre et al. discuss an emerging consensus in the literature that youth bulges appear to be more related to low-intensity conflict than high-intensity civil war.<sup>63</sup>

Figure 5 Democratic deficit and surplus in sub-Saharan Africa, 2010 (Polity data)



Source: IFs version 6.69, using data from Polity IV

**Figure 6** Youth bulge per region as defined by the African Futures Project (% of population between 15 and 29)



Source: IFs version 6.69<sup>64</sup>

The median age for sub-Saharan Africa is forecast for 2013 at less than 19 years of age and expected to reach 25 only by 2046. Comparatively, the median age for Western Europe is 43 years of age – more than double – and almost 46 for Japan. Nearly 49 per cent of the total population of sub-Saharan Africa falls within the age category of 15 to 29, the grouping generally associated with a youth bulge. This statistic is considerably higher than that for North Africa: the Arab Spring has been usually associated with the existence of a large youth bulge, which indicates that additional factors were at play.

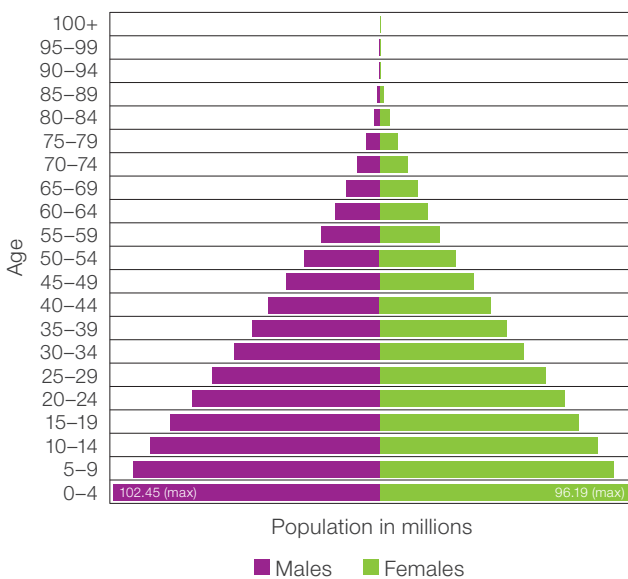
The proportion in sub-Saharan Africa is also significantly higher than in any other of the global subregions used by the UN for population projections, reflecting the earlier stage in the demographic transition from large families with

high death rates to smaller families that live longer in Africa.<sup>65</sup> This is evident in Figure 7, the comparative 2030 population pyramid forecasts for Africa and South America, another young continent.

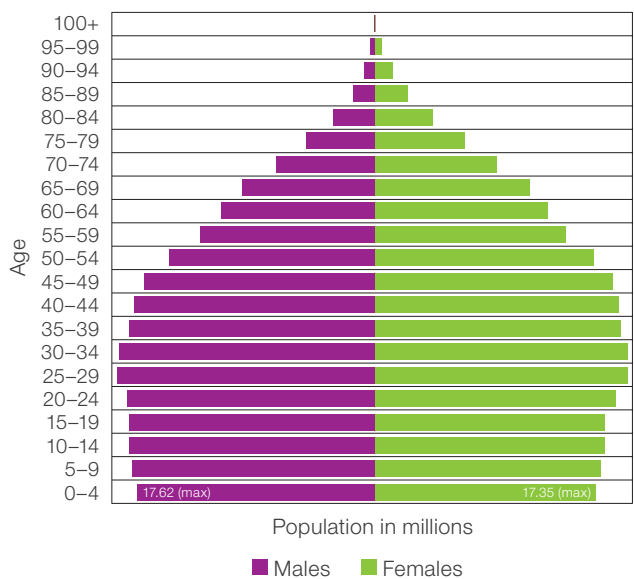
In Niger, Mali, Somalia and Uganda, a woman will currently give birth to an average of six to seven children during her life, whereas the same statistic for a woman in Libya, South Africa, Algeria, Morocco, Cape Verde, Tunisia and Mauritius is less than a third of that. Total fertility rates have declined rapidly in Southern and Northern Africa but those in Central, Eastern/Horn and Western Africa remain the highest globally. The implication is that shortly after 2050, one in every four people in the world will be living in Africa, and this number is expected to increase to almost one in three by the end of the century.

**Figure 7** Projected population pyramids for Africa and South America in 2030

Population distribution for Africa in year 2030  
[Base case]



Population distribution for South America in year 2030  
[Base case]



Source: IFs version 6.69<sup>64</sup>



A 2009 study by McLean Hilker and Fraser on youth exclusion, violence, conflict and fragile states<sup>66</sup> analyses the associations between youth and violence. It concludes that ‘the principle “structural” factors that underlie youth exclusion are: (a) un- and underemployment and lack of livelihood opportunities; (b) insufficient, unequal and inappropriate education and skills; (c) poor governance and weak political participation; (d) gender inequalities and socialization; (e) a legacy of past violence’.<sup>67</sup>

Many of these factors can be framed as structural exclusion and lack of opportunity for young people, which effectively block or prolong their transition to adulthood. The same study identifies a series of ‘proximate factors’ that, given underlying conditions of exclusion, can lead to ‘the mobilisation of specific individuals and groups into violence: a) recruitment, coercion and indoctrination; b) identity politics and ideology; c) leadership and organizational dynamics; d) trigger events’.<sup>68</sup>

There is empirical evidence in the literature that higher education levels reduce conflict risks.<sup>69</sup> However, McLean Hilker and Fraser note that countries with relatively high education levels, low employment levels and high rates of urbanisation are more likely to experience internal violence than countries with the same income level but without these characteristics. Many of these correlations were evident in North Africa at the time of the Arab Spring. This region scores the highest of all African regions on the Human Development Index<sup>70</sup> (but also has the highest democratic deficit – see above), whereas sub-Saharan Africa is generally the region that scores lowest on the Human Development Index globally.

On average, increased education is associated with reduced potential levels of instability (above certain levels, a more educated population is less prone to violence). But the lack of adequate economic opportunities for an increasingly educated population appears to have been

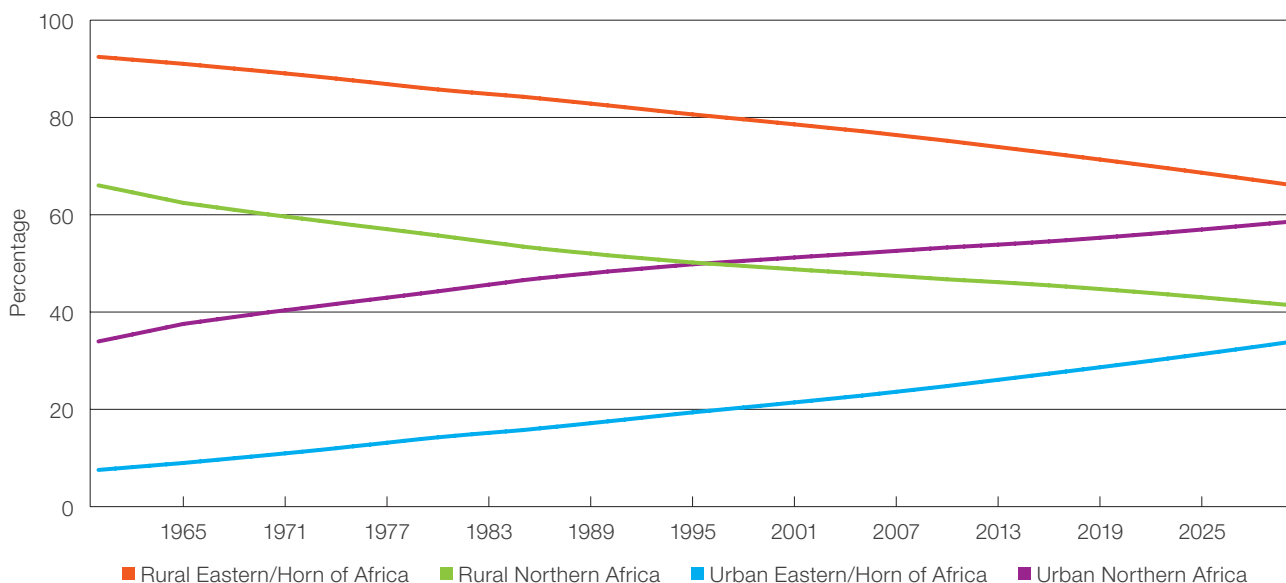
one of the factors that played a role in the events of the Arab Spring, despite the relative wealth of many citizens there compared with the rest of Africa, where education levels are lower but levels of democracy higher. Therefore, in the Arab Spring countries the gap between people’s expectations and the delivery of an environment reflecting those expectations was greater. Events in North Africa seem to confirm that high levels of unemployment when combined with relatively high levels of education not only translate into low levels of public satisfaction with government,<sup>71</sup> but also increase citizens’ disposition to public political protest and their holding leaders accountable. In an authoritarian context, this would almost inevitably imply violent clashes.

Associated with the structure of Africa’s population is rapid urbanisation – the engine of Africa’s economic growth coupled with other, less savoury by-products. The notion of over-urbanisation is, therefore, applied where the rate of urbanisation exceeds employment growth, provision of housing, social services and amenities, and outpaces the ability of the political system to distribute benefits.<sup>72</sup> Figure 8 depicts the historical and projected pattern of urbanisation in Africa for the least urbanised subregion (Eastern/Horn of Africa) and the most urbanised subregion (North Africa).

### Repeat violence

The fifth association is the propensity for repeat violence, which appears to have increased in recent decades. According to the *World Development Report 2011*, ‘90 per cent of the last decade’s civil wars occurred in countries that had already had a civil war in the last 30 years’.<sup>73</sup> Globally, cycles of war tend to repeat themselves in the same countries, inhibit development and hinder the region. The DRC, the CAR, Chad and many other countries appear to be trapped in a cycle of repeat violence from

Figure 8 Percentage of urban versus rural population in Eastern/Horn of Africa and Northern Africa



Source: IFs version 6.69

which it is extremely difficult to escape. Sustained violence increases poverty and complicates efforts to change a cycle of poverty, underdevelopment and instability.

Breaking this cycle is surely one of the largest challenges Africa faces today – and has led to the establishment of the UN's Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and, more recently, the AU's African Solidarity Initiative (ASI) with a focus on post-conflict reconstruction and development.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, it is no surprise that all the countries currently on the PBC's agenda are African, namely Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, the CAR, Guinea and Liberia.<sup>75</sup> The pilot countries selected for the ASI, which overlap in some instances with those of the PBC, are Burundi, the CAR, Côte d'Ivoire, the DRC, Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Sudan and South Sudan. All are clustered in West and Central Africa. Also, as the *World Development Report 2011* acknowledges, 'many countries that have successfully negotiated political and peace agreements after violent political conflicts ... now face high levels of violent crime, constraining their development'.<sup>76</sup> South Africa is a prominent example.

### *Bad neighbourhoods*

The spillover or bad-neighbourhood effect is a sixth consideration. Being situated in a conflict-ridden 'neighbourhood' (defined as four or more neighbouring countries in conflict) is a major risk factor and such countries will be far more likely to experience onsets of instability.<sup>77</sup> According to the *World Development Report 2011*, a 'country making development advances, such as Tanzania, loses an estimated 0,7 per cent of GDP every year for each neighbour in conflict'.<sup>78</sup> Also, neighbouring countries at high risk of conflict are more likely to offer safe havens for rebel groups and insurgents.<sup>79</sup> There are negative effects from proximity to other wars or countries with high rates of violent crime and illicit trafficking, and, conversely, positive effects accrue from being in a neighbourhood largely at peace.<sup>80</sup>

The potential for regional contagion from Islamist rule in northern Mali explains the unanimous support of Mali's neighbours within the subregional bloc, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for external military intervention to tackle the jihadists. It also partly accounts for the speed of the French military response in January 2013, given the particular vulnerability of Niger, a key uranium supplier for France's nuclear industry, to the developments in Mali.<sup>81</sup>

### *Poor governance*

The final correlation is governance and the 'thickness' of domestic capacity. This consists of, firstly, the ability to provide domestic security; secondly, the capacity to effectively administer the territorial area, providing public services to citizens; and, thirdly, the extent to which the government is perceived to be legitimate domestically – and legally recognised as such internationally. The literature reveals that there can be multiple sources of

legitimacy: state performance, accepted beliefs about the rightful source of authority, state processes and international recognition. Moreover, sources of legitimacy differ both between countries and among different groups within a society.<sup>82</sup>

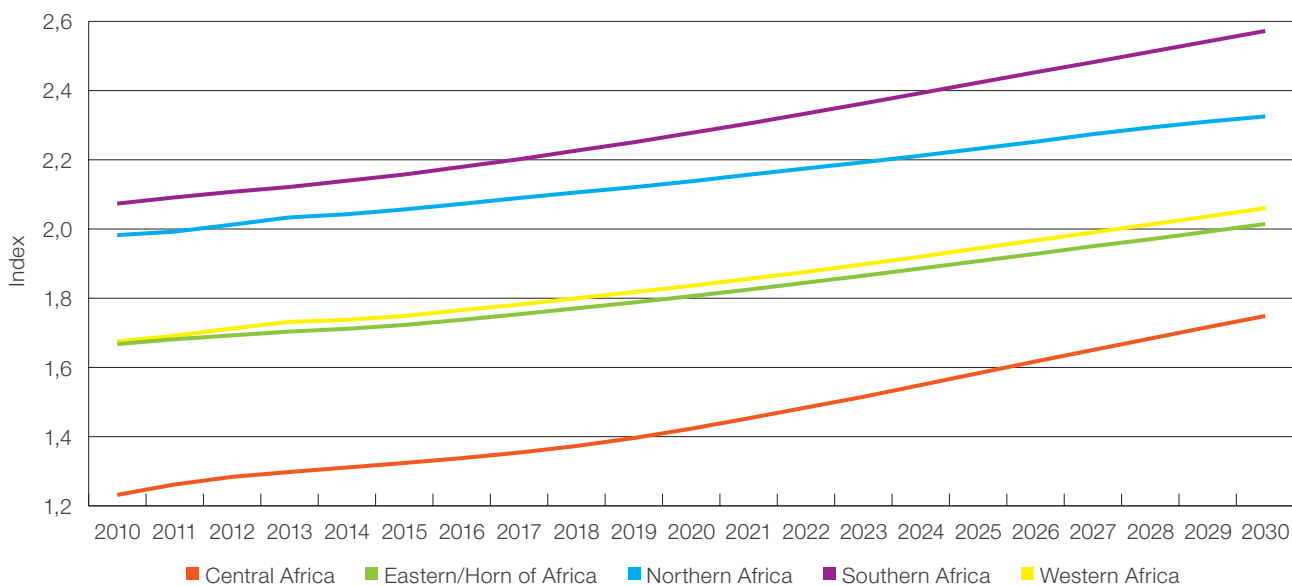
Governance is important, and this is evident in the way many African countries have fallen behind their former peers. South Korea had a per capita GDP lower than that of Nigeria in 1954. Yet during the following 50 years, Nigeria earned \$300 billion in oil revenues, while South Korea received much larger amounts of foreign assistance as a percentage of GDP than Nigeria. Nigeria's per capita income actually declined for several decades from the 1970s to the 1990s, whereas South Korea grew at rates ranging from 7 to 9 per cent per annum and is today the 11th largest economy globally. Nigeria ranks at number 55. Francis Fukuyama writes: 'The reason for this difference in performance is almost entirely attributable to the far superior government that presided over South Korea compared to Nigeria'.<sup>83</sup>

The direction of causality between economic growth and good governance or governance capacity is, however, contested and context-specific. Jeffrey Sachs and Ha-Joon Chang argue that there is strong evidence that good governance is the product of economic growth rather than a cause of it. It is also argued, on the other hand, that some countries grow as a result of good governance – probably exemplified by the recent development trajectory of Ethiopia and Rwanda, which have seen excellent improvements in key human-development indicators (if not in democracy) in recent years. Much Western development assistance is premised on the latter view (good governance as a prerequisite for economic growth), whereas most African leaderships understandably subscribe to the former approach (economic growth enables the development of governance capacity).

High levels of corruption are often associated with poverty and countries dependent upon single commodity exports, such as oil. Again, the direction of causality is complex. Do high levels of poverty increase corruption or does corruption cause poverty? Analysis is complicated because the ability to measure corruption is generally limited to measures of perception such as that produced by Transparency International. These indicate extraordinarily high levels of corruption in countries like Sudan, Chad, Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, Angola, Guinea, the DRC, Kenya, Guinea-Bissau, etc. But such measures generally disregard large-scale corruption within the banking sector and bribes paid by multinationals to gain contracts in poorer countries.

Eventually the differences between those countries that see general improvements in human development and those that do not are most probably to be found in the quality of leadership that countries experience over time, hence the importance of agency rather than culture (although political culture certainly impacts upon leadership).

**Figure 9** Governance effectiveness (World Bank) per region as defined by the African Futures Project



Source: IFs version 6.69 using World Bank 2010 data

Southern and North African countries show greater governance capacity than other regions, reflected in the higher portion of government revenue as a percentage of GDP in many of these countries compared with those in Central, West and Eastern/Horn of Africa.<sup>84</sup> Elsewhere, governance capacity is often very limited. For example, according to the ratings of the World Bank, sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest score globally for governance effectiveness. Figure 9 uses IFs to forecast trends in governance effectiveness in Africa based on 2010 data from the World Bank.

The graph indicates that there are current challenges relating to governance in Central Africa and this is likely to continue for many years. Perhaps this is most evident in the DRC, despite the best efforts of the international community.

It was noted earlier that the following correlations are particularly useful proxies by which to measure governance and poverty: high rates of infant mortality and intrastate conflict; trade openness and reduced propensity for intrastate conflict; and high rates of ethnic cleavages and greater propensity for intrastate conflict. The explanatory value of these indicators is powerful. For example, Goldstone et al. recently used four independent variables to develop a global model for forecasting political instability: regime type, infant mortality, bad neighbourhood and state-led discrimination.<sup>85</sup>

Africa is not uniformly comparable to other low-income regions and the brief analysis presented in the preceding sections should not detract from each country's specificity, unique history and circumstances. Relationships also change as countries move up the income ladder, as mentioned earlier in the discussion on the relationship between democracy and average income. For example, based on extended historical explorations, Hughes et al. have found that at income levels of \$18 000 (in 2005

dollars at purchasing power parity (PPP) and above, economic downturns and youth bulges tend not to increase the probability of internal war.<sup>86</sup>

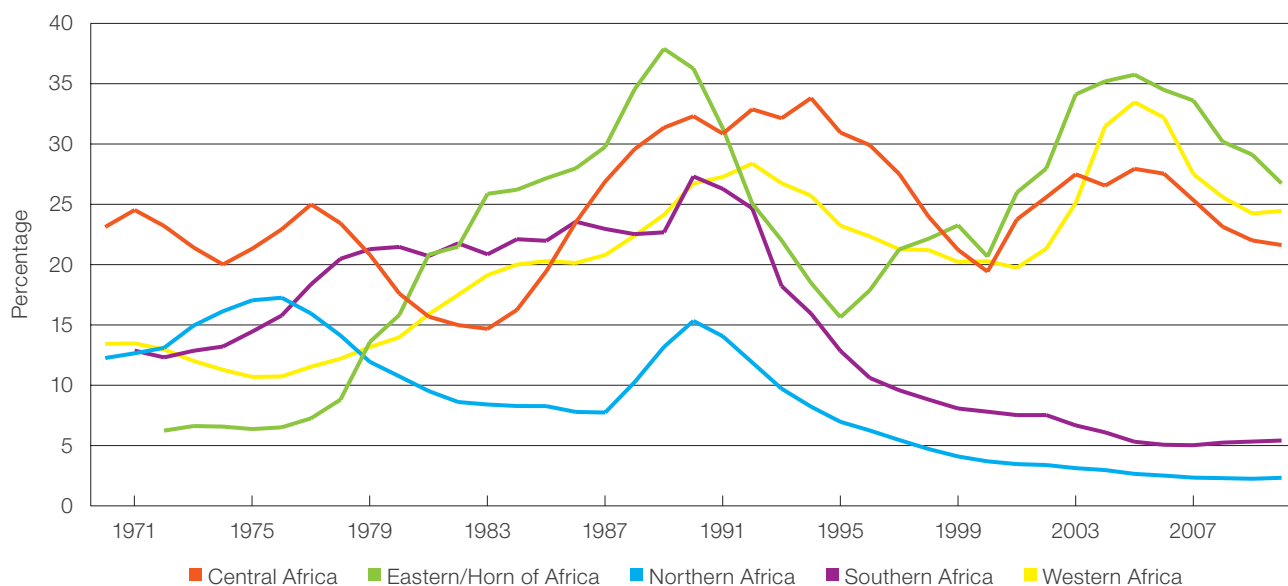
These general correlations do, however, provide an effective counterbalance to arguments that seek to characterise African countries as particularly prone to violence or anti-development. They also help counteract analysis emphasising cultural characteristics, the ethno-linguistic composition of African populations and arguments that corruption is particularly and uniquely African.

## COUNTERVAILING FORCES

During the Cold War, the struggle to build postcolonial states was characterised by the competing foreign-aid projects of the alliance system led by the US and the Soviet Union. According to some, contemporary post-Cold War and post-9/11 security under the regime of universal sovereignty requires the transformation or strengthening of national states.<sup>87</sup> Others call for more global governance and a rules-based system, and it is evident that both will be required. The last two decades have brought significant increases in resources and efforts committed by African and international actors towards building a firmer foundation for peace in war-torn countries and preventing the resurgence of violent conflict. These include significant investments in UN peacekeeping, conflict prevention and mediation. The efforts have made large contributions to ameliorate and manage instability, especially immediately after the Cold War, with the result that, from 1990 to 2007, more peace agreements were signed than at any other time in history.<sup>88</sup>

Against this background, the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 was a shameful episode that saw the international community, including Africa, stand aside during mass murder on an unprecedented level in modern history.

Figure 10 Foreign aid as percentage of government revenue per region as defined by the African Futures Project



Source: IFs version 6.69

However, it served to galvanise the AU, which recognised – in the global withdrawal of peacekeeping during these years – the threat of a repeat of Rwanda elsewhere on the continent. Subsequently, the AU began establishing an elaborate African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Today APSA includes comprehensive early warning, mediation and conflict-management capacities, as well as the associated institutional structures (specifically the Peace and Security Council, the Continental Early Warning System, Panel of the Wise, Peace Fund, Military Staff Committee and the African Standby Force). These structures are mirrored, in some instances, at subregional level by organisations such as ECOWAS and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

International partners played an important role in this process, particularly the European Union (EU), which invested close to a billion euros in APSA. In addition, substantial contributions were made by individual donor countries such as the United Kingdom, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany and others. Equally important was the fact that international disengagement from Africa turned around a decade later because the UN established a number of large missions in Africa, elevating peacekeeping expenditure to unprecedented levels. Over time, mandates have also become more sophisticated and robust.<sup>89</sup> Collectively, these two developments play an important role in containing and reducing instability and conflict in Africa.

Overall, the results have been remarkable and the extent to which today's African leaders actively engage in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping (on the back of the institutional capacities created) is a step change with the past. In January 2013, the AU crossed another important threshold when it committed substantial financial resources to the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali. Today there is a clear tendency for Africans, rather than

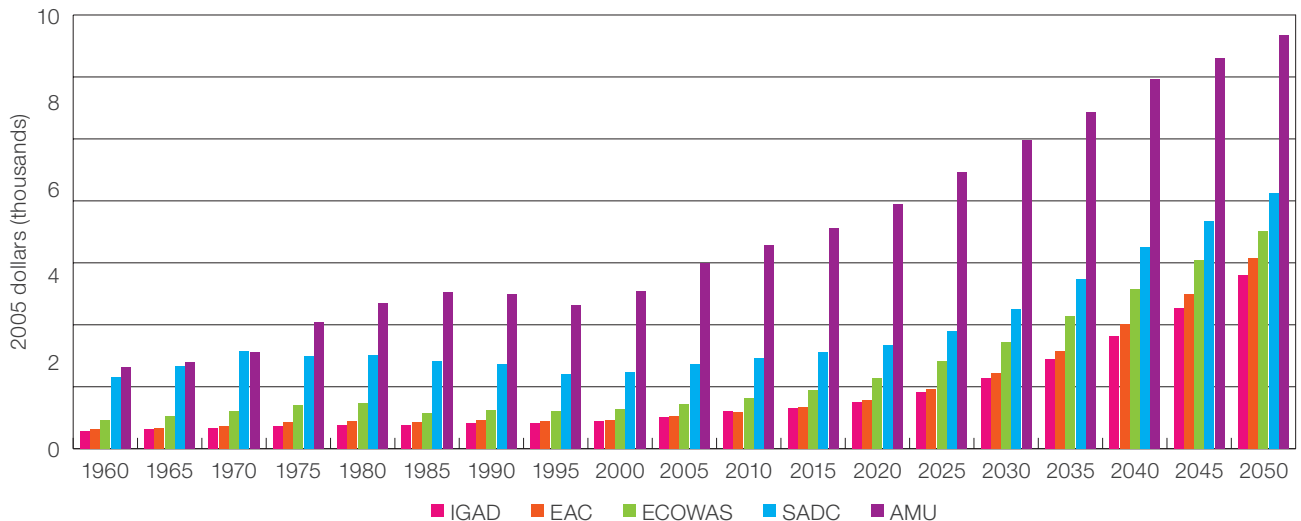
foreigners, to drive attempts at conflict resolution in Africa. Strenuous efforts are also being made to strengthen structural conflict prevention through innovative solutions such as the African peer review process, the establishment of the African Solidarity Initiative and the African Governance Platform.<sup>90</sup>

In addition, the international community (mostly Western countries) are making important efforts to alleviate the root causes of underdevelopment, insecurity and, consequently, violence by providing aid and debt relief. In 2000 the eight Millennium Development Goals were officially established following the UN's Millennium Summit, with the aim of helping citizens in the poorest countries achieve a better life by the year 2015.

Figure 10 reflects the levels of net aid, as a percentage of government revenue, provided to the five regions used in this series – West, Eastern/Horn, North, Central and Southern Africa. Countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Mozambique, Rwanda, the CAR, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Malawi obtain more than 50 per cent of their total government revenues through aid. There is recent evidence indicating steady improvements in aid effectiveness. However, the provision of development assistance remains controversial because of its inevitable tendency to undermine, rather than buttress, government capacity, particularly tax collection and the associated development of mutual accountability systems. Unlike experiences elsewhere (notably in Germany and South Korea), few African countries have been able to migrate out of aid dependence – a process that requires determined and ethical leadership. However, there are some, such as Ethiopia and Rwanda, that are making clear progress.

Moreover, the international regime of conflict prevention and resolution has also been strengthened through international criminal-justice mechanisms.<sup>91</sup> In particular, the signature of the Rome Statute in 1998, which

Figure 11 GDP per capita (PPP) for key regional groupings



Source: IFs version 6.69

established the International Criminal Court (ICC), boosted transnational justice globally. Ad hoc tribunals were also established for Rwanda and Sierra Leone. The existence of the ICC has arguably deterred would-be perpetrators of mass atrocities and held current leadership to account. Nevertheless, the perception that it pursues selective and politicised indictments has detracted from its efficacy in some of the worst conflict-affected contexts in which the court’s jurisdiction has been contested, such as in Sudan and Kenya.

Positive development, including growth rates of more than 5 per cent over the last decade, have turned African prospects around and will, over time, help to chip away at the structural conditions that drive conflict (discussed earlier in this paper). The most important structural reasons for the changes in Africa’s development prospects relate to population growth and urbanisation. These include an emerging demographic dividend; improved macroeconomic governance and reform; improved agricultural output; growth in services and information and communications technology; more stable political frameworks; more effective aid; targeted debt relief; increased domestic revenues; growth in remittances and foreign investment; and global economic growth fuelled by demand for commodities from China, India, Brazil, etc. Various indices, such as those of the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the World Bank, reflect that governance effectiveness (and hence capacity) in Africa has been steadily improving in recent years.

The IFs base case forecast is that GDP at purchasing power parity per capita (PPP) for Africa would increase (in 2005 dollars) from \$2 736 in 2013 to \$4 113 by 2030. The history and forecast of GDP per capita at PPP for key regional groupings are presented in Figure 11. The graph illustrates the proportional wealth of North Africa (represented by the African Maghreb Union [AMU]) and the historical challenges faced in East Africa, the Horn and West Africa.

Although the substantial progress described above generally allows for a positive outlook, reasons for concern persist and much remains to be done. *The World Development Report 2011* argues that ‘risk of conflict and violence in any society (national or regional) is the combination of the exposure to internal and external stresses and the strength of the “immune system”, or the social capability for coping with stress embodied in legitimate institutions’.<sup>92</sup> Therefore, countries with the weakest institutional legitimacy and governance are the most vulnerable to violence and instability, and the least able to respond to internal and external stresses.<sup>93</sup> The 2009 study by McLean Hilker and Fraser highlights the link between lack of education and training opportunities, and conflict. It also emphasises the importance of the equitable distribution of education and notes that ‘strong communities and young people’s involvement in associations can build their social capital and sense of belonging and empowerment and act as an important deterrent to engagement in violence’.<sup>94</sup>

The efficacy of African-led peacekeeping and conflict-management operations has been questioned due to the need for non-African countries to respond to crises such as those in Côte d’Ivoire (2011), Libya (2011) and Mali (2013). International and domestic investments had been made in the African Standby Force, consisting of five standby forces in each of Africa’s subregions. Yet the African Standby Force failed its stated mission to be a ready reaction force able to intervene and stabilise during a crisis – in all three instances it only lumbered into action after the crisis passed or not at all.

Southern Africa will find itself challenged in one additional respect, beyond its high levels of inequality. This is the region that has been most recently liberated, either from Portugal (in the cases of Mozambique and Angola) or white minority rule (in the cases of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa). Elsewhere on the continent, the legitimacy of liberation forces and the domestic

prestige and power associated with their leadership have largely eroded, leading to a normalisation of politics and the emergence of political contests. But this is not yet evident in Southern Africa. Although the recent history of Zimbabwe has seen the ruling party turn to repression to stave off electoral defeat, the more likely future trajectory for the region is similar to that in other places in Africa – where electoral rather than violent political contestation is the emerging norm.

At the same time, other entrenched vulnerabilities – such as uneven income distribution and access to social services, youth unemployment and exclusion from political participation – remain sources of serious concern, as does the management of revenues from the extractive sector.

### A MORE BENIGN GLOBAL CONTEXT?

APSA was established within the context of the security challenges in Africa immediately after the Cold War and at a time when global prospects for peace and stability were unparalleled. In retrospect, the subsequent brief ‘unipolar moment’ appears to have contributed to the growth of international terrorism and its later campaign against the US and its allies. Today, new challenges and threats are surfacing due to the reassertion of regional actors, the ideological competition between the West and newly emerging powers like China, and the empowering impact of globalisation. This is happening at a time when the global conflict-management system, the UN in particular, appears weak.

Worldwide, power is shifting, reflected in the way growing South–South trading patterns are driving global economic prosperity. Concentrations of wealth and influence are moving from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and may even eventually move back to Asia – a region that long dominated the world before the industrial revolution and the rise of the West. By 2050, it is forecast that China and

India will each contain 15 to 16 per cent of the global population and collectively account for 40 per cent of the global economy at purchasing power parity – and both are forecast to be larger than that of the US.<sup>95</sup>

Despite these changes, the US is likely to remain the dominant economy and military power for at least a decade, and, collectively, North America and the EU states (EU27) currently constitute some 52 per cent of the global economy, although their relative proportion is declining. The implications are set out in the 2013 edition of *Strategic Trends*<sup>96</sup> published by the Center for Security Studies, which states that

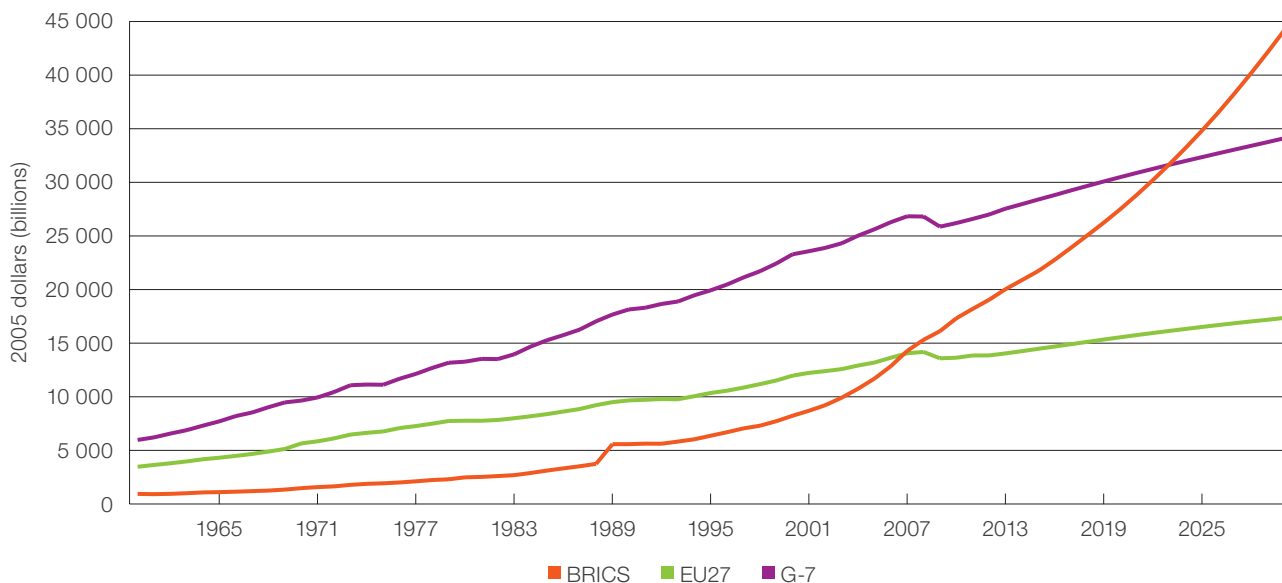
in a polycentric world, global leadership is in short supply as new power centres emerge and drive political fragmentation. At the same time, the term ‘polycentric’ implies that no single pole controls all dimensions of power. Hence, structural interdependencies are an important component of the evolving international system.<sup>97</sup>

The publication also asserts that ‘power and influence depend ever more strongly on the ability to navigate and exploit global networks, to form effective partnerships, and to combine different instruments of statecraft in a flexible, agile way’.<sup>98</sup>

Figure 12 provides one of many scenarios of how the future could unfold. It shows that the GDP in PPP of the BRICS grouping (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) will surpass that of the G7 countries in 2023; however, shifts in GDP in market exchange rates will occur more gradually.

In contrast to the rigidity of the international system during the Cold War, the development of multiple growth centres could lead to greater resilience and stability (also, trade flows have increased much more rapidly than world GDP as a result of the emergence of global production and

Figure 12 GDP at PPP for leading global economies



Source: IFs version 6.69

value chains). This development may also drive fragmentation if we enter an era of area-of-influence politics. Already there are signs of greater regionalisation of trade flows, such as within Asia.

In considering the possibility that competing regional blocs will again become the dominant pattern of interaction, like those that dominated world affairs more than a century ago, it is important to recognise the changes that have come from global development. In today's interconnected world (both in terms of communications and global supply chains), large segments of the population live in democracies. This is very different from the bipolar world order of the Cold War and the imperialist and colonial traditions of the past, which saw large portions of the global population subject to external fiat and domination. Democracies, by their nature, demand caution in engaging in external intervention and war. For Africa, which is traditionally marginal to the global economy, the two trends of fragmentation and interdependence present very different implications.

After experiencing several decades of a steady growth in democracy, rule of law and respect for fundamental rights, there is a danger that developed countries may lose interest in creating an integrated global market and become more selective and politicised in their external engagement. The relationship between trade and national security is already being rediscovered as hopes for a global trade agreement (the Doha round of negotiations) fade in favour of strategic partnerships. Therefore, regional and bilateral free-trade agreements are taking precedence over the global-trade agenda, the most important one of which could be the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership between the EU and the US. The recent inclusion of Japan in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, designed to lower trade barriers among 11 Asian allies, could serve to complement US efforts to build a global alliance of Western-orientated countries able to contain and compete with a rising China.

But generally, as the economic slump in the West has deepened, a number of important countries appear to be abandoning their focus on free markets and sustainable global development in favour of domestic growth and growing national employment. Official development assistance is falling as a struggling Eurozone battles the ongoing global financial crisis. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) latest report, aid decreased by 4 per cent in 2012 compared with 2011, which had already experienced a 2 per cent decline since the previous year.<sup>99</sup>

Although aid has many negative effects, a decline in levels has great negative implications for poverty levels in Africa. It could also trigger a retreat in democracy, given the extent of the democratic surplus in Africa (discussed earlier in this paper), and have negative implications for the efforts towards a rights- and rules-based global system. Finally, Africa may find itself without external allies that are willing to intervene in the interests of stability, as the UK did

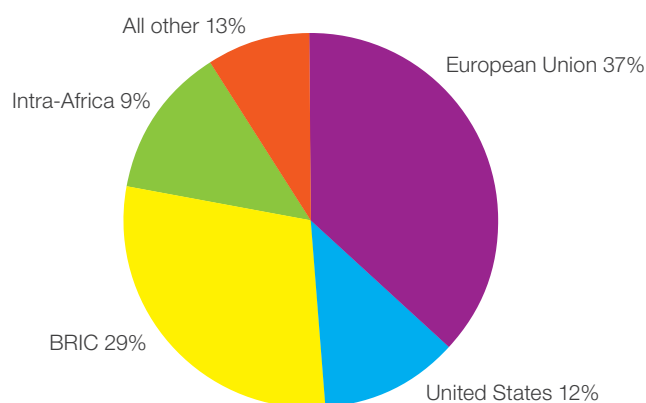
in Sierra Leone and Liberia some years ago, and France more recently in Mali. It is evident that Africa's indigenous instruments are not yet up to this task.

Therefore, views on the future of conflict must factor in expected global growth patterns (because a resurgence in global economic growth is a prerequisite for thinking globally instead of nationally); sustained democratic growth patterns (domestic demands for greater freedom are expected to increase in line with greater individual wealth and educational attainment); declining levels of external support for democracy and elections (in line with the declining influence of the EU and its members, the main proponents of human rights and democracy); and the relationship between democracy and conflict. Do democracies go to war with other democracies at a time when supply chains are global and interconnected? Will the potential for a power transition from the US to China in the 2030s prove globally threatening? Will the rise of two competing powers, China and India, in South-East Asia, lead to regional tension with a declining and anxious Japan?

None of these questions can be answered conclusively, but the events of recent years have indicated that global stability is dependent upon global economic growth. Without the latter, everyone tries to compete for a better place in the existing system, 'undermining global rules and increasing the potential for conflict'.<sup>100</sup>

European and American trade remain very important for Africa, but the change in Africa's fortunes is closely linked to events in China and, to a lesser extent, India and other countries. As countries rise (such as China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, South Korea, Turkey, Mexico, etc.), their appetite for commodities pulls African economies upward. Much of Africa is experiencing improvements in the quality of domestic governance, ability to collect and spend taxes, and revenue collection. The hopeless continent has become a source of global hope and – dare we say it – growth.

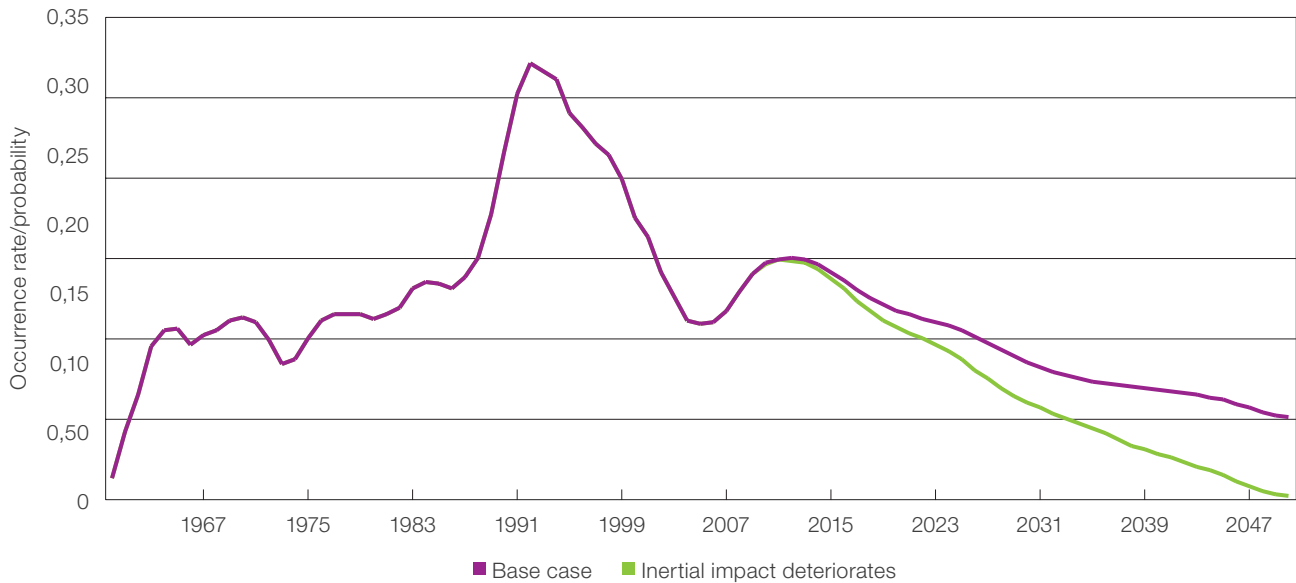
Figure 13 Africa's trade partners, 2011



Source: S Freemantle, *Intra-African trade: challenging, and critical*, Standard Bank, Johannesburg, 19 April 2013, 2.

Today's international system is, therefore, increasingly polycentric and Africa is dependent on a range of trading partners, no longer mainly Europe and the US. Using data

**Figure 14** IFs base-case history and forecast of intrastate violent conflict in Africa versus scenario implying a steady erosion of conflict impetus



Source: IFs version 6.69<sup>107</sup>

from the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Standard Bank provides a pie chart (reproduced in Figure 13) to indicate the extent of Africa's divergence in trade in 2011 and the very low component of intra-African trade.

As part of a global realignment of trade patterns, during 2012 China became Africa's most important trading partner. With a clear policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, China's ascendancy effectively supports regime stability in Africa, although at the expense of democracy and human rights. Together with similar preferences among countries such as Russia and, to a lesser extent, Brazil, a new global understanding is emerging. Today peacekeeping and coercive measures require both UN sanction and regional support from an organisation such as the AU or ECOWAS. Like the other members of BRICS, South Africa (the only African member of the G20) is an outspoken opponent of non-African engagement on the continent and its foreign-policy actions (as opposed to statements) tend to favour stability and African solidarity above democracy and human rights.

Therefore, continued global growth (especially China's growth) is extremely important for Africa. Although African economies are diversifying, commodities account for around one third of African growth.<sup>101</sup> The commodities super cycle has served as bedrock for Africa's recent sterling growth rates, and a downturn would have substantive negative implications for the continent.

One of the key questions to consider in our hot, flat and crowded world is whether global and regional inequality and exclusion could emerge as the new drivers of violence in Africa and elsewhere. We know that 'political exclusion and marginalization affecting regional, religious, or ethnic groups are associated with higher risk of civil war, while inequality between richer and poorer

households is closely associated with higher risks of violent crime'.<sup>102</sup> What will be the prognosis for the interstate and inter-regional relationships between, for example, a stagnant Europe and a politically unstable, economically regressive North Africa?

Southern Africa, a relatively prosperous region compared with West, East and Central Africa, faces particular concerns in this regard. When reviewing the Gini coefficient (which measures levels of internal disparities in income) in Africa, a number of countries with the worst internal levels of inequality globally are in Southern Africa. Namibia tops the list as the country with the largest internal disparities in wealth, followed by Lesotho, Gabon, Botswana, the CAR, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, etc. The associations between household inequality and violent crime are well established in South Africa, with its widely reported crime rates. Africa may yet experience levels of criminal violence previously only associated with a small number of notorious countries in Central and South America. Urban areas are particularly vulnerable, as explored in a previous publication by the ISS on the future of Africa.<sup>103</sup>

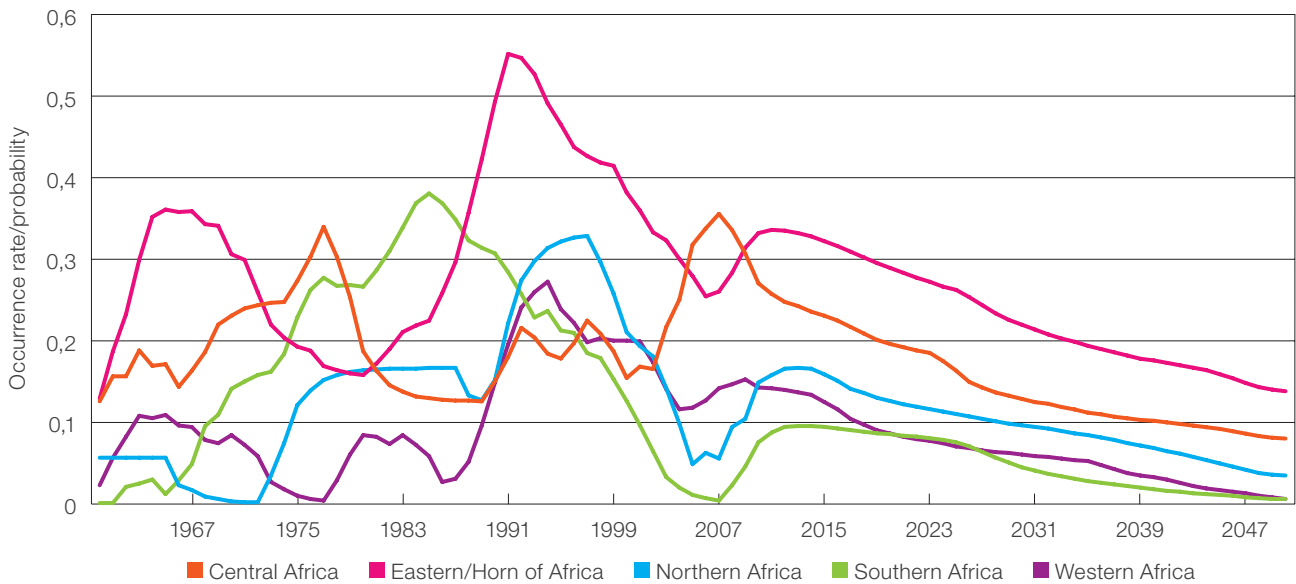
Africa was a victim of bipolar rivalry during the Cold War. The move to greater multipolarity carries a number of risks for the continent although, at the same time, it may provide leverage for new opportunities.

## CONCLUSION: FORECASTING INTRASTATE VIOLENCE

Looking ahead, violent armed conflict and resource insecurity will continue to occur mainly in poor countries where the following variables are present: weak governance, previous experience of conflict, spillover from being located in a bad 'neighbourhood' and/or widespread youth unemployment and exclusion co-existing alongside a median age of below 25 years.



Figure 15 Intrastate violent conflict level per region as defined by the African Futures Project (scale is from 0 to 1)



Source: IFs version 6.69

Clearly, large portions of Africa meet these criteria – from Senegal in the west to Somalia in the east, including much of Central Africa, the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa. These regions have seen considerable instability in recent years – for example, in the CAR, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria, Côte d’Ivoire and the DRC. The evolving political regime will also play a major role because those countries progressing from anocracies towards democracy are the most likely to experience violence.

At the same time, large-scale violence can confidently be expected to decline as Africa develops, becomes more prosperous and its population structures mature. This prognosis is supported by historical experience elsewhere. However, the risk of instability will remain relatively high for at least a generation. In tandem with these developments, it is expected that the nature of violence will continue to evolve, further blurring the lines between war and crime. Although political violence has been an enduring feature of Africa’s modern history, the continent is not uniquely prone to violence and historically has not been the region most affected by war.

In a forthcoming publication on governance in the next 50 years, Hughes et al. use the IFs model to forecast the potential levels of intrastate violence, allowing for the steady erosion of the inertial impact of past conflict over time.<sup>104</sup> The finding that reduction in conflict may help create virtuous or self-reinforcing cycles that, in turn, reduce future conflict vulnerabilities is in line with the 2006 Geneva Declaration on Armed Conflict, especially its report on armed conflict and development.<sup>105</sup> The Hughes forecast steadily reduces the propensity for repeat violence and is based on historical analysis that indicates a 60 per cent carry-over of past conflict levels to current ones. Past conflict is, therefore, the single largest indicator of future conflict and the steady erosion of the carry-over effect has substantial impact over time.<sup>106</sup>

A comparison of these two scenarios (the IFs base case and the potential erosion of the inertial impact of past conflicts over time in Africa) is depicted in Figure 14, indicating that sharp reductions in levels of internal war may be possible.

The impact of the more optimistic forecast for the five regions of Africa is presented in Figure 15. Eastern/Horn of Africa is the region most prone to conflict, and Southern and West Africa the least challenged.<sup>108</sup>

Hegre et al. reach very similar conclusions in their long-term forecast on the future of armed conflict for the period until 2050. Their forecast is ‘most optimistic for Western Asia and North Africa’, but ‘much more pessimistic’ for sub-Saharan Africa, with only a reduction in incidence of intrastate conflict of about a third – very close to the base-case forecast from IFs.<sup>109</sup>

As discussed earlier in this paper, the study done by Hughes et al. shows that, at income levels of \$18 000 (in 2005 dollars at PPP) and above, economic downturns and youth bulges no longer increase the probability of armed conflict. Apart from the special instance of oil-rich Equatorial Guinea, Libya and Gabon, only Botswana and possibly Mauritius are expected to have achieved these average income levels by 2030. Consequently, youth bulges in conjunction with persisting patterns of exclusion do remain a risk factor for the majority of countries in Africa, especially for low-intensity conflict and crime.

Necessarily, great uncertainties remain due to the unconsolidated nature of governance on the continent. Although large-scale armed conflict in sub-Saharan Africa has been declining since the mid-1990s,<sup>110</sup> the two best-known European-based projects that gather data on conflict incidence (the UCDP and the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer) both indicate that the decline in the frequency of armed conflict triggered by the end of the Cold War may have stagnated.<sup>111</sup> In fact, there were increases in instances

of violent conflict during 2010 and 2011, partly due to the Arab Spring.<sup>112</sup> These point to a potential resurgence of armed violence globally, possibly with the greatest impact in the Arab Peninsula (including key countries such as Saudi Arabia) – but also in Africa. And then there are the potential implications of a democratising China and the possible global impact of instability there. Despite these unexpected events, this paper's analysis (using the IFs system) indicates that a general increase in intrastate conflict may be temporary and that the longer-term downward trends in the incidence of intrastate, armed conflict are likely to resume.

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## **Whilst poverty and inequality are not direct causes of violence, the awareness of rising inequality between and within countries has exacerbated the significance of relative deprivation as a source of instability**

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Looking to the future, the largest unknown factor is the extent to which the conditions that gave rise to the global 'war on terror' will assume a new form. Radical Islamism has provided the political framework for the mobilisation of sufficient sections within a generally peace-loving Muslim population to cause global mayhem. Contributing factors include unemployment among the youth, lack of opportunities, discontent with corruption within the ruling class, religious or political oppression, and lack of inclusion, political participation and freedom of expression at a time of rising education. All these factors contributed to the Arab Spring and its impact in North Africa. Africa is the most religious continent internationally<sup>113</sup> and there is an ever-present potential for both Islam and Christianity to be used to politicise deprivation. Currently the conflict most illustrative of these trends is that in northern Nigeria, where the fight between the Nigerian military and Boko Haram has been steadily intensifying since its inception in 2009.

Poverty and inequality are not intrinsic, direct causes of violence. However, the awareness of rising inequality between and within countries has exacerbated the significance of relative deprivation (awareness of relative disadvantage compared with others) as a source of instability. The global spread of information technologies increases this awareness for large populations that continue to struggle for their daily livelihood amid the opulence and consumerist excesses in more affluent societies. The reality – that we live in a world of growing

prosperity and improvements in the living standards of an increasing number of people worldwide – does little to detract from the associated discontent.

The populations of wealthy countries will continue to contract while those of other regions, India and Africa in particular, will expand; the dividing lines between the rich millions and the poor billions will increase and become ever more marked. It is this context, rooted in the oppression and corruption in Saudi Arabia, that gave rise to al-Qaeda. Religion, which holds greater sway in poorer countries (with the exception of the US) than wealthy ones, may play an important role as a legitimate source of alternative belief, radicalisation and even violence. These are trends to watch, evident in West Africa and the Sahel at the time of writing.

The analysis presented in this paper underscores the extent to which instability, war and conflict in Africa is largely a function of poverty, underdevelopment and poor governance.<sup>114</sup> In many instances, African countries are caught up in a process of delayed state formation and are still trying to provide (human) security, build effective and legitimate governance capacity, and gain internal legitimacy. This process has been completed in many other areas of the world but was delayed in Africa, largely due to the impact of colonisation and the freeze that the Cold War placed on natural African state formation. Globalisation and the challenges of modernisation complicate processes that historically could unfold sequentially. In other words, governments could focus on securing borders and consolidating domestic stability, then build capacity for governance and eventually become more inclusive, legitimising the government in the process. Africa's current leadership has to contend with all these challenges simultaneously. In addition, development aid suffers from notoriously ahistorical approaches and the results are often messy.<sup>115</sup>

Forecasts are inevitably tools for thinking about the future – they do not purport to be predictions. The analysis presented in this paper, although drawing upon the most comprehensive and sophisticated integrated system available, merely points to an expected path of development based on current knowledge and historical trends.

The implications of the analysis are largely self-evident. The first is simply a continued focus on building national, regional and international capacity on conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict reconstruction – part of an interlocking system within and between African countries, regional organisations and the UN system. Much progress has been made but much remains to be done, evident during recent events in Mali and the CAR when the response from Africa was either late or ineffectual.

The second is the need for a shift in focus from traditional concepts of armed violence and intrastate conflict to an approach reflecting the changing transnational characteristics of the threats of the 21st century. Such an approach must acknowledge the connection between networks of organised crime, money

laundering, terrorism, kidnapping, human trafficking, arms and drug smuggling, and tax havens and fronting.

A third, normative conclusion calls for continued vigilance and investment in the basic tenets of democracy and respect for human rights, to prevent possible slippage in Africa that could undo the progress made in recent years. Simultaneously, the African challenge remains essentially one of the consolidation of governance, particularly the provision of security and the building of a legitimate and capable state, which is able to exercise its authority across all of its territories and provide its citizens with the necessary social services. Within this framework there is ample room for an active and engaged civil society that is able to hold government to account.

However, most important of all is an unyielding focus on the transformation of the African developmental model from jobless growth in capital-intensive extractive sectors, to the promotion of regional trade, industrialisation, diversification and an African agricultural revolution that will prioritise feeding Africa and provide work opportunities. It is evident in many other places of the world that there is a positive relationship between regional economic integration, peace and the role of regional institutions as guarantors of stability. Justifiably, there has been much focus lately on the creation of a developmental state that has the capacity, the institutions and the legitimacy to mobilise all groups of society around a national developmental framework. This framework would have manufacturing or services as a basis while allowing sufficient opportunity for private-sector knowledge and employment creation. In order for the developmental state to take root, there will need to be a broad transformation in the relationship between citizens and government in many of Africa's countries.

Africa will require the continued support and engagement of the international community, through the UN and other structures.

Despite its widespread poverty, poor governance and relative instability, Africa is emerging as globally important. The continent has 55 members of the UN General Assembly (the AU members plus Morocco), a rising consumer base, the largest potential agricultural environments and vast unexplored mineral resources. China, Malaysia, Turkey, Japan and India are increasingly active in Africa, contesting the historical advantage of Europe and North America. Also, with the region slowly emerging as an investment destination, Africans have gained agency and policy space.

On the other hand, there remains a large potential for domestic instability – a potential that continues to be perceived as a direct threat to neighbouring Europe. Africa is most affected by terrorism, and terror continues to grow on the back of corruption, misrule and the imbalances in socio-economic conditions, particularly in urban areas where social media are experiencing massive growth.

Eventually Africa's economic growth will collide with the impact of climate change and the response will be to accelerate the already fast rates of urbanisation evident in

many countries. Soon the management of urban spaces will be Africa's biggest developmental, governance and security challenge. And in this sense, continued turbulent times lie ahead. African governments will have to respond accordingly or face the consequences. With some of the highest rates of urbanisation in the world, urban Africa will increasingly dominate African politics and in time will force accountability upon a leadership that was previously largely dependent on a rural support base. The pace of political activity in Africa is likely to speed up because it is in urban areas that protest is more likely to turn violent than in rural areas. This tendency has already been seen during elections where associated urban violence has increased. This follows a trend identified during an earlier publication on Africa's future by Cilliers, Hughes and Moyer:

Increasing urbanization and the governance of complex urban spaces will present significant security challenges across the forecast horizon. Urban pressures, youth unemployment and service delivery deficits will drive crime in urban centres and will produce large urban slums such as Kibera in Nairobi and Ijora Badia in Lagos. Urban slums provide potential breeding grounds for domestic instability, gangsterism and organized crime. Furthermore, urban slums are security and justice service delivery challenges and are often neglected spaces, which can breed discontent. As vulnerable populations, slum dwellers are susceptible to insecurities including land tenure, access to formal and informal employment, victimization at the hands of local government officials and police, bribery, corruption, and urban crime and violence.<sup>116</sup>

Social mobilisation is an important key to breaking out of the dysfunctional equilibrium created by traditional elites locked in rent-seeking coalitions.<sup>117</sup> The events that occurred in Tunisia and Egypt during the Arab Spring provide a clear warning to many African governments that the future of the continent will be different from its recent past. Although prospects for sustained development are brighter than before, Africa's future will also be a turbulent one. However, much of Africa is better placed than ever to achieve prosperity and to continue its general downward trend in the incidence of intrastate conflict.

Dependence – a characteristic of colonialism and the Cold War period – is being replaced by interdependence in a polycentric world order, whereby the distribution of power has shifted and Africa is gaining in geopolitical weight. There are now many opportunities to disprove the widely held image of the continent as uniquely prone to the onset of warfare and violence. Such opportunities are due to rapid economic growth, general improvements in human development and a strengthened regional and international conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding regime. The way in which Africa's leaders manage these opportunities and consolidate the move towards effective, inclusive and legitimate governance will determine future prospects for sustained development, stability and peace.

## NOTES

1. The African Futures Project is a collaboration between the Pardee Center for International Futures at the University of Denver, Colorado, and the Institute for Security Studies, with its head office in South Africa ([www.issafrica.org/futures](http://www.issafrica.org/futures)). The International Futures (IFs) is a software forecasting system that represents relationships and interactions within and across key global systems for 183 countries from 2010 to 2100. IFs is an integrated assessment model, which means that it is characterised by dynamically interacting subsystems, rather than straight-line forecasts or extrapolations. These subsystems include modules on population, economics, health, education, infrastructure, agriculture, energy, environment, governance and international politics. The model has been developed and maintained by the Pardee Centre for International Futures ([www.ifs.du.edu](http://www.ifs.du.edu)) by Prof Barry B Hughes. In this paper, version 6.69 has been used for all data, analysis and forecasts where the source is not indicated otherwise.
2. Many of these developments have recently been captured in the 2013 *Human Development Report*. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report 2013: The rise of the South: human progress in a diverse world*, 2013, [http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR\\_2013\\_EN\\_complete.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2013_EN_complete.pdf) (accessed 12 April 2013).
3. Geneva Declaration Secretariat, *Global burden of armed violence 2011: lethal encounters, executive summary*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 10.
4. Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIIK), Heidelberg Conflict Barometer 2011, [http://www.hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/ConflictBarometer\\_2011.pdf](http://www.hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/ConflictBarometer_2011.pdf) (accessed 10 March 2012); and HIIK, Heidelberg Conflict Barometer 2012, [http://www.hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/ConflictBarometer\\_2012.pdf](http://www.hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/ConflictBarometer_2012.pdf) (accessed 12 April 2013).
5. This paper defines armed conflict as a contested incompatibility between a government and an organised opposition group causing at least 25 battle-related deaths during a calendar year (see Lotta Themnér and Peter Wallensteen, *Armed conflict, 1946–2010*, *Journal of Peace Research* 48(4) (2011), 525–536).
6. World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development*, 2011, 2.
7. Geneva Declaration Secretariat, *Global burden of armed violence 2011*, 5f.
8. Scott Straus, Wars do end! Changing patterns of political violence in sub-Saharan Africa, *African Affairs* 111(443) (2012), 181.
9. Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), [www.ucdp.uu.se/database](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/database) (accessed 10 March 2012).
10. HIIK, Heidelberg Conflict Barometer 2011.
11. Jakkie Cilliers, Resource wars – a new type of insurgency, in Jakkie Cilliers and Christian Dietrich (eds), *Angola's war economy, Peace, profit or plunder?* Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2000.
12. See <http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/political-instability-task-force-home/>.
13. Erik Melander, Magnus Öberg and Jonathan Hall, *The 'new wars' debate revisited: an empirical evaluation of the atrociousness of 'new wars'*, Uppsala Peace Research Paper 9, [http://www.pcr.uu.se/digitalAssets/18/18585\\_UPRP\\_No\\_9.pdf](http://www.pcr.uu.se/digitalAssets/18/18585_UPRP_No_9.pdf) (accessed 22 February 2013). The authors quote the work of Nils Petter Gleditsch, Peter Wallensteen, Mikael Eriksson, Margareta Sollenberg and Håvard Strand, *Armed conflict 1946–2001: A new dataset*, *Journal of Peace Research* 39(5) (2002), 621.
14. The UCDP tabulates the number of actors involved in conflicts and refers to dyads, defined as a pair of warring parties. In interstate conflicts, these warring parties are governments of states, whereas in intrastate conflicts, one is the government of a state and the other is a rebel group. See [http://www.pcr.uu.se/digitalAssets/124/124259\\_conflicts\\_dyads\\_2011.pdf](http://www.pcr.uu.se/digitalAssets/124/124259_conflicts_dyads_2011.pdf) (accessed 15 March 2013). For evidence on the increased fragmentation of conflict, see also Themnér and Wallensteen, *Armed conflict, 1946–2011*, 566.
15. W. Pearlman and K.G. Cunningham, Nonstate actors, fragmentation, and conflict processes, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(1), 4; Straus, Wars do end!, 181.
16. Straus, Wars do end!, 181–182; I. Salehan, *Rebels without borders: transnational insurgencies in world politics*, New York: Cornell University Press, 2009.
17. Tuesday Reitano and Mark Shaw, *Check your blind spot – confronting criminal spoilers in the Sahel*, Institute for Security Studies, Policy Brief, 2013; Lori-Anne Thérout-Bénoni, *Mali in the aftermath of the French military operation*, Institute for Security Studies, Situation Report, 2013; Mark Shaw and Tuesday Reitano, *The evolution of organised crime in Africa: towards a new response*, Institute for Security Studies, Paper 244 (April 2013). All available at [www.issafrica.org](http://www.issafrica.org).
18. Straus, Wars do end!, 192–193.
19. Ibid.
20. Straus, Wars do end!, 197.
21. Timothy Sisk, Pathways of the political, in Roland Paris and Timothy Sisk (eds), *The dilemmas of statebuilding: confronting the contradictions of postwar peace operations*, New York: Routledge, 2008, 196–224.
22. Dorina Bekoe, *Trends in electoral violence in sub-Saharan Africa*, United States Institute of Peace (USIP) Peace Brief, 2010, 13.
23. Sisk, Pathways of the political, 2008.
24. Straus, Wars do end!, 179, 193.
25. HIIK, Heidelberg Conflict Barometer 2011, 4.
26. The Heidelberg Conflict Barometer defines conflict items as follows: 'Conflict items are material or immaterial goods pursued by conflict actors via conflict measures. Due to the character of conflict measures, conflict items attain relevance for the society as a whole – either for coexistence within a given state or between states.' HIIK, Heidelberg Conflict Barometer 2011, 120.
27. Defined as change in the power constellation in the international system or a regional system therein, especially by changing military capabilities or the political or economic influence of a state. HIIK, Heidelberg Conflict Barometer 2011, 120.
28. HIIK, Heidelberg Conflict Barometer 2011, 5.
29. World Bank, *World Development Report 2011*, 6.
30. World Meteorological Organization, *A summary of current climate change findings and figures*, 2013, <http://www.wmo.int/pages/mediacentre/factsheet/documents/ClimateChangeInfoSheet2013-03final.pdf> (accessed 7 April 2013).
31. Ibid.
32. International Climate Conference, *Implications of a global climate change of 4+ degrees for people, ecosystems and the earth system*, Oxford, 2009, <http://www.eci.ox.ac.uk/4degrees/> (accessed 6 April 2013).
33. A group of 17 chemical elements widely used in advanced manufacturing.
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- Chatham House, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2012, 152. The authors forecast both the increased securitisation of resource politics and the potential for militarised responses.
35. The National Intelligence Council (NIC), *Global trends 2030: alternative worlds*, 2012. Available at [www.dni.gov/nic/globaltrends](http://www.dni.gov/nic/globaltrends).
  36. NIC, *Global trends 2030*, iv.
  37. Straus, Wars do end!, 188; Melander, Öberg and Hall, *The 'new wars' debate revisited*; Lacina Bethany and Nils Petter Gleditsch, Monitoring trends in global combat: a new dataset of battle deaths, *European Journal of Population*, 21(2–3) (2005), 145–66.
  38. Mark Duffield, Social reconstruction and the radicalization of development: aid as a relation of global liberal governance, *Development and Change* 33(5), 1049–1071, cited in Melander, Öberg and Hall, *The 'new wars' debate revisited*, 8.
  39. Globalisation is increasingly de-Westernised as a result of the rise of the South and the deleveraging of Western influence.
  40. See, for example, Håvard Hegre, Joakim Karlsen, Håvard Strand and Henrik Urdal, Predicting armed conflict, 2010–2050, *International Studies Quarterly* (2012), 1–21.
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  42. For an in-depth discussion on statebuilding and legitimacy, see Max Weber, *Economy and society: an outline of interpretive sociology*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968; Seymour M. Lipset, *Political man*, New York: Doubleday, 1960; Ronald Rogowski, *Rationale legitimacy: a theory of political support*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974; David Held, Power and legitimacy in contemporary Britain, in G. Maclellan, D. Held and S. Hall (eds), *State and society in contemporary Britain: a critical introduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984; Rodney Barker, *Political legitimacy and the State*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990; Muthi Alagappa (ed.), *Political legitimacy in Southeast Asia: the quest for moral authority*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995; Katia Papagianni, Participation and state legitimization, in Charles T. Call and Vanessa Wyeth (eds), *Building states to build peace*, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 2008; Roland Paris and Timothy D. Sisk, *The dilemmas of statebuilding*; Michael Barnett, Building a republican peace: stabilizing states after war, in *International Security*, 30(4) (2006), 87–112; OECD, *Do no harm. International support for statebuilding*, Conflict and Fragility Series, Paris, 2010, 157ff.
  43. OECD, Initial findings on statebuilding, Paris, 2008.
  44. World Bank, *World development report 2011*, 4.
  45. World Bank, *World development report 2011*, 60.
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  48. J. A. Goldstone, R. H. Bates, D. L. Epstein, T. R. Gurr et al., A global model for forecasting political instability, *American Journal of Political Science*, 54(1) (2010), 190–208.
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  50. The Polity score is from –10 (complete autocracy) to +10 (complete democracy), indicating that the average score of low-income countries is +1.
  51. Polity IV Project: political regime characteristics and transitions, 1800–2011, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm> (accessed 12 April 2013).
  52. Monty G. Marshall and B. R. Cole, *Global report 2011, Conflict, governance, and state fragility*, Center for Systemic Peace, 2001, 12.
  53. Zachary Elkins, Gradations of democracy? Empirical tests of alternative conceptualizations, *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (2000), 293–300; Scott Gates, Håvard Hegre, Mark R Jones and Håvard Strand, Institutional inconsistency and political instability: polity duration, 1800–2000, *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (2006), 893–908; Gerardo L. Munck and Jay Verkuilen, Conceptualizing and measuring democracy: evaluating alternative indices, *Comparative Political Studies* 35 (2002), 5–34; Shawn Trier and Simon Jackman, Democracy as a latent variable, *American Journal of Political Science* 52 (2008), 201–17; James Vreeland, The effect of political regime on civil war: unpacking anocracy, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 52 (2008), 401–24. All of the above cited in Goldstone et al., A global model for forecasting political instability, 195.
  54. Goldstone et al., A global model for forecasting political instability, 195f.
  55. In Goldstone et al.'s model, the relative odds for instability for such regimes were over 30 times greater than for full autocracies, other things being equal. Polity describes factionalism as a pattern of sharply polarised and uncompromising competition between blocs pursuing parochial interests at the national level.
  56. Cited in Political Instability Index: Vulnerability to social and political unrest, *The Economist*, 10 March 2009, [http://viewswire.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=VWArticleVW3&article\\_id=874361472](http://viewswire.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=VWArticleVW3&article_id=874361472) (accessed 30 April 2013).
  57. Goldstone et al., A global model for forecasting political instability, 196f.
  58. Bekoe, *Trends in electoral violence in sub-Saharan Africa*, 1.
  59. According to some authors, the bias of the liberal democratic state has evoked policy agendas, programmes and activities among international donors that predominantly strive for limiting the state by building strong societies able to restrain or at least control it, rather than developing legitimate state organisations. This puts fragile states under significant stress and potentially triggers instability and conflict. See also Barnett, Building a republican peace, 87–112; Michael Barnett, David Kim, Madalene O'Donnell and Laura Sitea, Peacebuilding: what's in a name?, *Global Governance* 13(3) (2007); Roland Paris, *At war's end: building peace after civil conflict*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
  60. Population Action International, *How demographic transition reduces countries' vulnerability to civil conflict*, Fact sheet 23, 2003, <http://populationaction.org/policy-briefs/how-demographic-transition-reduces-countries-vulnerability-to-civil-conflict/> (accessed 28 March 2013).
  61. Geneva Declaration Secretariat, *Global burden of armed violence 2011*.

62. Henrik Urdal, *Demography and armed conflict: Assessing the role of population growth and youth bulges*, Centre for Research on Peace and Development, Working paper No. 2, 2011; World Bank, *World development report 2011*, 6.
63. Hegre et al., Predicting armed conflict, 2010–2050, 6.
64. The country allocation in the African Futures Project (AFP) is as follows:  
 West Africa (15 countries): Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo  
 Eastern/Horn of Africa (14 countries): Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan (not yet divided into two countries within IFs), Tanzania and Uganda  
 Southern Africa (ten countries): Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe  
 Central Africa (eight countries): Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and São Tomé and Príncipe  
 Northern Africa (six countries): Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Mauritania and Morocco
65. The next highest region is Latin America, with 36 per cent.
66. Lindsay McLean Hilker and Erika Fraser, *Youth exclusion, violence, conflict and fragile states*, Report prepared for DFID's Equity and Rights Team (2009), 3–5.
67. McLean Hilker and Fraser, *Youth exclusion, violence, conflict and fragile states*, 47.
68. Ibid.
69. Hegre et al., Predicting armed conflict, 2010–2050, 5.
70. In 2010 North Africa scored, on average, 0,64 on the HDI. Southern Africa scored 0,473, West Africa 0,407, East Africa 0,406 and central Africa 0,349.
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72. Juha Auvinen, Political conflict in less developed countries 1981–89, *Journal of Peace Research* 34(2) (1997), 177–195, footnote 3, page 188.
73. World Bank, *World development report 2011*, 2. For discussions of the trends in civil war onset and termination, see J. Joseph Hewitt, Jonathan Wilkenfeld and Ted R. Gurr, *Peace and conflict*, Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2010; Nicholas, What is civil war? Conceptual and empirical complexities of an operational definition, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48(6) (2004), 814–58; Ibrahim Elbadawi, Håvard Hegre and Gary J. Milante, The aftermath of civil war, *Journal of Peace Research* 45(4) (2008), 451–459; Paul Collier, Lani Elliott, Håvard Hegre et al., *Breaking the conflict trap: civil war and development policy*, Washington, DC: World Bank, 2003.
74. The ASI was launched at the 19th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2012 within the context of the implementation of the AU Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development.
75. See <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/countryconfig.shtml> (accessed 15 March 2013).
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77. Goldstone et al., A global model for forecasting political instability, 197; Hegre et al., Predicting armed conflict, 7.
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81. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program's Georeference Event Dataset provides a visual image of the countries at risk from a bad-neighbourhood effect. It also reflects the vast stretches of Africa where relative stability has emerged compared with that during the preceding 20 years. See <http://www.ucdp.uu.se/ged/index.php> (accessed 15 March 2013).
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86. See Hughes et al., Strengthening governance globally.
87. Barnett Rubin, The politics of security in postconflict statebuilding, in Charles T. Call with Vanessa Wyeth (eds), *Building states to build peace*, Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008, 25–47.
88. Christine Bell, *On the law of peace: peace agreements and the Lex Pacificatoria*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 646.
89. Straus, Wars do end!, 198.
90. The AU continues to depend heavily upon external financial support. In 2013, for example, the proposed total budget for the AU is \$278 million, of which \$123 million will be derived from the assessed contributions of AU member states. The remaining amount of \$155 million, roughly 56 per cent of the total, is based on funding from international partners, with the NEPAD Agency the most dependent.
91. J. Goldstein, *Winning the war on war: the decline of armed conflict worldwide*, New York: Penguin Books, 2011; J. Western and J. Goldstein, Humanitarian intervention comes of age, *Foreign Affairs* 90(6) (2011), 60–73.
92. World Bank, *World development report 2011*, 7.
93. Ibid.
94. McLean Hilker and Fraser, *Youth exclusion, violence, conflict and fragile states*, 21–23.
95. However, at market exchange rates, the US economy in 2050 should still be slightly larger than that of India but only around two-thirds the size of China.
96. Andrea Baumann, Jonas Grätz and Prem Mahadevan, *Strategic Trends 2013, Key developments in global affairs*, Center for Security Studies, Zurich, 2013, 11.
97. Baumann, Grätz and Mahadevan, *Key developments in global affairs*, 7.
98. Baumann, Grätz and Mahadevan, *Key developments in global affairs*, 8.

99. See <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/ODA2012.pdf> (accessed 12 April 2013).
100. Baumann, Grätz and Mahadevan, *Key developments in global affairs*, 27.
101. According to the McKinsey consultancy group, the commodities boom is responsible for 32 per cent of growth. In 2011 UNECA argues that up to 50 per cent of growth is due to the commodities boom. The 2013 Ernst and Young Africa Attractiveness Survey 2013 estimates it at only 16 per cent for sub-Saharan Africa.
102. World Bank, *World development report 2011*, 6, relying on Frances Stewart, *Horizontal inequalities as a cause of conflict: a review of CRISE findings*, background paper for the WDR 2011, 2010.
103. Jakkie Cilliers, Barry Hughes and Jonathan Moyer, *African futures 2050*, ISS monograph 175, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2011, <http://www.issafrica.org/pgcontent.php?UID=1048>.
104. See Hughes et al., *Strengthening governance globally*.
105. See <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/fileadmin/docs/Geneva-Declaration-Leaflet.pdf> (accessed 19 April 2013).
106. Compare also Hegre et al., *Predicting armed conflict, 2010–2050*, 4.
107. Five-year moving average; index is from 0 to 1. The probability of intrastate conflict presented here draws on Hughes et al, *Strengthening governance globally*. The variable in IFs is SFINTLWARMAG and is a function of past conflict, bad neighbourhood effects, economic growth (inverse), trade openness (inverse), youth bulge, infant mortality, democracy (inverted-U), state repression (inverse), and external intervention (inverse). The inertial impact of past conflicts is removed over 100 years by setting parameter sfusehist to 2 within IFs so that values move towards the underlying function.
108. The regional composition corresponds with that of the African Futures Project. See endnote 64.
109. Hegre et al., *Predicting armed conflict, 2010–2050*, 12–13.
110. Straus, *Wars do end!*. Based on UCDP data, there were on average eight to ten wars in any given year starting in the early 2000s, which is about half the number of wars in sub-Saharan Africa in the early-to-mid 1990s.
111. According to the methodology of the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer, the category of violent conflicts comprises violent crisis, limited wars and wars, in contrast to non-violent conflicts, which comprise disputes and non-violent crises. In measuring the three levels of violent conflict, five proxies are used to indicate the conflict means and consequences. The dimension of means encompasses the use of weapons and personnel, and the dimension of consequences encompasses the number of casualties, refugees and extent of destruction. Whereas the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer defines a conflict actor as ‘either an individual, a state, an international organization or a non-state actor’, the UCDP applies a much more restrictive definition according to which, an ‘armed conflict is a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year’.
112. Three new conflicts (in Yemen, Libya and Syria) started as wars in 2011. All of them occurred in the context of the Arab Spring protests and were located in the region of the Middle East and Maghreb.
113. See, for example, Pew research, *Tolerance and tension: Islam and Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa*, 15 April 2010, 2, <http://www.pewresearch.org/pubs> (accessed 19 April 2013).
114. This issue has been explored by many. See, for example, the section on Societal capacity and warfare, 1946–2010 – The poorer countries by Global Conflict Trends at <http://www.systemicpeace.org/conflict.htm> (accessed 19 April 2013).
115. See Hughes et al., *Strengthening governance globally: the next 50 years* (forthcoming).
116. Cilliers, Hughes and Moyer, *African futures 2050*, 76.
117. Fukuyama, *The origins of political order*, 476.

## ABOUT THE PAPER

This paper analyses future trends for intrastate conflict in Africa up to 2050 using the International Futures (IFs) model. After reviewing the main post-Cold War patterns of conflict and instability on the continent, the paper discusses seven key correlations associated with intrastate conflict in Africa. It then points to a number of reasons for the changing outlook, including the continued salience of various 'structural' conditions that drive intrastate violence even during rapid economic growth, recent improvements in human development alongside a strengthened regional and international conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding regime. Finally, the paper explores how multipolarity may impact on stability and forecasts trends for intrastate conflict in West, Southern, Horn/East and Central Africa. The authors expect large-scale violence to continue its steady decline, although the risk of instability and violence is likely to persist, and even increase in some instances.

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