



TYPES OF CONFLICT IN AFRICA

HOW DO THE APRM REPORTS ADDRESS CONFLICT?

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This paper is part of a series commissioned by the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) exploring the content of APRM Country Review Reports (CRRs) currently available on issues including gender, land, youth, extractive industries, elections and violence, and government responses to the APRM CRRs.

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BACKGROUND

From an initial overview of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) reports it is evident that conflict is mainly dealt with in the political chapters. This reduces differing types of conflicts in APRM member states to their political causes rather than permitting a broader consideration of other contributing factors. Each country has its own unique experience and mix of conflicts. However, there are certain similarities and recurring conflicts present in many countries. For this reason, this research will assess how the APRM reports can provide an opportunity to better understand these dynamics, offer insight into patterns and lessons to be learnt and prompt a conversation about how to collaborate better to tackle conflicts and their underlying causes.

Almost all African countries have experienced some form of conflict. The fragile circumstances and transitions they have experienced, from independence struggles to post-independence conflict, to the search for stability and state-building processes, have left scars and unaddressed issues that have created the sources of conflict.

In addition, the world is changing quickly and new sources of tension are constantly being woven into the old, causing widespread harm. People are being displaced and deprived of opportunities for education, healthcare and employment. Infrastructure is being damaged or destroyed. Oxfam (2007) estimates that Africa loses about US\$18 billion a year because of conflict and armed violence. But what is the conflict picture in Africa? African countries share similarities but are also different. Presumably then, the conflicts are a unique mix of these similarities and differences. In this rapidly changing world it is essential to

understand that conflicts are unique – and understanding a conflict is the first step on the path to addressing it.

Before tackling conflicts in Africa one should first consider conflict in general. Kunkeler & Peters (2011, p 287) summarise the mainstream understanding of conflict, in fact, of armed conflict, that it is a battle between two parties, at least one of which is a state government, over a government or territory, using armed forces. However, the notion is evolving along with our understanding of states, borders, relationships, actors, issues and globalisation, with Mary Kaldor (1999) describing this expanded understanding as ‘New Wars’.

Understanding of conflict should include state and non-state actors, violent and non-violent conflicts, regional dimensions and a broad interpretation that considers socio-economic, environmental and other factors that may contribute to conflict. Conflict is not an isolated event but takes place on a continuum, meaning that it is transformative and fluid. Sriram & Wermester (2003) describe it as occurring in phases, corresponding to the idea of the continuum. A cursory look at conflicts in Africa shows that this broadened approach, which moves away from a state-centric lens, is much more relevant when analysing the subject.

The APRM process is a peer review mechanism whereby member countries voluntarily open themselves up to assessment in areas such as governance, economy and development and a country review report (CRR) is produced on each country that is reviewed. The purpose of the process is to gather best practices that countries can follow and adopt as policy and also to raise awareness of areas where they face challenges. The values underpinning the process are participation, transparency, openness, inclusiveness and accountability.

Conflict is one of the sub-focus areas in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) reports. With regard to conflict, the APRM has stated as one of its objectives the prevention and reduction of inter- and intra-state conflict.

Based on a qualitative analysis of conflict in Africa, this paper has identified broad types of conflict in order to understand better the conflict dynamics, causes and drivers on the continent. The types are used to analyse how the APRM reports cover the conflicts in the countries on which they focus and what they do and do not tell us about them.

The conflicts have been classified as: political, civil unrest, identity, resource-based and terrorism. Although there are many nuances and conflict can be further classified more specifically, these five categories describe the nature of most of the conflicts on the continent and are flexible enough to explain their differing dynamics. They are able to take into account intra- and inter-state conflicts, the causes of conflict, its regional dimensions, the multitude of actors involved and the various ways in which it is expressed.

METHODOLOGY

A total of 17 APRM country reports have been published thus far, of which 16 are available in English – the Mali report is only available in French. For the purposes of this research the 16 English-language reports have been analysed, with the APRM questionnaire used as a guiding tool. The older version of the questionnaire has been used as it provided the framework for the reports published to date. To some extent the questionnaire guides the content of the reports and thus the conversation about conflict. The APRM refers specifically to two broad types of conflict – intra-state and inter-state.

The APRM reports are divided into the following thematic chapters:

1. Democracy and Good Political Governance
2. Economic Governance and Management
3. Corporate Governance
4. Socio-economic Development

The political chapter is the one most relevant to this research, stating as its first objective:

Preventing and reducing intra- and inter-state conflicts with particular attention to the extent to which the country under review strives to sustain peace and security within its borders and to contribute to peace and stability in its neighbourhood.

Section 1(1.1.1.)

In order to gain an overview of the coverage of conflict in the reports, the text-mining technique has been used. This technique converts the reports into rich text format, then measures selected word frequencies and placement. This provides a bird's eye view of the conversation and allows researchers to pinpoint within which chapters particular conversations are taking place. Specific word clusters have been formed, with the conflict word cluster being the primary, and terrorism and civil unrest being secondary clusters (see Figure 1). Clusters could not be formed for each type as the words relevant to the remaining types were either too broad and could refer to non-conflict situations, or were already included in the conflict cluster.

Heatmaps have been generated from the word frequency and placement counts to provide a visual picture of how much and where the specific word clusters are mentioned. These data provide an interesting overview of the way the conversation about conflict is framed, but do not give much depth to the content. For this reason a more qualitative analysis was made of the specific chapters to better discern the quality of the conversation.

Table 1
Word clusters

CONFLICT	TERRORISM	CIVIL UNREST
armed	terrorism	protest
army	terrorist	riots
combatants		unrest
conflict		
conflicts		
coup		
coups		
military		
rebel		
rebellion		
rebels		
soldiers		
violence		
violent		
war		
wars		

CONFLICT

No two countries experience conflict in the same way, however there were some overarching trends and shared experiences amongst the countries examined in the APRM reports. Among the conflicts that cut across country reports were electoral violence and land-based conflict, while salient causes or factors contributing to conflict were ethnic/religious diversity, inequality and poverty.

The reports divided conflicts into intra- and inter-state and then explored them under these two umbrella terms. Although in some cases it can be useful to analyse conflict from this angle, it is important to note that the two types are not mutually exclusive, as intra-state elements can lead to or influence inter-state conflict, and the other way around. Some conflicts are of a regional nature and in its current formulation the APRM does not explore these adequately. One example is the regional insurgency in North Africa by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

(AQIM). AQIM operates in Algeria, Morocco, Libya and other territories.

Furthermore, international actors may be involved in an intra-state conflict, thus providing it with a transnational dimension. Lastly, conflicts are fluid and can change their spatial spread, the actors involved, the means used and even their motivation. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) began its activities in Uganda and has since spread into South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Central African Republic (CAR), changing its spatial spread. Its proclaimed goals of overthrowing Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni and creating a state based on the Ten Commandments appear to have changed.

Consequently, a simplistic division of conflicts into intra- and inter-state can result in the loss of many of the nuances needed to understand conflict and may hinder the formulation of suitable mechanisms to address it.

As the questionnaire guides the reports it is worth noting that it asks respondents to provide and describe factors that influence or cause conflict in their countries. In cases of intra-state conflict the questionnaire suggests possible factors, several of which relate more closely to crime or to a war economy.

Table 2
Factors influencing/causing conflict

Factors considered in the questionnaire	Factors not considered
Drug trafficking	Resources/resource governance
Organised crime	Terrorism
Economic inequality and wealth distribution	Civil unrest
Illicit arms trade	Marginalisation
Ethnic, religious and other diversities	
Refugees and internally displaced persons	

While respondents are free to suggest other factors, those that appear in the questionnaire tend to set the tone of the reports. The new questionnaire has given a more logical list, starting with inequality and including competition over and the exploitation of natural resources, and electoral violence (bringing into consideration political conflict). It has also removed the very specific references to crime – drug trafficking and organised crime. Although this is an improved list, it still lacks references to terrorism and civil unrest. The questionnaire offers no suggestions about factors that might lead to inter-state conflict and respondents are asked to list the sources of this type of conflict. The new questionnaire has suggested some factors but asks respondents to add others, as they see fit.

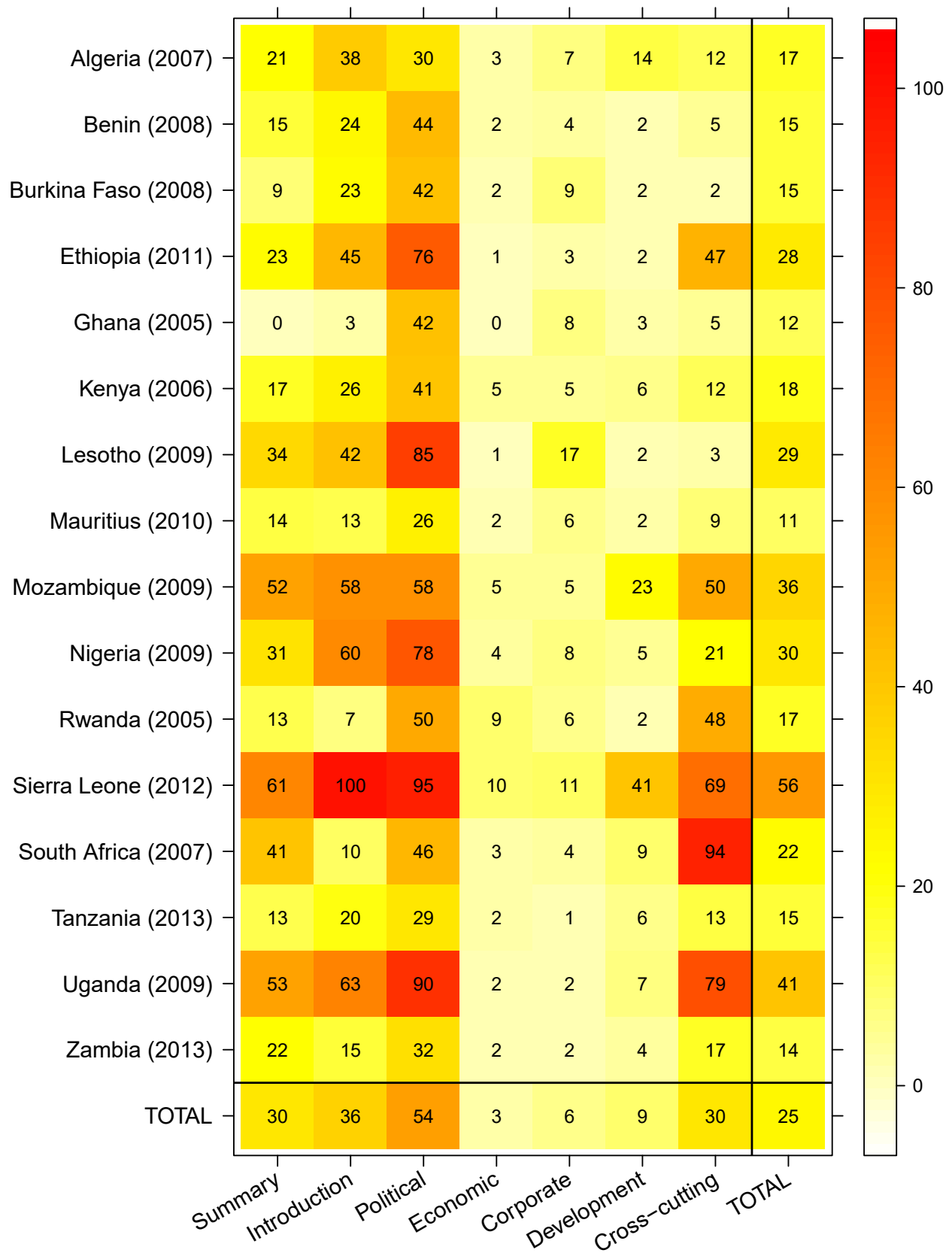
are allusions to factors causing or influencing conflict. In the Ghana CRR (2005, p 115), it is mentioned that the economic growth, market liberalisation and subsequent vulnerability of the Ghanaian economy to external shocks cause and mask regional inequalities.

WORD FREQUENCIES

Analysis of the conflict word cluster reveals that conflict is mostly considered in the political chapter, with an average of 54 mentions per 10 000 words. This is followed by the introduction, which contains 36 mentions, and the summary and cross-cutting issues, both with an average of 30 mentions per 10 000 words. Reports in which the conflict word cluster appears prominently in the introduction reflect on a combination of the country's turbulent history and current conflicts. A case in point is Sierra Leone, which suffered from a protracted and bloody war.

South Africa had a high conflict word count in the cross-cutting chapter. Since the country has not experienced a war in the traditional sense in the past 100 years, this reflects the turbulent anti-apartheid struggle and post-apartheid issues. The prevalence of conflict word clusters in the cross-cutting chapter suggests that the chapter offers the flexibility to engage on proximal causes of conflict. However, this engagement is voluntary as there is no question about conflict in the cross-cutting chapter. Although the mention of conflict is not as prevalent in the development chapter, there

Figure 1
Conflict (word frequency per 10000 words)

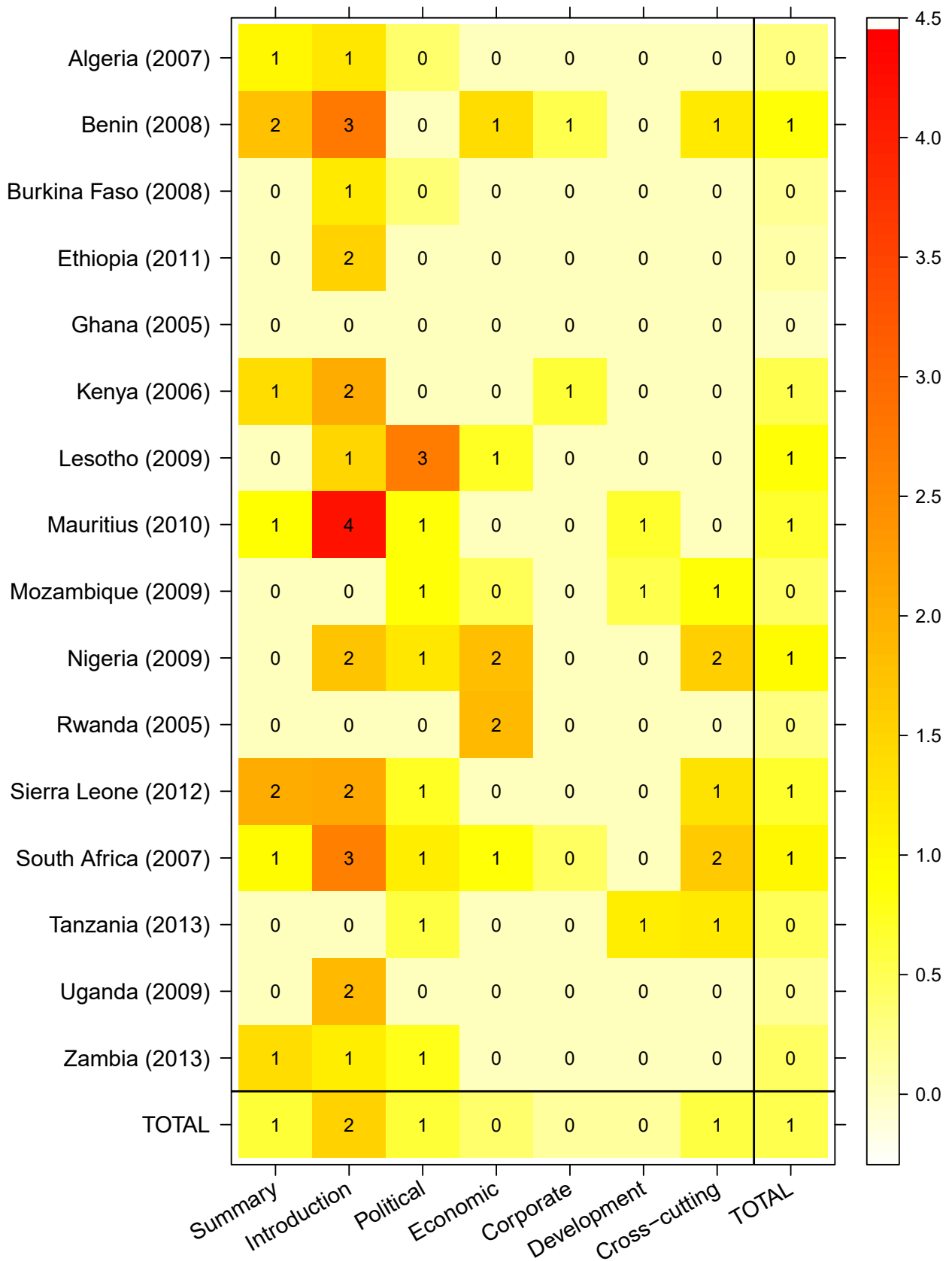


There is scant mention in the reports of civil unrest and, where it appears, it is generally in the introduction, with the highest count being in the Mauritius report, suggesting that it is viewed more from a historical perspective than as a current reality.

This, however, ignores the current instances of civil unrest in the form of protests, riots and the like. The political chapter of the Lesotho report contains the highest number of mentions (4) of civil unrest. This suggests either that civil unrest and other forms of conflict, such as political, intersect, or that civil unrest is mainly considered to be a political issue. It is important to keep this intersection in mind as civil unrest can serve as an indicator for the potential development of other types of conflict.

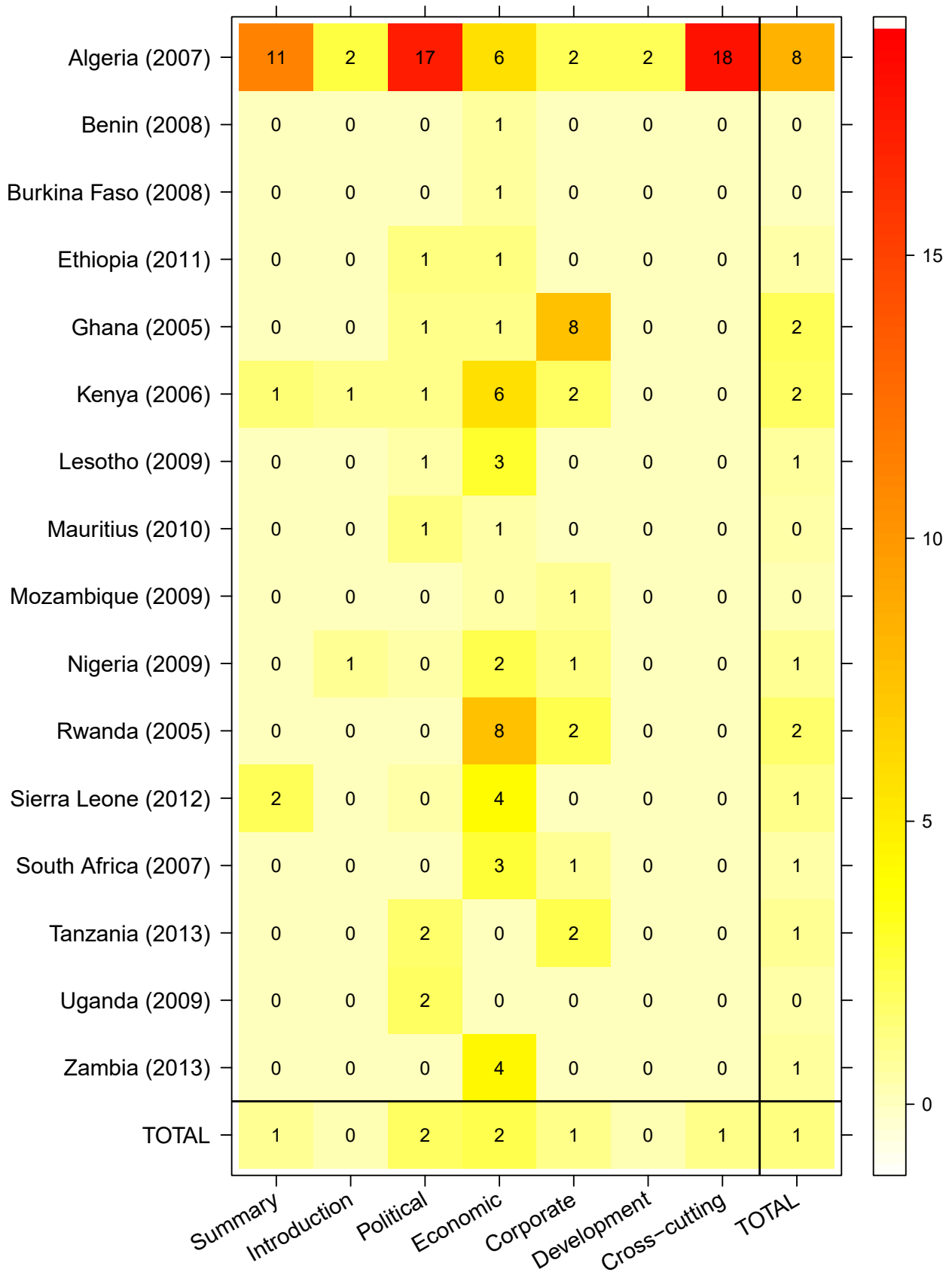
The civil unrest word cluster appears only in the summary, introduction, political and cross-cutting chapters. It is interesting to see that the issue is not brought up in the economic, corporate or development chapters, even though economic or development conditions, such as rising food prices or low access to education, can lead to civil unrest. The words protests, protestors, riot, rioters are not mentioned sufficiently often to meet the minimum threshold to be considered for text-mining.

Figure 2
Civil unrest (word frequency per 10000 words)



Terrorism is a low priority, with an average mention of one per 10 000 words. It is most prevalent in the Algeria CRR, with 17 mentions in the political chapter, 18 in the cross-cutting chapter and 11 in the introduction. The general frequency of the terrorism word cluster is slightly higher in the political and economic chapters, with an average mention in both of two per 10 000 words. This suggests that where terrorism is considered it is perceived as a security threat and as an economic issue, with the financing of terrorism playing a large role. The low number of mentions is surprising as a number of countries have experienced terrorism and because the questionnaire was drafted in 2004, three years after the topic was thrust into the spotlight with the 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre and the subsequent 'war on terror'. Simultaneously, terrorism as an issue has gained visibility over the years, especially with the intensification of campaigns such as that of Boko Haram in Nigeria. For this reason it is likely that newer reports would cover the topic more thoroughly.

Figure 3
Terrorism (word frequency per 10000 words)



TYPES OF CONFLICT

This paper has divided conflict into five types: political, identity, resource-based, civil unrest and terrorism. Given the broad nature of conflict and its variables, it is difficult to make sense of a general conflict discussion in wide-ranging reports such as the APRM CRRs. For this reason, the types have been selected to allow for a degree of specificity and a framework within which to allocate the conflict discussion. This allows for a better understanding and the formulation of suitable approaches to addressing conflict.

These types take into account most of the conflicts on the continent and their local and regional dimensions. It should be noted that the conflict types are not necessarily mutually exclusive, some of them are connected and influence one another. For example, political conflict can be influenced by, or influence, identity conflict – where political parties politicise identity and pit one group against another for their own gain.

POLITICAL CONFLICT

Political conflict occurs where there are serious ‘positional differences’ between two actors in a society, as described by the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research. For the purpose of these types, political conflict will be considered to be conflict over political power. The Kenya CRR (2006, p 62) identifies political conflict as ‘an outfall of competition and struggle for power [that] often provides the basis for a politicisation of ethnic differences, abuse of political power and authority, existence of militias in political parties, and limited opportunities for effective political participation’. Political conflict can manifest in the form of coups d’état, conflicts between political parties, personalities and supporters, conflicts between traditional and formal authorities and so on.

One condition present in many African countries that provides a catalytic environment

for political conflict is transition – from single-party to multiparty systems, from authoritarian rule to democratisation, from conflict to peace. Tensions and a lack of stability characterise these periods of change, which may result in power vacuums or challenges by new power positions to old ones. As most countries are changing to some form of democracy, elections have become one of the battlegrounds for power and theatres for political conflict. Political conflict in the shape of electoral violence features in a number of the reports.

Another prevalent form of political conflict highlighted in the reports is that between political parties. In Mozambique there are continuing tensions between the ruling Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) and the opposition Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo). The two groups fought each other in the post-independence period and, although they have signed peace agreements, the mutual mistrust remains.

This tension has played out in sporadic violence. The Mozambique CRR (2009, p 103) covers these aspects and mentions that there are reconciliation issues relating to the civil war that remain unaddressed, resulting in the current tensions. For this reason political parties should take responsibility for mitigating the tensions and fostering dialogue and cooperation in order to diminish the chances of the disagreements and opposing loyalties breaking out into violent conflict. In some countries there is little room for genuine opposition politics and the peaceful transfer of power so there is a perception that there are few means of demonstrating political grievances and attaining power other than through armed rebellion. This point is made in the Uganda CRR (2009, p 297).

Election violence, as stated above, is a recurrent theme in a number of the reports. The Lesotho CRR (2009, p 60) elaborates on the destabilising effect of the post-election violence that persists in that country because the opposition parties feel marginalised and refuse to accept election outcomes. In an effort to manage the conflict

Lesotho amended its electoral model to allow for greater representation and diversity in Parliament. In the case of Kenya, the CRR (2006, p 63) identified political conflict, the politicisation of identity and the abuse of power as possible sources of violent conflict. In 2007 this political conflict exploded into extreme post-election violence.

Some reports mention tensions between traditional leadership structures and 'formal' government structures as potential conflict areas. In the Ghana CRR (2005, p 20) it is stated that there are problems arising from traditional chief succession battles, lack of a clear mandate for the traditional structures, tensions between traditional and national authorities with regard to law and subordination of the former to the latter. These tensions reflect the parallel systems present in many countries and the subsequent power struggles. In some cases, traditional structures have been formalised and thus absorbed by government structures. This suggests that there should be more engagement between the two systems and that there should be a two-way interaction. This, if undertaken effectively and sincerely, can help to bridge the gap between the formalistic policies and the traditional structures that are more accessible and have more popular appeal in some regions.

Although the first objective of the questionnaire makes almost no reference to political conflict, the reports generally cover the subject well. They also show, as was the case in Lesotho, for instance, that lessons can be learnt and ways devised to manage this type of conflict and that the findings in the reports can potentially pinpoint indicators for conflict before it transforms into violence. The new questionnaire has identified pre-, during- and post-election violence and thus makes some direct reference to political conflict.

IDENTITY CONFLICT

Identity conflict is the use of exclusionary identity as the basis for conflict. Identity may refer to ethnicity, religious affiliation,

spatial identification, race, and so on. These exclusionary identity loyalties may be strengthened by socio-economic-cultural-political grievances and thus contribute to the 'othering' or 'dehumanisation' of some groups. In Africa it has been found that the most important social bonds are ethnic and regional identity (Erdmann 2004). In addition, in many African countries there are competing loyalties, divided among national, ethnic, religious and other lines (Sjorgen 2015, p 165). Rwanda, Kenya, Nigeria and Mali have all suffered from conflict fuelled by identity issues.

As a legacy from the colonial period, and the subsequent co-option of groups by external powers or by internal mismanagement and power struggles, identity has become politicised in many cases, with some identities privileged and others marginalised, or perceptions of undue benefit by one group causing tensions that can result in conflict. The borders drawn on the African continent mean that various groups, distinguished by ethnic, religious, linguistic, spatial and other markings may live in a single country. Nigeria, for example, is one of the most linguistically and ethnically diverse countries in the world (Morin 2013). The Nigeria CRR (2009, p 80) describes the situation as

a dichotomy between 'ethnic' as opposed to 'civic' citizenship in which a Pan-Nigerian notion of citizenship exists at the national level, while indigeneity operates at the local level. The dichotomy between 'indigene' and 'settler' has hardened into a theory of clan and ethnic exclusiveness and often provides the basis of inclusion or exclusion from access to state power and resources.

Diversity means that a tough balancing act is required to try to release tensions and foster cooperation. Algeria, for instance, has faced conflict because of the marginalisation of the Imazighen population. The state has taken measures to reduce tensions by recognising the Tamazight language and introducing other measures (Algeria CRR 2007, p 64). However, it is noted in the CRR that there is criticism of

the fact that although the measures have been enacted formally implementation leaves much to be desired. The example of the Imazighen draws us to another dynamic of identity that can be relevant to conflict: certain identities can be found across borders or in regions. Imazighen people live in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mali, Niger and a few other countries. This has influenced the conflicts in that transnational solidarity has encouraged or strengthened activism for language and other rights (Becker 2009).

Xenophobia is a form of identity conflict covered in the South Africa and Zambia CRRs. The Zambia CRR (2013, p 80) mentions xenophobic attitudes to refugees and potential xenophobic violence that might occur as a result of companies using foreign labour – a fact that has caused resentment in the local population (p 83). The South Africa CRR (2007, p 268) mentions xenophobia in both the political and the cross-cutting chapters and warns that it should be addressed before it turns violent. Subsequent to the publications of the reports xenophobic violence occurred in South Africa in 2008 and again in 2015 and in Zambia in 2016 (BBC 2016a). In the comments on the South Africa CRR provided by the South African government xenophobia is acknowledged as an issue and a commitment is made to fight it. However, there has been little effort to actually stem the problem. This highlights the importance of matching the recommendations and caveats provided in the CRRs with action.

Systems of governance can encourage cooperation or exacerbate identity conflict. In Ethiopia the federal system allows for different groups to have representation and a measure of autonomy. The CRR (2011, p 65) regards this style of governance as refreshing, but cautions that if it is not managed well the system can promote identity-based divisions and conflict. In Nigeria there are divisions among the various identities and groups of people. As the CRR (2009, p 82) describes it, the groups are 'largely exhibiting animosity fanned mainly by illicit and divisive politics'. This case also provides

an example of the intersections among conflict types, in this case between identity-based and political conflict.

Marginalisation is an important source of potential identity and other conflicts. The Uganda CRR (2009, p 109) identifies the grievances of ethnic minorities as potential sources of conflict. It cites as an example the case of the Batwa group, which is vocal about marginalisation stemming from land deprivation and exclusion from the provision of social services (Uganda CRR 2009, p 111). Such grievances can give way to identity-based conflict or transform into other types of conflict such as civil unrest or resource-based conflict.

The reports have generally covered identity – ethnic, religious and other – as a source of conflict. In some cases the reports have identified potential sources of tensions before they turned into violence, as in Zambia and South Africa, indicating that they can add pre-emptive value to the conversation. The one area that is not much discussed is the cross-border or regional nature of some identities and the subsequent regional nature of some of the conflicts.

RESOURCE-BASED CONFLICTS

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) report, *From conflict to peacebuilding: The role of natural resources and the environment*, found that in the past 60 years natural resources have been linked to at least 40% of intra-state conflicts in the world and these conflicts are twice as likely to recur within five years compared to conflicts unrelated to resources (UNEP 2009, p 30).

Africa is a continent well-endowed with natural resources, among them 30% of the world's mineral reserves and the fact that it is the world's largest arable land mass (African Natural Resources Center 2015, p 1). These riches have, however, not led to concomitant development (Beegle, Christiaensen, Dabalén & Gaddis 2016, p 14). In addition, the natural resources have

caused or fuelled numerous conflicts, earning them the reputation of being a curse rather than a blessing.

Resource-based conflicts have destabilised countries, weakened or changed regimes, displaced people and had a negative impact on development. They have not been bound by borders and include an array of actors, from local to transnational. In some cases the resource-based conflicts have been used to create tight control over the state and thus over the resources too (Humphreys 2005, p 510) and in others they have taken place with no regard for the state at all. In addition to competition for control, factors such as climate change, population growth, poor governance, availability of arms and unsustainable and inequitable exploitation have further fuelled resource conflicts.

Of the 17 countries reviewed by the APRM almost all have experienced some form of conflict linked to resources. Oil, gemstones, land, timber and drugs are some of the most prevalent sources of conflict on the continent (Maphosa 2013, p 3). In Kenya conflicts between farmers and nomadic pastoralists turned violent and deadly. In Sierra Leone rebels were financing their activities through the extraction of and illegal trade in diamonds and other resources – this profiteering can result in a protracted conflict as some parties start benefiting from the war economy and thus have no interest in ending the war.

There is no direct reference in the APRM questionnaire to the link between resources and conflict. For this reason, the compilers of the reports have used their discretion over the way in which the two elements are mentioned. The most salient conflicts reported seem to be over land. In Burkina Faso farmers and cattle herders clash as there is frequently no clear demarcation of land for agricultural and for grazing purposes and even when there is, the distinctions are not necessarily respected (Burkina Faso CRR 2008, p 87). The APRM reports also recognise the need to exploit and

use natural resources sustainably to enable their longevity and diminish the grievances caused by over or irresponsible exploitation.

In certain contexts resource conflicts have the potential to become inter-state or regional conflicts due to competition over resources in border areas or where there are disputes over ownership or use of resources. One example is that of Lake Nyasa, between Tanzania and Malawi, where Malawian investors are accused of oil exploration and fishing on the Tanzanian side of the lake (Tanzania CRR 2013, p 49). The repeated mention and increase in these conflicts over resources, which do turn violent in some cases and are also present in countries that are otherwise generally stable, should be considered in the context of population growth and the consequent strain on resources, as well as environmental degradation and poor governance. The Ethiopia CRR (2011, p 274) does this when it mentions in the cross-cutting issues chapter that climate change and the increasing scarcity of resources will lead to conflict.

In addition to natural resources, conflicts occur over non-natural resources such as trade routes/locations or borders. These types of conflict may involve actors such as traders, members of organised criminal networks and security forces. Kenya faces border banditry, whilst traders in Tanzania fight over the best trading locations.

The role of local and international companies in resource exploitation and conflict is important in Africa, yet it is not adequately discussed in the reports. One of the most direct mentions of the problem is in the Nigeria CRR (2009, p 81), where there is some focus on the Niger Delta conflict – where locals have taken up arms against companies that are exploiting oil. Not only are the companies contributing to substantial regional environmental degradation, but revenue from the oil deposits is not finding its way back to local communities. An indirect mention of the companies involved in resource exploitation can be found in some cross-cutting

and corporate governance chapters. The Sierra Leone CRR (2012, p 350) links the exploitation of resources to conflict, stating that the country has set up mechanisms to encourage transparency in managing resource revenues so to discourage exploitation that would give rise to excessive greed or grievances.

The coverage in the APRM reports of resource-based conflicts takes into account both state and non-state actors. However, there is generally little direct mention of complicity or of activities by multinational or international companies that are exploiting resources. Further, the discussion about the extraction or use of resources other than the usual suspects, oil and land, is poor or almost non-existent. There should be greater discussion of the role of the state and corporations in resource-based conflicts as well as a greater appreciation of the role resources play in conflicts. The new questionnaire makes direct links between resources and conflict, so the next reports may be more thorough in their discussions.

CIVIL UNREST

Civil unrest refers to protests, riots, revolts, demonstrations and uprisings initiated by a segment of the public in response to socio-economic and political grievances. Such actions can be instigated by organised or unorganised groups, they may target state and non-state institutions and they may or may not be violent. The risk of unrest is high in places where there are high unemployment levels and high inequality in urban areas (Kunkeler & Peters 2011, p 281).

The questionnaire makes no reference to civil unrest under the first objective of the political chapter. However, it does refer to community protests as an indicator in the corporate governance chapter. Objective 2, question two, asks 'to what extent are corporations responsive to the concerns of the communities in which they operate?' The new questionnaire expands the reference in the corporate governance chapter, where it questions whether

organisations in the public, private, informal or non-profit sectors, not only corporations, act as good citizens. What is interesting is that the heatmap indicates that there is, on average, no mention of the civil unrest word group in the corporate governance chapter, despite the direct reference in the questionnaire.

There has been civil unrest in a number of African countries in response to socio-economic, civil and political issues. Some of this unrest has been met with violence by the security authorities or has turned violent. Examples include recurring violent service delivery protests in South Africa, where protesters violate property and chase away municipal officials. Their persistence over the years shows that the issues are not being addressed adequately or quickly enough. In Ethiopia protests are often met with violence. In June 2016 about 400 anti-government protesters were killed (BBC 2016b) and the authorities are playing down the numbers. This is not an isolated incident and reveals deeper problems in the country that contrast with the more positive coverage in the Ethiopia CRR.

Despite these and other examples of civil unrest on the continent, the reports provide limited direct coverage. However, there is mention of the potential causes of civil unrest and thus the potential to develop the discussion about those root causes, linking them to present or possible future civil unrest. In the Burkina Faso CRR (2008, p 86) there is reference to the fact that some social or political tensions turn into protests and that citizens' demands over commercial or residential land can turn violent.

One of the potential causes is youth unemployment, which is specifically mentioned in the Nigeria and Sierra Leone CRRs: 'Unless the unemployed youth are properly managed, and their economic and social needs are well addressed, there is a potential that the youth could again become a breeding ground for social instability and unrest' (Sierra Leone CRR 2012, p 26). Youth unemployment should be considered against the background that Africa's under-18 population will grow to one billion

by 2050 (You, Hug & Anthony 2013). If sound strategies are not put in place now this has the potential to lead not only to civil unrest but also to radicalisation, crime and other scenarios that will increase the potential for conflict.

Inequality is another important factor that can lead to civil unrest. Within countries that are experiencing high economic growth, and sub-Saharan Africa is the fastest-growing economic zone in the world according to the mainstream indicators (Murori 2015), there has generally been an increase in inequality and the inequitable distribution of resources (natural, financial, opportunities, etc). It is noted in the Mozambique and Tanzanian CRRs (2009, p 278; 2013, p 14) that these inequalities can lead to social conflict.

Macro-economic factors can also inspire civil unrest. One of the most important of those is food prices, which are affected by international markets, weather and climate change (Smith 2013). Africa's population is still largely at the lower end of the income pyramid and thus increases in food prices have a profound effect, yet there was hardly any mention in the reports of food insecurity as a source of conflict. Burkina Faso (2008), Mozambique (2010) and Uganda (2011) have all experienced food riots and discontent over the rising prices of other goods (IRIN 2008; Patel 2010, Kron 2011), but none of the reports mentions any prospects of such actions.

Civil unrest can create a ripple effect at a regional level. Unrest in one country can lead to tensions in another, as alluded to in the Zambia CRR. The CRR (2013, p 122) states that unrest in the DRC, Angola, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi led to an influx of refugees into Zambia. This situation creates a challenge within Zambian society if questions of xenophobia and the like are not dealt with.

In recognition of the potential of civil unrest the Benin CRR (2008, p 17) acknowledges that the informal sector provides a safety valve as it compensates for the lack of some services

provided by the state, such as employment or social security. This interesting link suggests that there could be more coordinated interaction between the formal and informal sectors to address issues that give rise to civil unrest and this is possibly something that future APRM reports could explore.

The apparent lack of attention paid to civil unrest could imply either that countries do not perceive it as a great threat or that they lack the political will to deal with the causes. Either of these presents a danger as the unrest will grow and evolve if underlying socio-economic, political or other relevant issues are not resolved. The uprisings in North Africa are a case in point, where neither the governments nor the African Union were prepared to deal with the events. It would be useful if a more standardised definition and indication be developed in the questionnaires so to encourage a conversation about civil unrest.

TERRORISM

Terrorism is defined in Article 1(3) of the 1999 OAU Convention on the Combating and Prevention of Terrorism as:

(a) any act which is a violation of the criminal laws of a State Party and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or private property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to: (i) intimidate, put in fear, force, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act, or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint, or to act according to certain principles; or (ii) disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency; or (iii) create general insurrection in a State; (b) any promotion, sponsoring, contribution to, command, aid, incitement, encouragement, attempt, threat, conspiracy, organizing, or

procurement of any person, with the intent to commit any act referred to in paragraph (a) (i) to (iii).

Africa has not been immune from terrorism, battling with it in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel region, large countries like Nigeria and elsewhere. Terrorism has often taken on a transnational nature where groups operate in multiple countries or include recruits from different nationalities. However, as the heatmaps show, the subject is not thoroughly explored in the reports, even in those countries that face the threat. Only the Algeria CRR explores terrorism – a major source of conflict since 1992. Even in that report, though, the focus is on political and legal mechanisms to deal with acts of terrorism without much consideration of the underlying causes leading to radicalisation, apart from a brief reference to youth unemployment.

In the Nigeria CRR there is no mention of Boko Haram, which was established in 2002 and has been active in Nigeria since 2009. Gaps such as this raise the question of whether Nigerian leaders and civil society took the threat seriously; if they refrained from mentioning the group out of fear of being perceived as sectarian; whether they realised that some grievances they did not want to deal with paved the way for radicalisation or whether there were other reasons why they chose not to address the issue.

Terrorism is briefly mentioned in the CRRs of Kenya and Tanzania, which are in a region that has experienced terrorist threats for many years (Tanzania CRR 2013, p 44), for example from the Somalia-based Al-Shabaab and from sympathetic groups within the countries' own borders. In the Ethiopia CRR (2011, p 70), a link is made between cross-border criminal activities and the potential terrorist threat they could pose. In this report the regional dimension of terrorism is also considered, where certain elements in Somalia pose terrorist threats to Ethiopia and Eritrea.

There is an implicit link between terrorism and the strengthening of state security apparatuses and control. In the Algeria CRR (2007, p 9), it is mentioned that 'special attention should be paid to complaints about the "media clampdown" and the excesses of certain elements of the security forces, who sometimes act contrary to the law or in flagrant violation of human rights'. Violations of human rights can either perpetuate a cycle of radicalisation or create new grievances that may, in turn, lead to new conflicts. In the Kenya CRR (2006, p 78), the same link is mentioned, where security forces are accused of human rights abuses.

Generally there is almost no mention of links between causes of radicalisation and terrorism. In the Nigeria CRR, the section dealing with the Niger Delta mentions that activities related to oil extraction and the damage they have caused to people's livelihoods, combined with widespread poverty, have created grievances which have caused conflict and, in some cases have led to the rise of terrorism. One of these cases is the emergence of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta group, although this is not explicitly mentioned.

Where terrorism is mentioned the focus is on anti-terrorism conventions and protocols, thus placing the focus on policy. This, however, does not provide any information about the terrorist threat itself, its reality and dynamics and the practical measures that can be taken to combat it. In considering terrorism in terms of policy, the reports mention the link between terrorist activities and their financing. For this reason many of the policies target terrorist financing in an attempt to eliminate one of the facilitators of terrorism. This focus on terrorist financing fits into the global concern with the issue and possibly explains why the focus is on that aspect rather than on terrorist activities and threats within African countries themselves.

CONCLUSION

There are different types of conflict in African states: political, identity, resource-based, civil unrest and terrorism, to name just a few. Because these conflicts continue to hamper democratisation and equitable development, nuanced understanding is imperative in order to address the problems adequately. Utilising the conflict types, this paper found that conflict discussion in the APRM reports is generally incomplete.

There is inconsistent coverage of conflict and some types, such as political and identity-based conflict, receive more attention than those such as civil unrest and terrorism, which are almost absent from the conversation.

Another feature of conflict that was conspicuous by its absence was regionalism. Many conflicts in Africa are of a regional or fluid nature and thus require a regional and adaptable lens to examine them comprehensively. Further investigation is needed to establish how the country reports could address this regional dimension, possibly through some added regional feature. The reports did, in some cases, warn of future conflicts, an example being the xenophobic attacks in South Africa. This suggests that the reports could serve as an early warning mechanism whereby certain warnings/scenarios mentioned in the reports could merit deeper investigation through the APRM's 'emergency review' to probe further and advise on suitable preventative measures.

Greater consideration of the reports' findings through the African Peace and Security Architecture could be beneficial in that it could inspire more informed responses to potential conflict triggers and developing situations. To guide a fuller discussion, the questionnaire should develop and directly refer to more comprehensive definitions or types of conflict. In addition, as the causes and consequences of conflict are far-reaching, perhaps there should be a more direct reference to conflict in the cross-cutting chapter too.

Although the newer questionnaire has improved the references to conflict, it is an evolving tool and there is still room for improvement. The APRM reports have great potential to provide valuable, multi-stakeholder insight into conflicts in Africa and, by promoting a fuller discussion, the reports would be able to provide for better understanding of the conflicts and facilitate improved approaches to addressing them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ENCOURAGE BROADER PARTICIPATION

There seems to be a focus on overly 'formalistic' and top-down approaches and mechanisms related to conflict and a consequent lack of more comprehensive recommendations that aim to increase participation and communication between the formal/legal institutions and the populace. This contradicts the idea that the APRM should be a participatory process, a disconnect that to some extent hampers adequately addressing the underlying causes of conflict.

Reference to the lack of participation and consequent tensions is made in some of the reports themselves: 'inputs and views of affected, local communities were ignored. This policy has caused some violent outbreaks in rural areas' (Tanzania CRR 2013, p 9). In view of the prevalence of informality in Africa, there should be engagement with 'informal' elements and structures in order to increase participation. In the new questionnaire there is mention of traditional authorities and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. This is a step towards increasing participation and promoting a more bottom-up approach.

CONSIDER FUTURE SCENARIOS

Perhaps the questionnaires could include a future scenario question, where they directly ask how current sources of tensions might play out and how they can be addressed. This would force forward thinking and could

encourage respondents and observers to make links between sources of conflict and conflict, and encourage preventative instead of reactive thinking.

MORE HOLISTIC CONSIDERATION OF CONFLICTS

There are inconsistencies within the reports in the reference to causes, facilitators and actors in conflict. For example, reference to the misuse or poor governance of resources and the contribution to conflict seems to be minimal, except where the cases are extremely well known and cannot be ignored, such as Sierra Leone and the use of diamonds to fund conflict.

ATTEMPT TO INCREASE CONSISTENCY IN REPORTS

The reports are inconsistent in terms of length and coverage of conflict. Some are quite lengthy, others much briefer, thus affecting the conversation on the topics covered, including conflict. The Rwanda CRR, for example, is under 200 pages, while the Nigeria CRR is over 500. It would be beneficial for there to be some more guidelines to standardise the depth of coverage of issues, so as to provide more comprehensive conversations.

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ANNEXURE A

Method of deriving ‘heatmap’ graphics from APRM Country Research Reports using word stemming and clustering

Grant Masterson and Rod Alence

Each APRM country review culminates in a book-length report. Given the way these reports are compiled, and their proven accuracy and reliability in identifying critical governance issues in APRM member states, they warrant further examination. However, the length and technical language of the reports is often cited as a major obstacle to broader levels of engagement with their content. To address this, the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) piloted a text-mining methodology to simplify and disaggregated specific issues from the reports in a manner which, hopefully, enhances their utility.

Text mining reduces the reports to ‘bags of words’, whose frequencies can be analysed statistically. The first step was to capture the text from the 16 reports electronically and to ‘clean’ it – by, for example, removing all punctuation and numbers and deleting page headers and footers. Next the text was summarised in a word-frequency matrix showing how often each word occurs in each chapter of each report. Using this full list of words, paper authors compiled a list of words usually associated with their specific paper topic. For example, in the paper on ‘Extractives and Mining’, words pertaining to mining, oil, and resource extraction were conceptually grouped together under these three umbrella terms. This allowed the paper authors to calculate the frequencies of these specific concepts within each chapter of each report. The frequencies, as raw word counts or as counts normalised per 10 000 words of text, provide rough indicators of the degree of emphasis on the paper’s key concepts.

The analysis is aided by the fact that all the APRM country reports have similar structures. All contain four core thematic chapters on key themes of the APRM: ‘democracy and political governance’, ‘economic governance

and management’, ‘corporate governance’ and ‘socio-economic development’. These core chapters are preceded by an introductory discussion of the APRM process and country background. In early reports the introductory material occupied a single chapter, but in later reports it spans two chapters. For ease of comparison, where it occupies two chapters the text is combined into a single document, called ‘introduction’ and treated as a single chapter. The core thematic chapters are followed by a concluding discussion of ‘cross-cutting issues’, findings, and recommendations. In early reports this concluding material occupied a single chapter, but in later reports it spans two chapters. Again, where it occupies two chapters these were combined into a single document, called ‘cross-cutting issues’ and treated as a single chapter. Each report also starts with an executive summary, which is treated as a chapter in its own right. All other front matter and appendices are excluded from the analysis.

Except for the first few reports published the word counts are reasonably consistent. The first two reports, on Ghana and Rwanda, are quite short, averaging only 36 000 words. The third, on Kenya, is 75 000 words. The average length of the other 13 reports is 99 000 words, with nine falling between 90 000 and 110 000 words, and the longest two being Mozambique (17 000 words) and Nigeria (114 000 words). The four thematic chapters account for nearly two-thirds of each report, averaging 65 000 words. Among these, ‘democracy and political governance’ is longest, averaging 21 000 words; the average in the other three – ‘economic governance’, ‘corporate governance’, and ‘socio-economic development’ – is slightly more than 14 000 words. The average number of words in the remaining chapters – ‘executive summary’, ‘introduction’, and ‘cross-cutting issues’ – is about 8 000 words.

The combined word count of all 16 reports (excluding front matter and appendices) is about 1 400 000 words. Three pages of typed, double-spaced text in a standard font equals about a thousand words. Using this as a rough approximation, the text analysed is roughly equivalent to 4 200 typed, double-spaced pages.

The final heatmaps illustrate the intensity of word occurrences by country and by chapter. The higher the frequency with which a word appears in a chapter, the darker that block will appear. Country chapters with dark red blocks are therefore those with the highest frequency of a word, while those with very pale yellow blocks have no or almost no references to that word. The use of the heatmaps themselves allows for a unique and otherwise unattainable perspective on the contents of the 16 APRM Country Reports analysed. It is possible to identify trends in the occurrences of key concept words in the reports and, due to the thematically arranged structure of the reports, this provides the reader with additional perspectives on the context in which these words are being referenced.

However, caution should be exercised in reading too much into the heatmaps themselves. The brief given to all the authors in this series of papers was to view the heatmaps as an indication of which APRM Country Reports, and specifically, which chapters, warranted further examination with respect to the theme of the paper. The heatmaps are useful insofar as they point a researcher in the direction of interesting trends as well as unexpected (or expected) anomalies and outliers in terms of the referencing of a word within the reports. It is not possible to deduce the content of the reports from the heatmaps, simply which sections of which reports warrant specific referencing when examining specific issues such as those in this Occasional Paper series.

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