

“Silencing African Guns” in the Age of Anthropocene : A Strategic Paradigm for the African Union

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Abstract

The African Union (AU) while commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 2013 made a Solemn Declaration to make the continent peaceful at the end of 2020 which came to pass without the goal being achieved. In addition to pre-existing conflicts, wars induced by human-created ecological crisis – Anthropogenic conflicts – have also begun. The objective of this paper is to attempt a retroactive analysis of this outcome regarding the theoretical distinction between negative and positive peace. Using a macro-level normative qualitative analysis of secondary data and informed by Pan-Africanism, this paper argues that the prospects for peace have eluded the continent primarily due to the predominance of the negative peace approach (a colonial legacy) which privileges armed confrontation rather than a positive peace strategy which upholds the constructive resolution of conflicts through negotiated joint communal initiatives. Africa is replete with centuries-old traditions of positive peace which are still practised in local communities. Given that the negative peace model has not proved its worth and cannot address the root causes of war triggered by ecological crisis, the AU through the APSA ought to leverage and amplify the existing positive peace regimes of the continent to achieve the goal of silencing African guns.

Keywords: Anthropocene, Africa, Negative Peace, Positive Peace.

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Introduction: AU's Agenda 2063 and the Imperative of Formalized Pacific Pan-Africanism

In 2013 African governments, under the aegis of the African Union (AU), rededicated themselves to the ideals of Pan-African unity and signed a Solemn Declaration to that effect. The event, which was to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), was expressed as a commitment *to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa, to make peace a reality..., and to rid the continent of wars... and not bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans*. The OAU's Assembly of Heads of State and Government set to achieve the said objective at the end of 2020 (African Union, n.d.). Consequently, Agenda 2063, a continent-wide social contract made up of 7 Aspirations and detailing a 50-year transformation vision from 2013 to 2063, was adopted by the AU and civil society actors in 2015. The 4th Aspiration: *A Peaceful and Secure Africa*, popularly known as *Silencing the Guns*, stated that...

[M]echanisms for peaceful prevention and resolution of conflicts will be functional at all levels. As a first step, dialogue-centred conflict prevention and resolution will be actively promoted in such a way that by 2020 all guns will be silent. A culture of peace and tolerance shall be nurtured in Africa's children and youth through peace education. Africa will be a peaceful and secure continent, with harmony among communities starting at the grassroots level. The management of our diversity will be a source of wealth, harmony and social and economic transformation rather than a source of conflict. (African Union, n.d.)

Aspiration 4 was then operationalized through initiatives centred on the *African Peace and Security Architecture* (APSA) made up of the *Panel of the Wise*, a *Continental Early Warning System* (CEWS), the *African Standby Force* (ASF) and the *Peace Fund*. Other sub-institutions such as a *Military Staff Committee*, *Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution* (Ba & Cold-Ravnkilde, 2021) external

partnerships with, for example, the EU (Mabera, 2020) and the United States (Williams, 2011) were set up.

Be that as it may, the formal end of Aspiration 4's time run in 2020 did not coincide with a continent at peace with itself as anticipated. Just as was the case at the beginning of Agenda 2063, Africa is still home to the world's most fragile states (Fragile States Index, 2021) and with certain regions trapped in (intractable) war (Palik, Rustad, & Methi, 2020). The underlining factors for such disturbances include unresolved pre-colonial ethnic group differences (Zezeza, 2008; Nasong'o, 2015; Wig, 2016) and the conflict inducing structure of the African state (Zolberg, 1968; Raleigh, 2014). In recent times anthropogenic disruptions (environmental damage caused by human activities) have also been cited as important triggers of war on the continent. Indeed, several instances of violence are said to result from the effects of environmental damage interlocking with and sometimes superseding the underlying causes of armed confrontations (Kalmoy, 2019; Crawford, 2015)(Kalmoy, 2019; Hendrix & Salehyan, 2012; Mbiyozo & Maunganidze, 2021; Yanda & Bronkhorst, 2011; Crawford, 2015).

A close reading of the AU's 2014 Climate Change Strategy (2020-2030) reveals an implied awareness of the continent's susceptibility to the dangers posed by anthropogenically induced ecological stress. It notes that the continent is the 'most vulnerable' and 'least prepared' continent to manage the negative effects of climate change and related scourges. Consequently, the prospects of an African renaissance by way of developmental progress are imperilled (African Union, 2014, p. 12). Furthermore, in a communique issued by the APSA's PSC in 2021, the link between climate change and violence was affirmed. It recognized the need for the AU to more effectively mitigate the negative effects of climate change at both, national, regional and continental levels, and the imperative of a continental framework for a proactive response to the security threats posed by climate change-related phenomena (African Union, 2021).

The dawn of the AU signalled the intention of the continent's statesmen to chart a new path to enhance the human conditions of existence.

Nevertheless, and as is true with any human endeavour, how *intent* is conceptualized or how the ideational basis of aspirations is framed ultimately determines the pace and direction of progress, learning and re-evaluation. Whether or not *the will* to proceed on any given positive tangent evolution will occur is a function of the structure of concepts that drive and shape the character of interventions at any point in time (Potucek & Vass, 2019). This tendency also determines whether or not the credible commitment of critical constituents can be mobilized in support of public aspirations. A cursory assessment of efforts to achieve peace on the continent seems to be predominantly defined by the *negative* conception of peace: the cessation of violence. Negative peace is in contrast to *a positive peace* which includes and goes beyond the cessation of violence to embrace an open-ended quest to restore harmony in social transactions and communal initiatives such as a collective defence of the commons (Galston, 2013). As such, positive peace provides the ideational basis for interdependence and civility not only in human relationships but also between humans and natural systems and as such defines the logic which governs political relationships (Plater, 1996).

Unlike strained human relationships (e.g., war) caused by ideological differences or grievance through offence which may be resolved through confrontation, anthropogenic causes of unsettled human relationships cannot be addressed as such. Confrontation works only when rival actors are either vanquished or when the risk of attrition leads to a truce. Either way, peace achieved through confrontation lasts until dissatisfied actors (re)gain power to challenge the status quo (Weisiger, 2014; Luttwak, 2001; Parrish, 2017). The use of confrontation to resolve violent conflict rooted in anthropogenic factors is counterproductive in the long run even for actors who emerge victorious. This is because such an outcome does not tackle the root causes of violence in the first place; military confrontation may address a symptom, but not necessarily the underlying causes of violence. Thus, negative peace may be effective in the short to medium term but blunt in the long run.

The AU's experience with Aspiration 4 ought to be assessed in the light of the foregoing. This paper uses a macro-level, normative,

historiographical analysis to propose that the AU adopt the tenets of positive peace as its standard paradigm of conflict resolution. This is not to suggest that the AU is unaware of the imperative of this need. There is ample evidence to prove that the contrary is true. See (ACCORD, 2014, p. 16;26). What seems to be lacking is a concrete strategy which may guide a shift from negative to positive peace. This is the basis of the proposal made in this paper. The paper is structured as follows: the next section focuses on the colonial roots of the prominence of negative peace in Africa. This is followed by a sketch of the anthropogenic undercurrents of structural violence in Africa; an assessment of negative peace approaches to conflict resolution on the continent; an outline of the theory of positive peace as propounded by Galtung; a sampling of African positive peace experiments; discussions on the prospects for African positive peace systems; and proposals for an institutional redesign of the APSA instead of a conclusion.

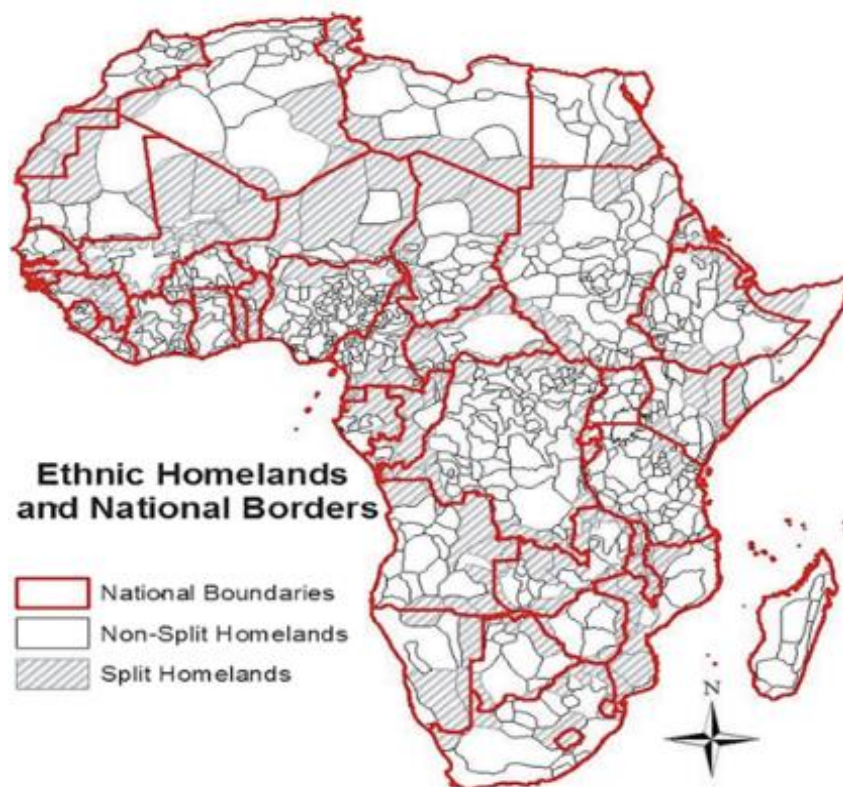
A Note on Methodology and Method

This paper is based on a macro level normative descriptive analysis of historical data from secondary sources. Since it is based on a positive inclination towards the tenets of Pan-Africanism, it has a subjective taint and is informed by a personal conviction in harmonious human relation management regimes based on communal solidarity and the tolerance of diversity. It is also positively aligned to the Pan-African ideological orientation of the AU (Pardos, 2016). The historical data is sourced from reports, journal articles as well as published and unpublished resources. The theoretical foundation which informs the burden of this paper is primarily inspired by the humanitarian thinking of Galtung and *African sagacity* as propounded by Odera Oruka and Wiredu (Oruka, 1983; Wiredu, 1998). The theoretical methodology of this paper is thus in sync with the normative orientation of the AU in general and Agenda 2063 in particular. Being so, the theoretical contours of this piece provide a framework for a diffused critique of coercive methods as a means to manage conflict in African human systems.

The APSA's Challenge: The Colonial Legacy of Negative Peace

The European colonialism in Africa institutionalized negative peace. Given that the enterprise sought to curtail African rebellion or resistance to imperial domination, its viability was contingent upon the setting up of constraints to make Africans compliant. As noted by Cooper (2002, p. 157) and others (Schafer & Black, 2003; McQuade, 2019) the emergent regime was based on systems of governance that restricted the full expression of the political and economic agency of African people by orienting institutions towards the sole purpose of natural resource extraction. This was the primary reason why the Berlin Conference of 1884/85, the gathering which formalized the scramble for and partition of Africa, was convened (Porter, 2008). Its participants, among others, agreed to the terms of the *General Act* and its sub-principle of *effective occupation* which required that European governments can only lay sovereign claim to African territories only if they show proof of *effective occupation* by way of treaties concluded with traditional rulers and garrisons to maintain local stability (Craven, 2015, pp. 36-42). The agreements of the conference were enforced through bilateral and multilateral treaties among European governments, between European and African traditional rulers (Touval, 1966; van der Linden, 2016) as well as by military conquest (Moyd, 2014). The subsequent structures that were set up had traditional rulers, stripped of real power, serving as tax revenue collectors and labour recruiters of colonial governments under the scheme of indirect rule (Naseemullah & Staniland, 2016). Garrisons, to maintain order, were also manned by European officers and African rank and file (Moyd, 2014). The resulting occupation of the continent which, by and large, had been completed by 1900 defined the current boundaries of African states and paved the way for the setting up of economic enclaves externally linked bilaterally to European economies (Frankema, 2015).

The political system of the various colonial regimes in the spatial sense was defined by European spaces (red boundaries) arbitrarily overlaying and cutting across the boundaries of African ethnic polities /nations (in grey and white) (fig. 1, below).

Figure1: Cross-cutting state and national boundaries in Africa

Source: (Nunn & Wantchekon, 2011, p. 6)

This structure, intact at the time of independence, led to a structural crisis of a Gramscian kind (Davis & Lynch, 2018): even though the various colonial systems were fading into history, they were not being substituted with authentic African orders; the post-colonial institutions that were set up were neither European nor African in essence. This led to a political vacuum, generalized crisis and imminent collapse which initially manifested in the form of personalized governments, democratic reversals and *coup d'états* (First, 1970; Roessler, 2011). Further, even though in a cartographic sense, the states were legally not in doubt, they were internally contested by ethnic groups. As noted by Ekeh (Ekeh, 1975), colonialism led to the creation of two African publics instead of one: a *primordial public* (ethnic groups) and a *public realm generated by the colonial system* (the State). These two publics, in contact but not in harmony, were governed by different

and often contradictory ideologies which generated mutual extremism and annihilation. It is this tendency that makes Davidson refer to the dynamics between nations and the state in Africa as a curse of the continent (Davidson, 1993).

Granted that there was indeed a curse, Africa's first generation governments, took active steps to, as it were, exorcise it by : first, maintaining the colonial agenda of terminated ethnic group sovereignty; second taking measures to restrict (albeit unsuccessfully) the political agency and cultural autonomy of such groups (Ake, 1990; Ayittey, 2006; Niang, 2019). Laakso and Olukoshi, note that a...

[A] key element of the nation-building project was the assumption that the diversity of ethnic identities was inherently negative and obstructive and that it was a requirement of successful nation-building that the different identities be eradicated, submerged under or subordinated to the identity of the group(s) that dominated state power. (Laakso & Olukoshi, 1996, p. 13)

This initiative further deepened animosity in the form of inter-ethnic feuds, irredentist agitations, uncivil wars (Etefa, 2019; Fearon & Laitin, 2000), instrumental association or active disengagement (Mampilly, 2003; Animashaun, 2009). As a result of these centrifugal tendencies, African states are variously described as quasi, collapsed or lame leviathans (Christopher, 1997; Callaghy, 1987). These designations account for Africa's status as the most fragile and riskiest region in the world (The Fund for Peace, 2021).

The standard approach historically adopted to contain instability on the continent arising from its idiosyncrasies of state formation as sketched, is strategically similar to that of the colonial era. Such initiatives are mostly by way of armed confrontation (de Coning, 2017), counter-insurgency operations (Joseph, 2012) or *peace operations/nation-building* (Dobbins, et al., 2019) all of which privilege negative peace and by that count as a colonial legacy. Assessors of African initiatives in the quest for peace with the colonial model note that conflicts on

the continent are impervious to the standard approaches and hence pronounce a verdict of mixed but mostly suboptimal results (Zartman, 2000, pp. 2-3; de Guttery, 2014; de Coning, 2017; Cawthra, 2016; Brosig, 2014). The APSA's mandate informed as it were by the colonial past of the continent requires that it takes into consideration the legacy of negative peace to engineer a befitting response to tackle the root causes of disharmony on the continent. The episodes of anthropogenic structural violence in Africa, the focus of the next section, and the legacy of negative peace constitute a challenge to the APSA given the backdrop of the cited inefficient attempts to bring about peace on the continent as intensioned by goal 4 of Agenda 2063.

Containing Structural Violence in the Age of Anthropocene: Negative Peace vs. Positive Peace Regimes in Africa

Anthropocene is derived from two Greek words for human “anthropo” and new “cene” (Pavid, n.d.). It is used to informally describe the current age, the *Human Epoch*, defined by humanity having acquired the capacity to (permanently) transform the Earth for the first time in history (Bonneuil & Fressoz, 2016; Anthropocene Institute, 2021). The markers of the age of Anthropocene include carbon gas emissions from the use of fossil fuel, built environments on a mega-scale (urbanization), disruption of natural ecological cycles (e.g., rainfall patterns), global warming, habitat loss (deforestation), extinction (depletion of fish stocks) and ecological dead-zones from soil erosion (The Subcommittee on Quaternary Stratigraphy (SQS), 2019). The cited markers of the Anthropocene generate ecologically rooted structural violence and hence directly threaten lives and livelihood support systems. Structural violence denotes conditions that prevent people from meeting the basic needs of life (Galtung, 1969). For example, drought or flooding is structurally violent because it may lead to generalized food insecurity. Structural violence is different from classic violence (i.e., behavioural violence). While the latter manifests as a crude physical attack initiated by one actor against another to kill, structural violence, in its purest form, has no direct concrete actors. It is long term, has no clear origins and no specific endpoints in time.

The cited distinction between structural and behavioural violence is not to suggest that the two categories are exclusive. Rather, they are interdependent: structural violence tends to trigger armed conflict or culturally sanctioned violence. This tendency develops because structural violence generates unequal/restricted access to life and livelihood supporting ecosystem services, unevenly disempowers and marginalizes groups (Dalby, 2007; Ohlsson, 2020). In this respect, structural violence also triggers radicalization and exclusive group mobilization for survival (Galtung, 1964; Loadenthal, 2019).

The evidence adduced by the AU and other observers points to the fact that disrupted ecosystem services due to the impact and stress-induced in the Age of Anthropocene have led to structural violence and armed conflicts in Africa (International Crisis Group, 2021). Even though a robust causative link is yet to be established, there is a consensus that human-induced pressures constitute the primary *risk multiplier*, *fragility amplifier* or *conflict catalyst* of war in Africa (Hoag & Svenning, 2017; Mbiyozo & Maunganidze, 2021; Burke, Miguel, Satyanath, Dykema, & Lobell, 2009; Onuoha, 2008; Hendrix & Salehyan, 2012). The ecological disruptions said to have amplified group vulnerability to crisis and intolerance is attributed to the acute effects of global warming on the continent (Serdeczny, et al., 2016; Cilliers, 2018: pp. 29-30). These observations reflect the thinking of Schwartz and Randall to the effect that...

[V]iolence and disruption stemming from the stresses created by abrupt changes in the climate pose a different type of threat to national security than we are accustomed to today. A military confrontation may be triggered by a desperate need for natural resources such as energy, food, and water rather than conflicts over ideology, religion, or national honour. The shifting motivation for confrontation would alter which countries are most vulnerable and the existing warning signs for security threats (Schwartz & Randall, 2004).

Further, Africans are aware of the dangers posed by the markers of the Age of Anthropocene to their survival. An *Afrobarometer* study reported the African respondents sharing testimonies of negative daily lived experiences and the anticipation of a gloomy future emanating from human-induced disruptions in nature (Selormey, Dome, Osse, & Logan, 2019).

It is worthy of note that even though there is no consensus as to the precise point in time at which the Anthropogenic age began, there is ample reason to date it as coinciding with the inception of the first industrial revolution in Europe which led to the scramble for and partition of the continent (Saldanha, 2020; Satgar, 2018) and the first-ever mega-scale extraction of national resources to feed the demands of large scale production processes in Europe; a tendency which also led to the disruption of life and livelihood ecosystem services on a similar scale (McQuade, 2019; Niang, 2019; Wood, 2015). Within the context of the *Longue durée*, colonialism in Africa, therefore, counts as a marker of the Anthropocene and as such characterized by the simultaneous initiation of structural and behavioural violence (Davies, 2018).

The conflict in the Darfur Region of Sudan, in a state of emergency since 2003, has several designations. For example, it is referred to as the first genocide of the twenty-first century as well as ethnic cleansing. However, within the context of this paper, its description as the world's first climate change-induced war is relevant (Driessen, 2021; Welzer, 2012, pp. 109-110; Gof, 2007; Mazo, 2009). The several groups who inhabit the region, such as the *Fur*, *Masalit* and *Zaghawa* (the largest) have a long history of coexistence in autonomous but interdependent *dars* (meaning homelands in Arabic, hence Darfur, land of the Furs). The war which broke out in 2003 matured in the course of a thirty-year period during which adverse climatic changes upset the balance of harmony between sedentary and nomadic groups with access to water, arable land and migration routes becoming strategically contested and fixed within inter-group rival systems (Assal, 2009). Within the context of the ensuing (in) security dilemmas, militant and radicalized identity groups emerged (Christian, 2013; Hassan H. A., 2010). For example, the *Fur* and *Zaghawa*

contending against a motley of nomads constituting the *Janjawīd*² assisted by the Sudanese Government (International Crisis Group, 2015).

The Darfur crisis is the epicentre of a zone of instability embedded with antagonistic herders and farmers in the Sahel, a region classed as having the world's fastest rate of temperature increases (Tubiana & Gramizzi, 2017; Berg, 2008; Cooke & Sanderson, 2016; UNOWAS, 2019; United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, n.d.; Heinrigs, 2010). To the west of Sudan, for example, the shrinking Lake Chad is said to be enhancing the capacity of insurgent groups such as *Boko Haram* to entrench and mobilize (Skah & Lyammouri, 2020; Varin, 2020; Angerbrandt, 2017). To the east, there is the threat of an imminent water course war between Ethiopia and Egypt as well as simmering tension between the two states and Sudan (Mersie, 2020; Maru, 2020; International Crisis Group, 2020; Dahir, 2020). The conflict is over Addis Ababa's construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and the fear of its implications for the Nile water distribution system. The Nile River (flowing through Egypt) is made up of the Blue Nile (originating from Lake Tana in Ethiopia and dammed by the GERD) which joins the White Nile in Khartoum, Sudan. While Egypt sees the GERD as a threat to its political and economic fortunes (Hassan & Rasheedy, 2007), Sudan is concerned that an irrigation system connected with its *Roseires Dam* will be negatively affected (Egypt Today, 2020).

To the extent that the GERD is at the centre of the crisis between the countries in question, it is tangential to their main concerns. To be sure, it has been established that all three countries stand to benefit from the GERD project, hence it can ordinarily be asserted that there is a negligible basis for the worries being expressed (Wheeler, Jeuland, Hall, Zagona, & Whittington, 2020; Tesfa, 2013). Having said this, the anxiety of the governments in question has a lot to do with the anticipated adverse effects of global warming in the region and the likelihood that the River Nile will shrink (El-Geressi, 2020; Ministry

2 *Janjawīd* is derived from two Arabic terms, *Jaan* means *evil*, and *weed* means horse. It, therefore, translates as *the evil horsemen*. See (Flint, 2009)

of Foreign Affairs: Netherlands, 2019; Oestigaard, 2012). Be that as it may, the GERD crisis is the most advanced case of several *heat-aggression* conflicts or *water war* flashpoints dotted across the continent (Hussona, 2021; Ravnborg, 2004: pp. 13-14).

As noted in a preceding section, the standard response to these complex systems of violence is premised on negative peace operationalized through armed confrontation with external encouragement. Cases in point, concerning the Chadian Crisis, are the *Multinational Joint Task Force* (International Crisis Group, 2020), *Operation Barkhane* under the auspices of France (Griffin, 2016) and the *Group of Five for the Sahel* (G5) (UN Security Council, 2021). Again, as previously noted, the dividends from these initiatives have been noted to be suboptimal (Schmauder, Soto-Mayor, & Goxho, 2020; Powell N. K., 2016). In addition, as evidenced by militant groups pledging oaths of allegiance to foreign patrons (Maszka, 2017), the strategy of armed confrontation has shifted the axis of contention to external political settings and actors and by that transformed the potential terms for peace into that of the external patrons.

The narrative of experiences as sketched, however, are not to be taken as an accurate sample of the realities at hand on the continent. Indeed, there are noteworthy ongoing unorthodox civil society initiatives in the quest for positive peace being rolled out by protagonists and victims alike. Unlike the standard negative peace approach, the said initiatives have resulted in a cessation of violence and the reconstruction of communal bonds of solidarity even though with some reversals. A region-level case in point is the *Great Green Wall* initiative of the Sahel (AGGW) under the auspices of the AU and which is billed to become the earth's most extensive human-made ecosystem (O'Connor & Ford, 2014). Spanning 7748.991 kilometres across eleven countries, from the western to eastern margins of the continent, the AGGW is an experiment based on group regeneration and harmony through joint efforts to confront a common threat to life and livelihoods. There are also isolated initiatives being undertaken within the space of the AGGW using a similar positive peace eco-governance paradigm

(Maclean, 2018). For example, a witness to a local community initiative to construct weirs in El Fasher (Northern Darfur) had this to say:

Before, just 150 farmers could make a living here: now, 4,000 work the land...Crucially, the weirs are not just promising a more bountiful future, but a more peaceful one. Communities of farmers and nomadic camel herders, deadly enemies during the war, are coming together to plan and build them. This has often meant meeting face to face for the first time since the conflict began in 2003, but recrimination has turned into cooperation over shared water and even resulted in wedding invitations (Carrington, 2019).

The positive peace dividend of the El Fasher case is also being replicated in similar initiatives across the continent (Galvin, Beeton, & Luizza, 2018; Wily, 2002) through the communal *Six Ss* (*Se Servir de la Saison Seche en Savanne et au Sahel*) initiative in places such as Burkina Faso, Senegal and Togo through joint community efforts to construct small-scale irrigation systems, low tech erosion management, orchards, and the construction of communal grain storage facilities (CCAFS, n.d.).

Further, in a trend that seems to be gradually gaining traction (Powell J., 2015; Mednick, 2021; Hinshaw & Parkinson, 2018; International Crisis Group, 2019; Bagayoko, 2021; Thurston, 2018) a series of positive peace negotiations, mostly discreet, have taken place between jihadists, governments and communities across the Sahel region toward the re-establishment of communal harmony. As reported about one such initiative in Mali between the Dogon (farmers) and Fulani (herders) in Koro, a remote area said to be dangerous (Al Jazeera, 2021) ...

[T]he Dogon villagers organized to negotiate with the jihadist leaders. To convince the jihadists..., the community representatives invoked the historical links and blood pacts between the Dogon and Fulani communities. Finally, the jihadists implemented

a peace agreement that has ended intercommunal violence and to which, so far, both Fulani and Dogon parties have adhered. (Ba & Cold-Ravnkilde, 2021)

On the 12th, 22nd and 24th of January 2021 three peace agreements between the Fulani and Dogon were signed with the following terms (Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2021):

- Encouraging community leaders to commit to peace by pardoning all past actions and by disseminating messages of peace and cohesion;
- Facilitating the free circulation of people and their goods across all the communes;
- Encouraging the establishment of measures of mutual trust between the communities (visits, restitution of livestock, reporting theft, etc.);
- Accompanying and facilitating the return of all displaced people;
- Encouraging and facilitating the frequenting of the villages and markets by all the communities;
- Avoiding the circulation of weapons in the villages and towns;
- Opposing theft of livestock, regardless of the owner, and facilitating the search for stolen animals and goods so that they can be returned to their owners;
- Facilitating the use of natural resources and land by all communities (fields, pastures, access corridors, cottages, etc.);
- Encouraging the return of basic social services
- Respecting the laws, customs, and places of worship of the different communities;
- Respecting the moral authority of traditional and religious authorities, who, before the crisis, ensured social cohesion and alleviated social tensions.

This feat to (re)establish a culture of harmony and peace, is not unique in the history of conflict resolution in the region and Mali for that matter (Pezard & Shurkin, 2015). For example, on the 27th of March, 1996, over three thousand small arms were set alight in a bonfire symbolically designated as the *Flame of Peace*. The event was to mark the end of a six-year (1990–96) Tuareg insurgency against the Malian government. It has been noted that this peace settlement became possible primarily through the use of pre-colonial African mediation practices under the auspices of traditional authorities (Schraeder, 2011: pp. 178-179). The efficacy of such conflict resolution regimes has been observed elsewhere on the continent (Shire, 2021; Kariuki, 2018; Ludovic, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2015: p. 7).

These possibilities in the shadow of the dominant paradigm of negative peace indicate the viability of the positive peace approach to harmony on the continent and as such is a viable tactical option worthy of consideration in the long run. Indeed, it seems deep-seated authentic African philosophies and institutions which have survived over centuries encode and sketch clear paths by which comprehensive positive peace systems can be instituted and nourished over time. A classic case in point is the 13th-century oral *Manden Oath* which still defines the values and identity of the Malinke people of Mali and is transmitted from father to son as well as commemorated in festivals presided over by traditional rulers. Its edicts, among others, prescribe social peace in diversity, instruct the sacredness of human life, lifelong education, security, ban slave raids, uphold freedom of expression and protection of the environment (UNESCO, n.d.; Diagne, 2008).

An option which transcends national identity is the value of religion as a path to communal regeneration in a context of adverse ecological changes with the potential to induce structural violence. All the dominant religions in Africa: Islam (Koehrsen, 2020), Christianity (Kearns, 2003) and Animism (Gumo, Gisege, Raballah, & Collins Ouma, 2012) encode teachings on ecological integrity.

The cases cited so far have implications for the potential for peace over the course of Agenda 2063. The record of the negative peace paradigm having failed to achieve Aspiration 4 of Agenda 2063 instructs the need

for a new approach. This is much more so when uncivil war induced by structural violence does not lend itself to easy resolution when conventional approaches are used. This said, the viability of the positive peace approach as evidenced by the harmonious political settlements (even if momentary) mentioned shows that there is an inherent value in authentic African systems that can be creatively leveraged to bring about peace on the continent. It is in this respect that Zartman's observation is relevant. He notes that ...

Traditional societies in Africa as elsewhere are reputed to hold secrets of peace making locked in ways formed from centuries of custom before the disruption of colonization. In places that modernization has passed by, these traditions are often claimed to be still in use, keeping the heart of society in harmony while imported overlays such as states and currencies are collapsing in conflict around them... some of Africa's reputation in conflict management has historic and even contemporary footnotes and there are also other, less well-known claims to a non-Western approach to conflict management. A clearer picture is needed (Zartman, 2000: p. 1)

The APSA's *Panel of the Wise* is best placed to frame the clear picture Zartman deems necessary. The next section is a proposal on how this can be done.

A Proposal in Lieu of a Conclusion: The APSA and *African Solutions to African Problems* in the Age of Anthropocene-The Option of Pacific Pan-Africanism

The need for *African solutions to African problems* is implied in Zartman's advice. This however is not to suggest the exclusion of useful external principles but rather the need for a well-calibrated merger of appropriate principles. The first step in this direction will require an institutional re-engineering of the APSA, in particular, its *Panel of the Wise* to adopt processes that will formally bring on board primordial

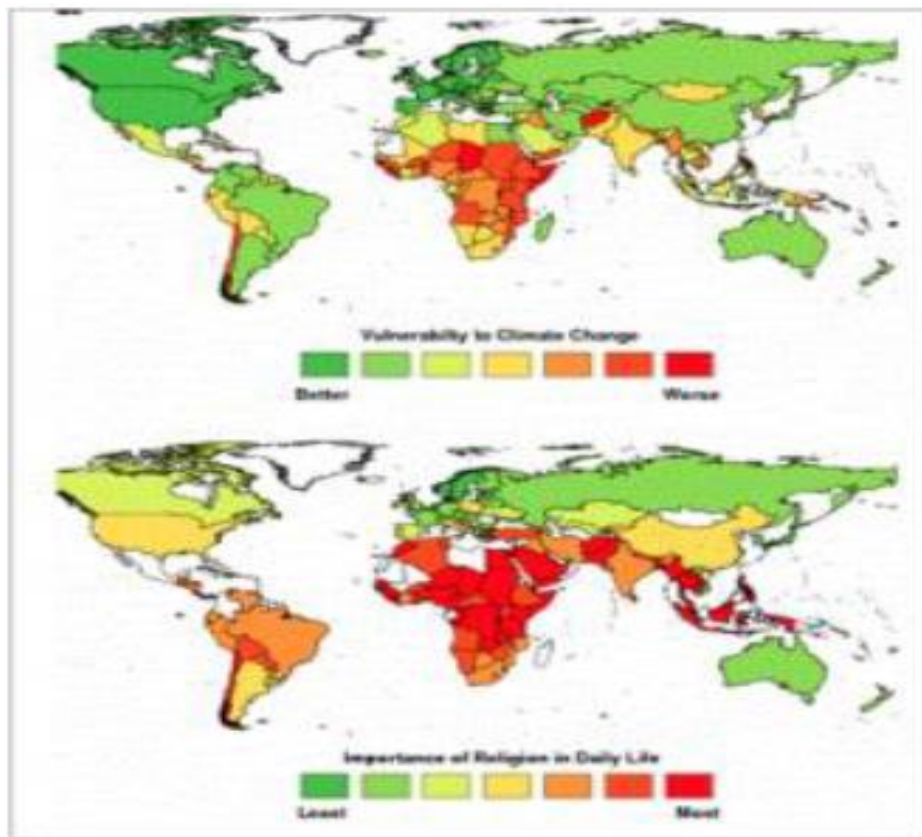
African leaders and institutional representatives. Given that the said actors and systems are the custodians of ancient practices and customs of peace-making and administration on the continent, such an option will be authentically African. This initiative stands a good chance of, for example, mainstreaming the ancient moral authority of *Gada* traditional system of governance of the Oromo people in Ethiopia (UNESCO, n.d.) or that of the *Sarkīs* (Emirs) of Northern Nigeria into the APSA's processes.

An option that transcends national identity and which can also be leveraged by the Panel of the Wise is the value of religion as a path to communal regeneration in a context of adverse ecological changes with the potential to induce structural violence (Appiah-Thompson, 2020). All the dominant religions in Africa: Islam (Koehrsen, 2020), Christianity (Kearns, 2003) and Animism (Gumo, Gisege, Raballah, & Collins Ouma, 2012) encode teachings on ecological integrity. The leaders of religious communities can be mobilized in the quest for positive peace through the communal management of structural violent tendencies emanating from ecological stress. The promise of religion as a strategy to mobilize Africans in harmony in the quest for common courses is revealed in a study conducted by the PEW Research Centre. It is noted that...

Christianity and Islam also coexist with each other. Many Christians and Muslims in sub-Saharan Africa describe members of the other faith as tolerant and honest. In most countries, relatively few see evidence of widespread anti-Muslim or anti-Christian hostility, and on the whole, they give their governments high marks for treating both religious groups fairly (Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, 2010, p. 1)

Given that the spatial distribution of religious communities in Africa is coterminous with the incidence of climate change-induced vulnerability (see figure 2, below), such communities can be mobilized to craft common initiatives.

Figure 2: Pattern overlap: Vulnerability to climate change and daily importance of religion in Africa



Legend: From top

Vulnerability to climate change.



Importance of religion in daily life.



Source: *Murphy, Tembo, Phiri, Yerokun, & Grummel, 2015: p. 103*

All said, the primordial polities and religious communities of the continent straddle states, therefore, any attempt to make them part of the *Panel of the Wise* will be truly a continental initiative and unifying in its effect. This will go a long way to enhance the APSA's proactive early warning capabilities and reaction since any threat of violence can be known beforehand from traditional authorities who are in close contact with micro-level political actors and realities. The modalities of any initiative of the *Panel of the Wise* in this respect ought to be worked out in close conjunction with the primordial authorities and religious leaders at the very beginning and branded as the quest for a continental-wide *Pacific Pan-African* paradigm. The continuous negotiation and search for the parameters of such a paradigm spearheaded by local traditional authorities and religious leaders in and of itself can lead to a deep-rooted culture of positive peace and tranquillity in Africa.

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