

Revisiting Military Spending—Security Nexus in Africa

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The military spending in Africa is not only high but it is persistent, unconstrained, and even defies the COVID-19 fiscal challenges. With militaries including intelligence been projected as the “guarantors” of national security, this phenomenon has been perpetuated by the assumption that more military spending will improve security conditions. This article revisits this assumption by showing the traditional state-centric military security threats that justify such high spending are increasingly been overtaken by the growing non-military security threats that have become the major national security concerns. Based on the available data on security, safety, and military spending in Africa, it is shown in this article the presence of inverse relationship between high military spending and security. The main driver of such spending is the backroom resource-driven defense policies that are grounded on the military-centric definition of strategy, which advocates military solutions and more resources to military as panacea for securing survival of state and safety of its citizens. Such military solutions might be detrimental to state and human security. The urgent war to be fought today in Africa is not about existential threat of state and its territorial integrity but it is a war against a web of complex threats to the lives and livelihoods of African citizens. One possible way of constraining the high military spending in Africa is to formulate new defense policies that are inclusive, transparent, people-centered, and guided by inclusive people-centered national security strategies and core budgetary principles.

Keywords: Africa, security, threats, military, defense, budget, strategies

Introduction

The military spending has become a global concern as it is persistently increasing and diverting the much-needed scarce resource away from investment in achieving the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. A reallocation of small portion of the world military expenditure towards investment in these goals would immensely make it possible to realize some of these key goals. Despite the call by the United Nations and the Global Campaign on Military Spending to reduce military spending and to redirect such resources to investment in civilian spending, the military spending is defiantly rising and unconstrained. In Africa the rise in military spending is pronounced and even higher than the global rise and defies the COVID-19 fiscal challenges as well.

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This raises some fundamental questions of whether such spending improves security, what drives such spending, and what to be done to better manage such spending and constrain it. In an attempt to contribute to answering these questions, this paper starts first by assessing the changing security threats facing Africa as well as the shift in perceiving security as state/military-centered to people-centered. The pervasive phenomenon of high military spending in Africa is analyzed as well as its defiance of the COVID-19 fiscal challenges. Then the link between military spending and security is assessed as well as its impact on economic growth and governance. Some of the drivers of this unconstrained military spending are briefly presented and possible way for constraining and better management of such spending is discussed as a conclusion and way forward.

The Growing Non-military Security Threats in Africa

Africa faces a seemingly ever-increasing and changing range of security threats. While the security landscape is dynamic and ever-changing by its very nature, the context in which the threats occur exhibits several common features. There is a decline in interstate conflict and an increase in intrastate conflicts including civil wars with some states in Africa becoming increasingly the source of insecurity of their citizens (Palik, Rustad, & Methi, 2020, p. 7). Specifically, intrastate conflicts remain the major source of insecurity with Africa having the largest number of rising one-sided violence in relation to other regions. With reference to one-sided violence, terrorist attacks have surged considerably in Africa, and have become not only one of the main drivers of instability but also Africa's greatest security threats (Africa Center, 2022a). In addition, there is rapid increase in state-based violence, and one-sided violence (Palik et al., 2020) while non-state violence declines but remains one of the most treacherous security threats.

Besides the rising violent conflicts, the non-violent and violent riots in Africa have drastically increased by twelvefold since 2001, which is largely attributed to substantial increase in awareness, access to internet and social media (Cilliers, 2018). Also, the security landscape of Africa has been increasingly susceptible to new forms of complex, multifaceted transnational organized crime included but not limited to cyber, maritime, terrorism, violent extremism, pandemics, human and arms trafficking, and other crimes related to trade that have been committed by a web of national, regional, and international criminal actors and networks. The prevalence and trend of the transnational organized crime have been increasing with Africa having the second highest level of criminality globally (ENACT, 2021).

These new security threats have been exacerbated by imminent changes in a number of megatrends including climate change, urbanization, demographic changes, and information technology. In particular, the rapid rising of temperatures and the global warming coupled with unsustainable human activity (Africa Center, 2022b) are not only threatening human security and weakening the resilience of African population but have exacerbated their susceptibility to a web and interconnected non-military security threats. Linked to demographic change is the rapid population growth, particularly the large youth cohorts that can pose threat to national security if they are unemployed. In the Sahel region, one of the fastest growing population in Africa, a study shows a positive correlation between youth bulges and the risk of political violence with high unemployment, economic exclusion, longstanding governance deficit, limited access to resources and marriage as the structural reasons for making African countries susceptible to violent conflict and terrorism (Sakor, 2020).

The governance deficit has been identified as the core underlying security threat and instability in the African countries to address these new security challenges with states becoming increasingly autocratic and a

source of insecurity. There is cumulative empirical evidence that shows democracy as the best path to security, as strong democracies are associated with low level of conflict violence and much lower human insecurity (Bayeh, 2014). In particular, there is inverse relationship between patronage autocracies and human security, while bureaucratic democracies are strongly linked with high levels of human security (Piccone, 2017). The growing governance deficit in Africa is reflected in the significant decline of the number of democracies and surge in the number of autocracies and intermediate regimes with autocracies and democracies associated respectively with high risk and low risk of political instability (Siegle, 2019).

This changing security landscape in Africa underscores that the traditional military security threats that are related to the existential of state and territorial integrity are being overtaken by new types of non-military security threats that make citizens rather than state to become the core priority for delivering security and safety. This makes traditional security policies that focus on state security and buildup of militaries inapt to address the new and future security threats that are becoming increasing internal, multifaceted, intertwined, non-military, transnational and evolving with rapid changes in megatrends.

Militarized Security to Human Security

Besides the changing security threats facing African states, the concept of security that guides the way resources are allocated to the armed forces has changed. The traditional state-centric conception of security that was advanced by the colonial regimes and accentuated and becoming increasingly regime-centric during the post-independent Africa was based on the premise that the security of states rather than that of people was paramount (Knudsen, 2012). This state-centered security paradigm calls for the building and strengthening the militaries and their capability to protect state sovereignty instead of achieving the security interests of citizens (Bayeh, 2014). One major implication of this understanding is that having more resources to militaries is seen as a panacea for securing the survival of state and its sovereignty. Another implication is that the strategies adopted by states to deliver security have been dominated by military-centric definition of strategy that reduces strategy to a perfunctory exercise of resource allocation and inhibits critical, strategic, creative, new, and adaptive thinking (Meiser, 2017). This has heightened the supremacy of military with armies increasingly projected as the “guarantors” of the national security.

As the interstate security threats including military threats have become no longer the dominant threats to national security but have increasingly been supplanted by intrastate and non-military security threats, the traditional state-centered conception of security has become irrelevant. This paradigm shift was necessitated by the end of the Cold War that was accompanied by surge in intrastate, non-military, and transnational security threats with the state-centric security started giving way to people-centric security (Bayeh, 2014). This resulted in the emergence of human security as the people-centered approach of national security that changed the focus away from states and towards individuals. The adoption of the concept of human security by the United Nations General Assembly was informed by the concepts of human development, sustainable development and responsibility to protect (Baudelin, 2005). It has two core pillars, freedom from fear and freedom from want, with seven essential dimensions: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security (UNDP, 1994). The assertion that state-focused security is a national security has also been challenged and it has been argued instead that human security rather than state security is the national security (Reveron & Mahoney-Norris, 2019).

This recognition of human security as national security has important implications for the way security is perceived, planned, managed, and delivered to the citizens as well as the way resources are allocated to the security sector (Kuol & Amegboh, 2021). This implies that human security is not only people-centered, but it is also end-focused, multi-sectoral, and prevention-oriented with emphasis on the centrality of human beings and prioritization of human lives and livelihoods in responding to security threats (UN, 2009). One important implication of these characteristics of human security is that citizens rather than states are at the center in formulating and implementing policies for delivering and sustaining security at national, regional, and global levels (Siebert, 2009). Another implication is that policies for delivering security should not only be people-centered but they should also be comprehensive, holistic, and integrated to advance a full-fledge security (Bayeh, 2014). In recognition of the growing intrastate and non-military security threats and to advance national security of its member states and citizens, the African Union adopted this concept of human security as national, regional, and continental security and provided a multi-dimensional definition of security that embodied both the traditional, state-centric, notion of the survival of the state and the non-military notion in terms of human security (AU, 2004).

The High Military Spending in Africa

Despite the changing security threats and the concept of security and the call by the UN for its member states to reduce their military expenditure, the nation states continue to spend more and in unconstrained way on their militaries (UN, 2020). In Africa this phenomenon of unconstrained and burgeoning military expenditure is not only prevalent, but it is persistent (see Figure 1). Despite the unreliability of military spending data (Omitoogun, 2003), the pattern of military expenditure in Africa has been shaped by the Cold War period, the end of the Cold War, the economic crisis, and the surge of autocracies. Before the end of the Cold War in 1991, the surge of interstate security threats necessitated the rising military expenditure. The end of the Cold War in 1991 coupled with the global recession in the early 1990s was marked by a decline in military expenditure in Africa.

The end of the Cold War period reduced interstate and military security threats and produced considerable improvement in the quality of governance in Africa. The number of autocracies in Africa dropped to half by 1992, while the number of democratic regimes increased to just 11 by 1994 from three in 1989 and reached 13 democracies at the end of 2004 (Marshall, 2005). This surge in democratic regimes might partially explain the considerable drop in the military expenditure between 1991 and 2001. Since 2002, there has been a drastic rise in the military expenditure that can largely be explained by the surge in autocracies. This observed positive correlation between military expenditure and autocracies is consistent with the findings of other studies that show a positive relationship between military expenditure and leaders' longevity with autocratic leaders spending more on the military than democratic ones (Ndayikeza, 2021). Also, the rising military spending in Africa is associated with the high risk of coup perpetrated by their military establishment (Collier & Hoeffler, 2007). There is no doubt the military expenditure since 2002 follows a persistent and unconstrained upward trend regardless of the changing security threats that are no longer military in nature. In comparison to the world trend, the share of the African military expenditure of the world military expenditure is relatively very small but it has generally been increasing causing a source of fiscal concerns (Da Silva, Tian, & Marksteiner, 2021). It is challenging to constrain military spending once it is risen, especially once militaries, as in the case

of many African countries, become sources of revenue for politicians, engage in major businesses, and become schmoozed into the business elite.

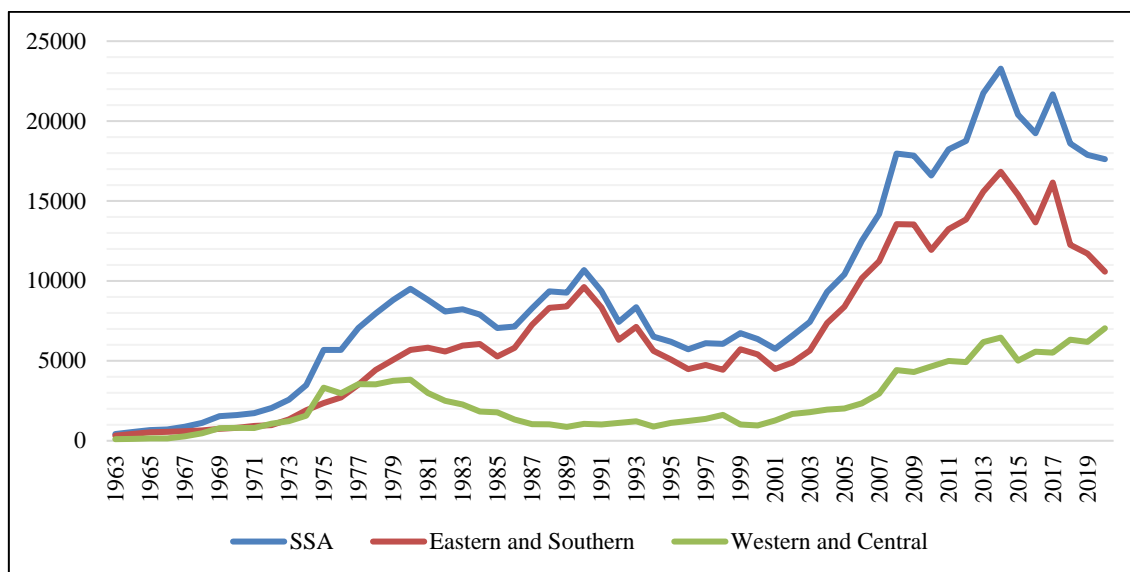


Figure 1. Military expenditure (in USD millions) trends in Africa, 1963-2020. Source: Data from the World Bank.

Defying the COVID-19 Fiscal Challenges

The eruption of COVID-19 was a litmus test of how unconstrained military spending in Africa defied the fiscal challenges caused by the pandemic. This pandemic has undoubtedly exposed serious cracks in systems of government, particularly how public resources are allocated, and adapted to address new crises. It has underscored not only the centrality of the concept of human security in shaping the forward looking of how security could be better delivered to all citizens through the whole-society approach, but it has also shown that human security is less at risk from the traditional existential threats that necessitate military buildup and arsenal than by a pandemic that can hardly be fought by conventional weaponry (Kuol, 2020).

The COVID-19 had exposed a reactive fiscal response and challenges in most African countries that dedicated significant reduction in spending in most public sectors except militaries that defied such fiscal challenges. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the global military expenditure increased in 2020, the year of COVID-19 outbreak, by 2.6 percent more than the level in 2019, while the military expenditure in Africa increased by 5.1 percent almost twice that of the global increase in military expenditure (Da Silva et al., 2021). Although the military expenditure in Africa accounted for the smallest share (2.2 percent) of the global total, Africa, compared with other regions, recorded the highest growth in its military expenditure in 2020. In relation to aggregate government spending, the military expenditure accounted to average of 8.2 percent in 2020, compared to a global average of 6.5 percent. Such an increase underscores the misalignment of military expenditure in relation to non-military expenditure in Africa. This misalignment is well captured by the World Bank that estimated the public spending in the non-military sectors to decline considerably during the pandemic, particularly education spending which was projected to decline in 2020 by 4.2 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa, while military spending of Sub-Saharan Africa was projected to grow in 2020 by 3.4 percent (World Bank, 2020).

The aggregate military expenditure in Africa may conceal variation across countries. In 2020, Uganda recorded the highest increase (49 percent) in its military expenditure, while Sudan accounted for the highest decrease (-37 percent) (see Figure 3). While each country might have different justification for the increase in military spending, the countries that increased their military expenditures in 2020 tended to be countries in the categories of autocracies and political instability (see Figure 2). This is consistent with the findings of some studies that show autocratic leaders tend to spend more on the military than democratic ones, and the reverse for education and health expenditure (Ndayikeza, 2021).

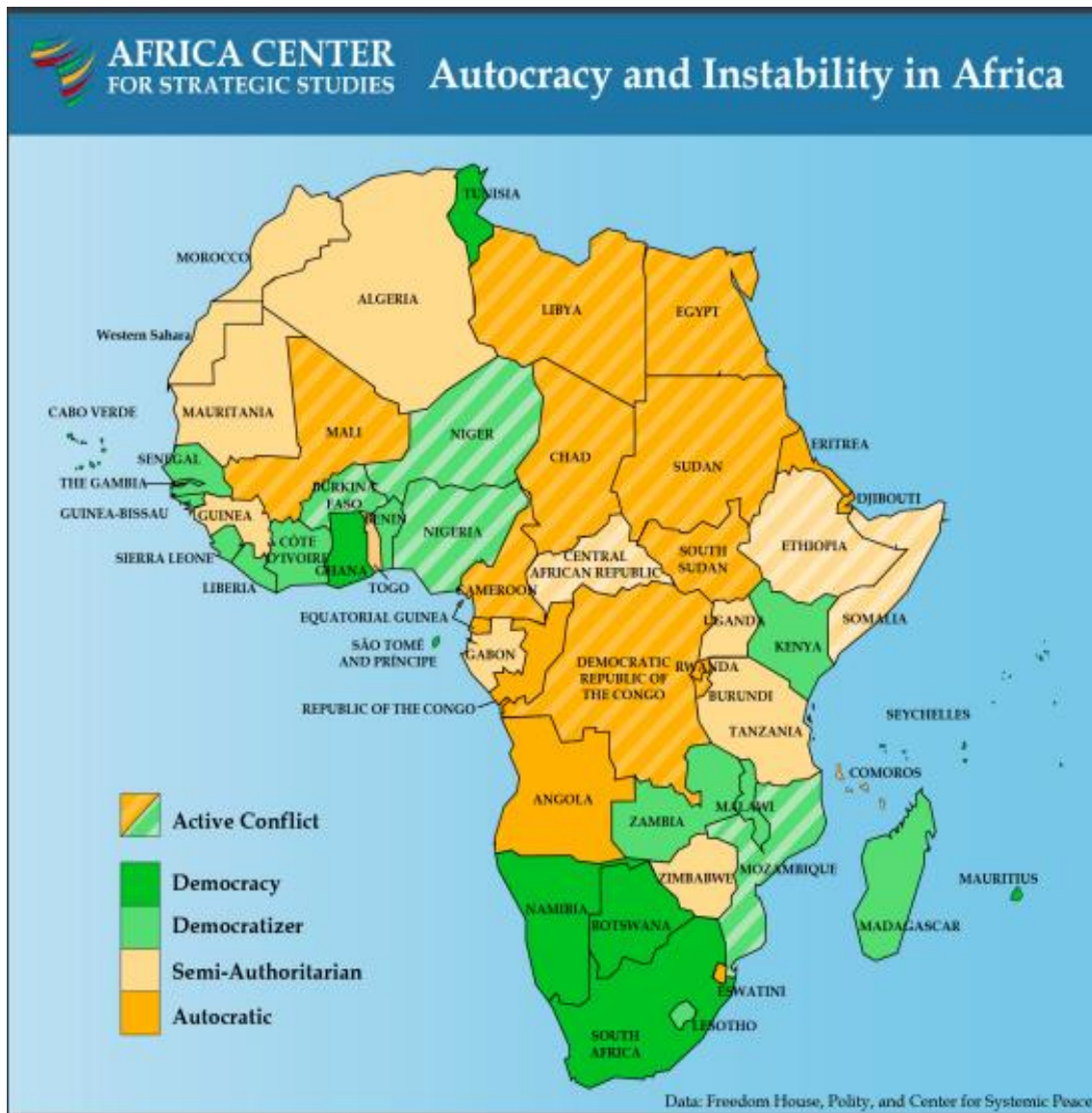


Figure 2. Autocracy and instability. Source: Africa Center (2021b).

Despite its closed political system and military rule, Mauritania provides a good example of how increase in its military spending to overhaul the military has succeeded in containing and confronting violent extremist groups (Boukhars, 2020). On the other hand, Nigeria that has been allocating enormous resources to security sector and increases its military expenditure by 29 percent in 2020 has not been successful in countering

terrorism (Ogbonnaya, 2020). Interestingly, Sudan provides another good example of how the new civilian government formed after the ousting of the autocratic Islamic military regime had managed to decrease the military expenditure by 37 percent in 2020, one of the highest reductions in the Sub-Saharan Africa (see Figure 3).

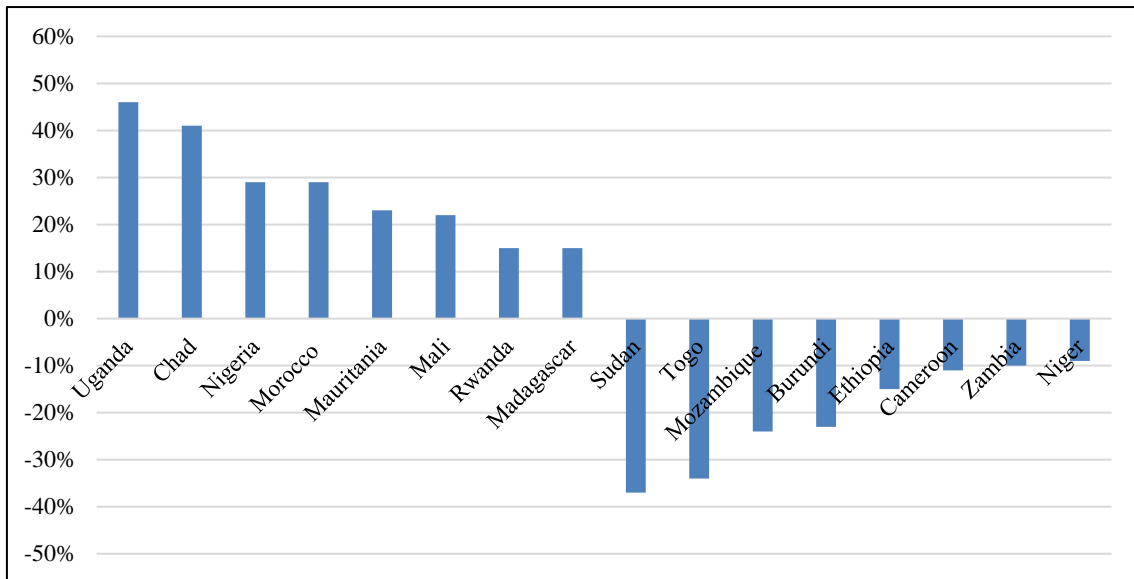


Figure 3. Change in military expenditure 2019-2020. Source: Data from Da Silva et al., 2021.

It is argued that this unconstrained military expenditure remains unchallenged or even with support from most political elites (UN, 2020). Using zoom polling to assess the impression of 50 African security leaders from more than 40 countries who attended a virtual academic program on “aligning security resources with national security strategies” (Africa Center, 2021a) about the high military spending, almost half of the participants argued for the increase in security expenditure with the overwhelming majority wanting such resources to be allocated to military (see Figure 4). Though most participants concurred that high military spending may crowd out the much-needed investment in health and education, some participants argued for more resources to the militaries to counter violent extremism that threatens the existence of the state and territorial integrity.

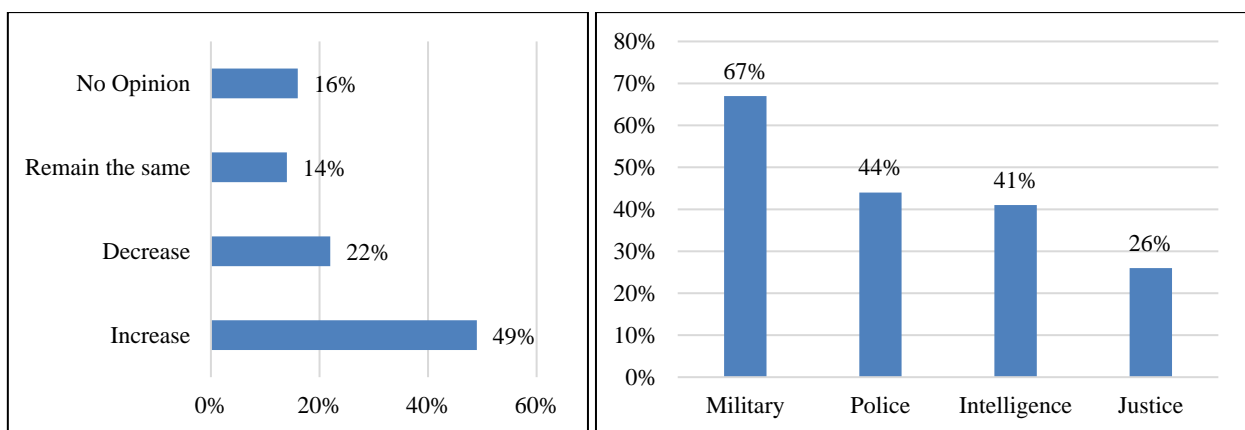


Figure 4. Whether to increase security spending and where to allocation security resources?

Although the increase in military spending in countries affected by terrorist activities can mitigate their

negative effect on economic growth (Iheonu & Ichoku, 2021), there is, however, a concern whether such high military spending can improve security conditions. As governance deficit is one of the key drivers of the violent extremism and terrorism, increase military spending and militarized solutions cannot create conducive conditions of peace and stability without addressing the governance challenges. The increase in military spending to counter terrorism and violent extremism has not been successful but has created instead a conflict environment that makes violent conflict to become a lucrative business enterprise to sustain and justify such high level of military expenditure (Ogbonnaya, 2020).

Military Spending, Economic Growth, Security, and Governance

There is no doubt that countries do need resources to address their internal and external security threats. However, the real question is the opportunity cost of the high military spending in Africa as such resources could be used in civilian spending with more added values in terms of peace and development. The increase in military spending has the potential of having positive impact by increasing aggregate demand that can spur economic growth, while on the other hand it can negatively crowd out the much-needed civilian spending for security and development. Whether the positive economic impacts of high military spending outweigh its negative effects remains unsettled debate, particularly in developing countries. While about half of studies on developing countries show military spending hampers economic growth, only about a quarter of studies on developed countries find military spending having a negative impact on economic growth (Brauer, Dunne, & Tian, 2019, p. 94). This finding has been supported by other studies that show positive effects of military expenditure on economic growth more pronounced for developed countries than less developed countries (Awaworyi & Yew, 2014).

These studies have shown at least in the case of developing countries that military spending has negative impacts on economic growth. In the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, the military spending is more likely to have a negative effect with limited evidence for a positive effect, or at best no significant impact at all on economic growth (Dunne, 2010). In the case of countries in conflict, there is a significant short run effect of military spending on economic growth but with no evidence in the long run. Based on this unambiguous evidence of inverse relationship between military spending and economic growth with potential economic benefits of reducing military expenditure, the rising military spending in developing countries is viewed as “colossal waste”, as it diverts resources from addressing other critical non-military security threats (UN, 2020). The urgent war to be fought today in Africa is not about existential threat of state and its territorial integrity but it is a war against a web of complex threats to the lives and livelihoods of African citizens such as climate change, inequality, poverty, hunger, and diseases.

Besides its economic impact, the intended impact of military spending on security has increasingly come under scrutiny. There is increasing evidence that shows high military spending causes greater insecurity by providing security for the ruling elite instead of security, safety, and well-being of the citizens (UN, 2020). In the case of Africa, high military spending can create conducive conditions for the risk of the abuse of power and human rights that can further undermine peace and security (Iheonu, Odu, & Ekeocha, 2020). The high military spending negatively impacts security by advancing militarized solutions that can create a breeding ground for corruption, state predation and patronage (UN, 2020). Prioritizing military solutions to address real or perceived security threats may endanger both human and state security (Ndawana, 2020). It also projects militaries as the primary guarantors of security that make them to attract not only more resources but also

unconditional favor from political ruling elites. In addition, the resource-centric and militarized approach to address security threats can reduce the provision of security to a reactive and resource-driven strategy (Meiser, 2017). More military spending by itself alone cannot address the security threats without an overarching national strategy with which resources (funds and force structure) are prioritized and aligned.

Despite the unreliability of the military expenditure data (Omitoogun, 2003), the link between the military spending and the security and safety, at least in the case of Africa, could generally be described as an inverse relationship with rising military expenditure not producing an improvement in security and safety as depicted in Figure 5. Given the limited data and the exceptionally high heavy weight military expenditure of the countries of North Africa, such association cannot be simplified as presented in Figure 5, but it can generally confirm the wealth of evidence that challenges the assumption that the higher military spending will necessarily lead to higher security (UN, 2020).

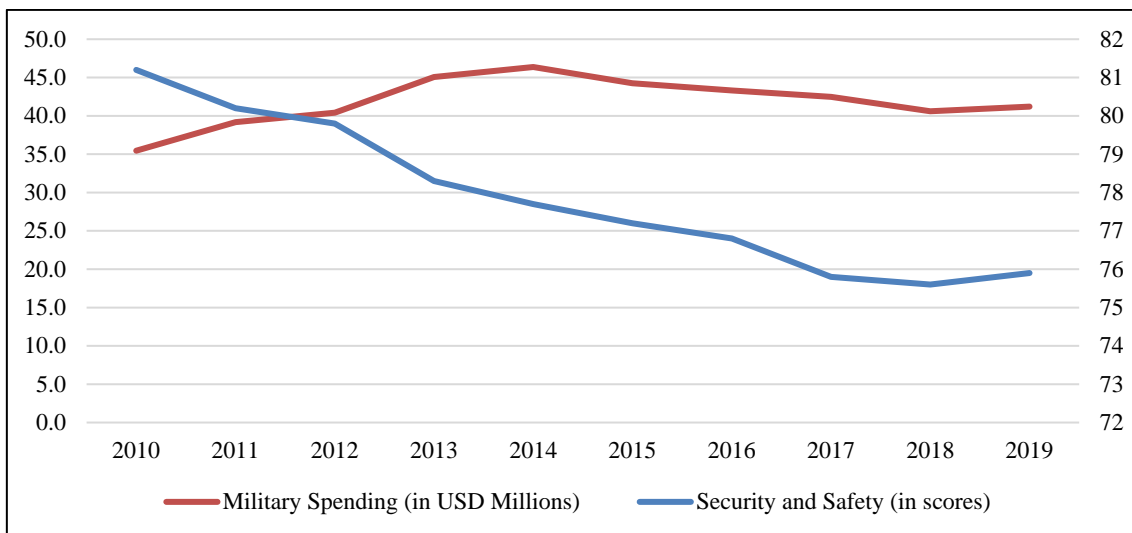


Figure 5. The Association of Military Expenditure with Security and Safety in Africa. Source: Data from IIAG (2021) and SIPRI.

Such inverse relationship becomes clearer when the change in military expenditure during 2010-2019 is compared with the change in the level of security and safety and its sub-categories during the same period (see Figure 6). While the military expenditure increased in Africa by 16 percent, the level of security and safety dropped by 6.5 percent as well as the absence of conflict violence and violence against civilians causing surge in forced migration. In particular, the state-based conflict, government violence against civilians, and no-state actor violence against civilians increased considerably during the period of the rising military expenditure.

These statistics show that more military spending per se does not necessary improve security and safety, but it might create a conducive environment for state to abuse its powers and to perpetuate violence against citizens, harm security by diverting resources from addressing other urgent non-security challenges, misalignment of resources, deficiency in allocating public resources and corruption in the use of security resources. Also, military expenditures if not guided by citizens-centered public policies and subjected to budgetary principles and civilian oversight could create a conflict environment causing both state-based conflict and non-state actor conflict to become money-spinning business to sustain and justify the unconstrained high military expenditure.

In addition, such high military expenditures are unlikely to win the trust of citizens as they crowd out

investment in the much-needed public services such as health and education with more value for money. The citizens’ perception in 2010 of the level of security and safety in Africa was generally low and slightly above half of the aggregate scores, while their level of trust in police and military was half of the aggregate scores (see Figure 7). However, with the rising military expenditure during 2010-2019, the public perception of the level of security and safety as well as their trust in police and military slightly waned.

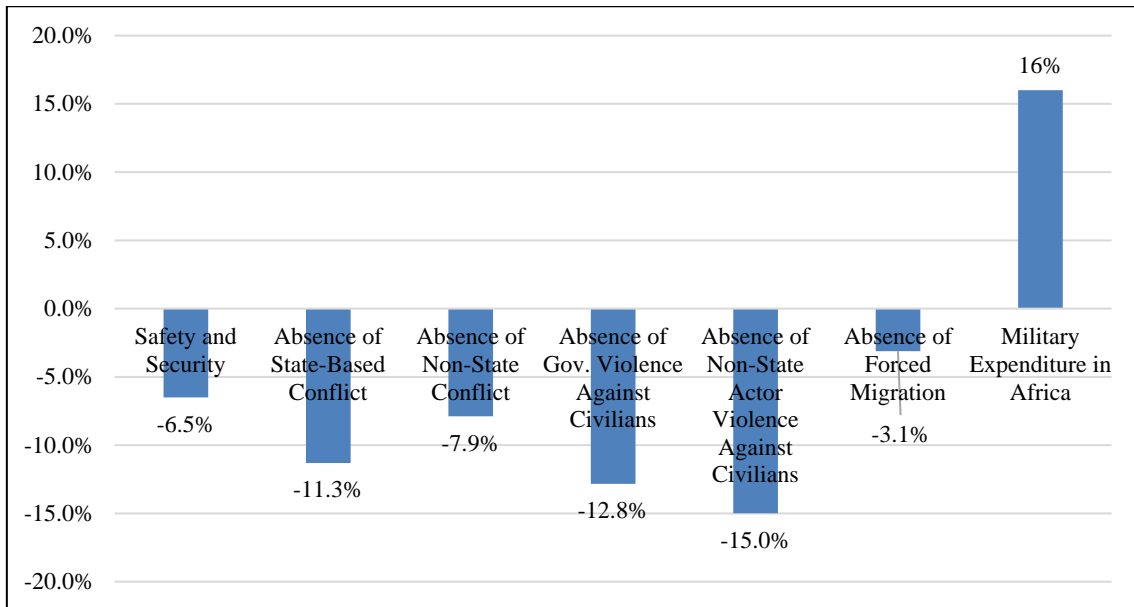


Figure 6. Change in military expenditure and security and safety, 2010-2019. Source: Data from IIAG (2020) and SIPRI.

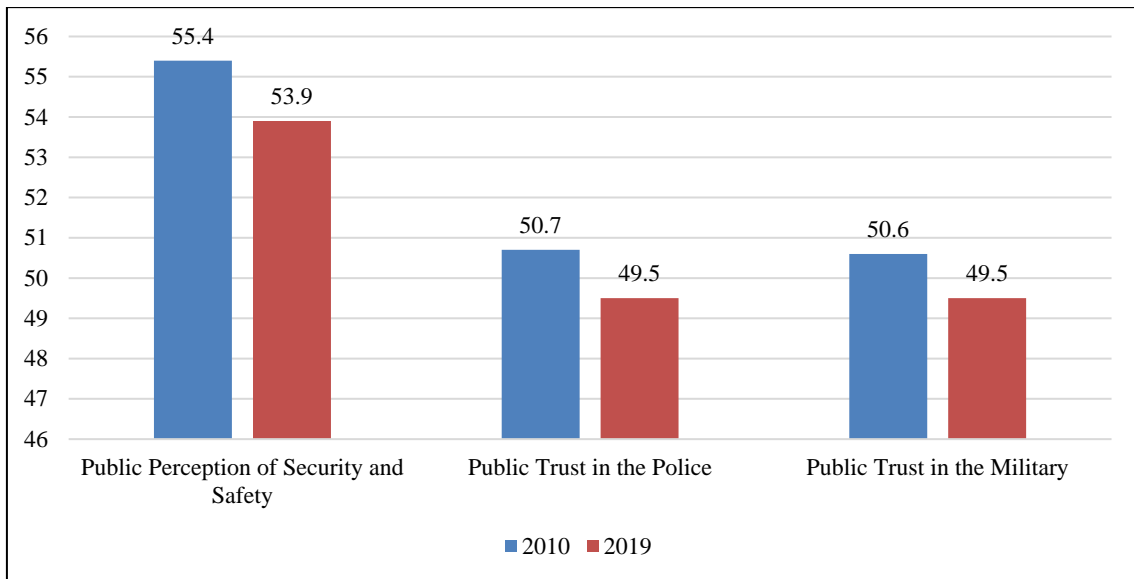


Figure 7. Public perception of security and safety. Source: Data from IIAG (2020).

There is increasing evidence that shows a strong link between high military spending and corruption, which has detrimental impacts not only on security governance but also on creating environment for insecurity, conflict, violation of basic freedoms, and perpetual unconstrained military expenditure (Gupta, de Mello, & Sharan, 2000). In Sub-Saharan Africa, the high military spending is associated with high corruption that in turn

enables countries to keep such large military spending (N'dri & Kakinaka, 2022). This evidence is more pronounced in corrupt and autocratic countries. The strong association between military spending and corruption has also a potential of creating “Rentier-Security state” and “Predatory State” with military budgets becoming a source for financing patronage, kickbacks, and sustenance of autocracies (UN, 2020). The Governance Defense Anti-Corruption Index published by Transparency International has consistently been showing more prevalence of perceived corruption in security sector, particularly African militaries, than in other civilian institutions.

There is increasing evidence that indicates the African security sector institutions and agencies, particularly militaries, are not adhering to the core budgetary principles, which has led to increased corruption and off-budget expenditures and revenues (Harborne, Dorotinsky, & Bisca, 2017). In particular, the involvement of the African militaries in business is not only prevalent and growing but it is increasingly making the militaries more susceptible to a fertile ground of corruption. The reporting of military expenditure in terms of transparency and accountability to the United Nations is overall at low level in Sub-Saharan Africa with very few countries updating their military spending to reflect actual expenditures (Tian, Wezeman, & Yun, 2018). In addition, the weak civilian and public oversight of the African militaries has hampered the promotion of transparency, accountability, integrity, and professionalism in the military institutions.

Drivers of the High Military Spending in Africa

The demand for high military spending is often justified by the need to have military capabilities capable of addressing traditional interstate and military security threats. While these military security threats continue to be detrimental to national security, the real question is whether such threats could justify the high military spending in Africa. The conflict trends in Africa show a drastic decline in interstate violent conflicts and the emergence of new non-military security threats that are becoming increasingly more detrimental to national security (Palik et al., 2020). Other possible justification for the high military spending is to ensure national security through deterrence that has unfortunately failed to deliver better security but spurred instead arms races and created mutual suspicion and fear from the neighboring countries (UN, 2020). The African Union Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact that aims at promoting non-aggression and peaceful co-existence and preventing interstate and intrastate conflicts has not only provided common deterrence, but it has also contributed to the reduction in number and intensity of interstate conflicts on the continent (AU, 2005).

As the military security threats facing Africa might not justify the high military spending, then what would be the other drivers of such trend in military expenditure? Although there might be a set of factors to be considered, here are some of the drivers of the high military spending in Africa:

Militarization of National Security

Despite the security threats facing Africa are becoming non-military security threats in nature and coupled with the changing concept of security to human security, military security threats continue to be seen as the main national security challenges. This has not only prioritized state-centric security and military solutions but has accentuated the concept of armed forces as the primary guarantors of national security that allows militaries unchallenged access to scarce resources. There is increasing politicization of the armed forces in Africa with political elites becoming interesting in their control as the vehicle to access power and wealth (Ouedraogo, 2014). This has rendered the militaries unwavering support, including unconstrained access to resource, across

various political spectrum. It has further heightened the fear of military coups forcing the ruling elites to avail more resources to soothe the armed forces.

Resource-Driven Defense Strategies

Understanding how defense budgets are prepared, processed, approved, managed, and overseen remains elusive. There is a contestation on how to allocate resources to armed forces, between budget-driven or mandate-driven on the one hand (Daniels, 2019) or ends-driven or means-driven on the other hand (Cancian, 2020). General practice seems to suggest the allocation of resources to the armed forces in most African countries is generally guided by defense policies or white papers on defense that are grounded on the military-centric definition of strategy as a resource-driven approach and with assumption that more military spending will result in a better national security. These defense policies are largely not publicly made available and accessible and in most cases are backroom without the scrutiny of parliaments and the involvement of citizens and without adherence to the basic budgetary principles.

Weak Democratic Civilian Control and Oversight of the Militaries

Most activities of African militaries remain over-classified and susceptible to cultures of secrecy and exceptionalism with the notion that military issues are a no-go zone for civil authorities. The way resources are managed and allocated to the armed forces in many African countries remains largely outside the effective civilian control and public oversight as well as non-adherence to budgetary principles of comprehensiveness, contestability, legitimacy, transparency, and accountability.

Absence of National Security Strategies

The allocation of resources to the military is not guided in most African countries by an overarching national security strategy. Most African countries do not have such grand strategy not only to guide development and implementation of sectoral strategies such as defense policies or white papers on defense but also to align the allocation of resources to armed forces with clear national security vision and priorities.

Conclusion: New Defense Policies

Despite the bleak reputation painted of the role of the military spending in Africa, there are exceptions with some militaries enjoying respect from citizens and exhibiting high level of efficiency, effectiveness, and professionalism. In some instances, the armed forces stood up to defend constitution, peaceful transition of power, and the political choices of the people. In relative terms, the military expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure and gross domestic product (GDP) has been declining. There is also a declining trend of military expenditure in relative and absolute terms in Sub-Saharan Africa. There is also a significant improvement in the transparent reporting of military expenditure in Sub-Saharan Africa to the United Nations, particularly in terms of availability, reliability, disaggregation, and accessibility with a growing number of African countries publishing their defense policies or white papers on defense in public access domain (Tian et al., 2018). The challenges of building respected, effective, and professional armed forces rest largely with political elites and even most of the coups in Africa are indirectly instigated by the political elites when they are not in power. So, the African armed forces are still relevant not only in advancing human security but also in playing a critical role in fostering democratic governance and conducive environment for security and stability.

It is likely that the high military spending in Africa will continue be unconstrained regardless of security

threats with far reaching consequences of exacerbating insecurity and persistent high levels of corruption. This inverse relationship between high military spending and security calls for the need to rethink of reversing such trend. This underscores that what is needed in the Africa's armies is less about more resources but rather how investment in armed forces and their capability could be rationalized and justified to meet strategic military objectives guided by national strategies and priorities within means available.

One of the possible ways of addressing this high military spending in Africa is the development of inclusive and citizens-centered national security strategies that should aim at advancing sustainable human security as a national security priority. It has been shown that a well-designed and inclusive process for formulating national security strategy produces good strategy and enables decision-makers to plan better for addressing national security threats as well as effecting long-term positive change for delivering security to state and its citizens (Cancian, 2020). A national security strategy that is developed in an inclusive and participatory process of all stakeholders including women and youth as suggested by the African Union (AU, 2004) will provide strategic guidance for the formulation of new defense policies and review of the existing ones to become people-centered policies with the aim of forging new civil-military relationship.

South Africa provides a good example as it embarked on a thorough inclusive and transparent review process of its national security strategy, defense policy, and white paper on intelligence and came up with one key recommendation of the urgent need to develop through an inclusive and transparent process a new national security strategy that will provide overriding basis for reform and transformation of security sector including defense and intelligence (Daniels, 2019). Based on African experiences and case studies, a toolkit for national security strategy development process has been developed to assist African countries to develop their own national security strategies (Africa Center, 2020). One of the key activities identified in this toolkit is the conduct of institutional audit and review of security sector to identify what is existing and gaps in terms of policies, legislations, regulations, division of labor, decision-making, coordination mechanisms, oversight and monitoring systems, and map relevant stakeholders. This toolkit will be relevant as well to the Africa's militaries not only to play effective role in development of their national security strategies but also to help in the process of formulating and reviewing their new defense policies or white papers on defense.

Such new defense policies if they are developed with effective participation of civil authorities and citizens will make Africa's militaries to see the added value for complying with the basic budgetary principles (Harborne et al., 2017). These new defense policies will set clear and shared national defense vision, objectives, and priorities that will guide the formulation of military budgets and ensure involvement of policy makers in such process (*legitimacy*), provide basis for including in military budgets all expenditures and revenues to prevent off-budget practices (*comprehensiveness*), put the military in a better position to compete on equal footing for funding with other sectors to ensure the best use of public funds (*contestability*), ensure prompt publication of military budget documents, public deliberations of military budget matters, and broad dissemination of military budget information (*transparency*), and make sure all military expenditure and revenues are voted for and authorized by competent authorities before execution as well as providing periodic reporting of fiscal performance and budget execution independent audit to the legislature (*accountability*).

As the process of formulating new defense policies or white papers on defense is both political and technical, it will need political leadership to provide a clear political guidance and national strategic vision that presents defense as a public service like education and health that will require the effective engagement of citizens as key stakeholders in the way defense is planned, managed, delivered, and overseen. This engagement

of citizens will contribute to building their trust in the armed forces and to forge a new civil-military relationship. The success of this process will rest on national ownership over the entire process that is guided by a nationally shared vision and without dictation from external actors or donor programs. As this process will have implications for power dynamics and the redistribution of power and resources, there is a need for a change in attitudes and perceptions, particularly among the armed forces who have been enjoying a monopoly on the use of force and in affairs of state. The political leadership is to present and articulate the inclusive process of formulating the new defense policies as win-win and to allay the fears of those who might lose powers in the process. These new defense policies or white papers on defense can be successfully implemented in a political environment that cherishes checks and balances mechanisms, respect of rule of law, and the supremacy of democratic civilian authorities.

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