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ABOUT THE JOURNAL

The Brazilian Journal of African Studies is a biannual publication, in digital format, dedicated to the research, reflection and propagation of original scientific articles with emphasis on the analysis of International Relations, Organizations and Integration, Security and Defense, Political Systems, History, Geography, Economic Development, Social Structures and their Transformations and Schools of Thought. RBEA is essentially academic, linked to the Brazilian Centre for African Studies (CEBRAFRICA) of the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS).

The RBEA has as target audience researchers, professors and students interested in the specificities of the African continent and its international insertion. Alongside such perspective, the Journal intends to expand the debate about the Brazilian projection world widely, the Brazilian cooperation efforts (including in the Defense field) with the African countries in the South Atlantic perimeter and the construction of a regional identity in face of a scenario of geopolitical transformations.

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REVIEW

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Analúcia Danilevicz Pereira

December/2024

The current global situation, in which Africa acquires relevance, presents a set of overlapping and multilayered tensions, whose epicenter we are crossing. The ongoing crisis is quite peculiar, mainly due to the various simultaneous events that converge in direction of conflicts and war. On the other hand, the political, ideological and economical wear of the West, uncovered a variety of projects and political regimes in the African continent, as well as economic growth, that made Africa's spot in the global economy rise. The changes of systemic character in the position of the African continent, as a geopolitical and geoeconomic space, stem from the establishing of a new political pattern of international interactions, with the development of African partnerships in a framework of South-South and South-East Cooperation, alongside the erosion of the West's political and economical monopoly that lasted five centuries. Africa moves, in this sense, towards the defense of the international order's adaptation to the realities of the 21st century.

The impacts of climate change are particularly pronounced in the continent, which presents the highest rate of population growth in the world, and that will equal its population to that of Asia at the end of the century. However, there's an expectation that more than half of the world population growth by 2050 will happen in this continent. This fact will unlock new market and labor possibilities alongside the resources that have long lured international interest, conducting towards humanitarian and developmental challenges. Therefore, Africa increasingly figures in the discussion regarding important countries and organizations due to its growing importance in global issues.

Nowadays, this extremely young population has constituted the base of growing intra-African and Europe-aimed migratory fluxes, generating international tensions. Simultaneously, the search for strategic natural resources in the continent grows, as well as the inevitable multiplication of interactions with old and ascending great powers. Inside such framework, the leaders

are forced to find alternative political forms, becoming more assertive in the state and diplomacy strengthening. Would they be sustainable? At the same time, regional rivalries are aggravated, which is typical to the nation-state maturing process, as in Europe of previous centuries. The striking surprise in this situation is that such process forces the extracontinental great powers to adapt to the new African dynamic and priorities.

But one must consider that great powers aim to create influence zones or seek to promote a new power distribution. In many cases, African political elites are frequently pressured by political and socio-economical problems, as well as by domestic conflicts, to search for external support. What reveals itself as original is the qualitative change of international interactions. The African interests surrounding autonomy e development have been, in this sense, conditioned by the global logic of rivalry or cooperation between the main great powers.

Considering the context of international tensions and realignments that mark the current systemic crisis, many African countries have been acting directly in the construction of a multipolar world. The multipolarity is still unstable, and these levels of instability directly affect the possibility of resuming national projects that aim to develop the so called global semi-periphery. However, the movement surrounding political awareness of the new international reality in progressive.

In its 18th issue, the BJAS presents 7 articles and 1 review, written by scholars of various nationalities. Besides Brazilians, this issue counts with the contribution of scholars from South Africa, China, Lebanon, Kenia, Mozambique and Nigeria. Habib Badawi, in *"Russia's strategic pivot to Africa: geopolitical implications in a multipolar world"* examines the strategic pivot of Russia to Africa, analyzing the motivations, approaches and implications of the renewed engagement of Moscow with the African continent. In *"Egyptian Foreign Policy under Al-Sisi government: paths to diversification of partnerships"*, Charles Pereira Pennafort and Mateus José da Silva Santos analyze the main characteristics that revolve around Egypt's process of global and regional repositioning during the last decade. Almeida Zacarias Machava and Tomás Bernardo Chirindza discuss how the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Agreement has the potential to overcome challenges and contribute to the process of African integration within the framework of the African Economic Community in the article entitled *"The COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Agreement in the context of the implementation of the African Economic Community (AEC)"*.

The evaluation of the conflict causes in Cabo Delgado Province, in northern Mozambique, is the subject of the article *"Mozambique: violent extre-*

mism and terrorism in Cabo Delgado Province”, by Ercilio Neves Brandão Langa. Next, Naftaly Mose, Omonike Ige-Gbadeyan and John Thomi, in the article “*Technological spillovers from Foreign Direct Investment in Kenya*” analyze the role of spillovers of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in technological innovation in Kenya. The Chinese contribution to railway modernization in Nigeria and its impact on infrastructure development and economic advancement is the focus of the discussion in “*Socio-economic impact of the modernized Nigerian railway system by the Chinese*”, Olaoluwanike Comfort Ogunrinu and Lemuel Ekedegwa Odeh. Finally, Jacinta Chiamaka Nwaka, Lilian Chidiebere Onyeiwu and Marcel Alkali examine the rationale behind the exclusion of women from the Niger Delta Amnesty Program (NDAP), which was planned, sponsored and implemented locally, and created expectations of transformation on the social bases in the article “*Too poor for peace: women in the Niger Delta Amnesty Program in Nigeria*”. The BJAS presents, as well, the review of the work “*25 Anos de Cooperação em Defesa na CPLP*”, by Kamilla Raquel Rizzi and Luís Manuel Brás Bernadino (Lisbon: Mercado de Letras Editores, 2023), written by Nathaly Xavier Schutz and Irina Lima Martínez.

The BJAS publishes a bilingual electronic version (Portuguese and English). Thus, we welcome contributions from colleagues in Brazil and abroad, with whom we seek to establish connections to deepen knowledge and build a Southern perspective on the African continent and its relations.

We thank the Editorial Assistants Augusto Lorenzo Esposito and Gabriela Gampe Bonness and the CEBRAFRICA team who worked on the translation and revision of the articles: Amabilly Bonacina, Augusto Camatti, Gabriele Lima de Souza, Isabella Cruzichi, Isadora Perciliana dos Santos, Isadora Vedana, Luiza Gabriel de Souza, Maria Eduarda Lameira Nascimento, Mariana Realí Vitola, Matheus Severiano Marques Xavier, Pedro Henrique Galante Zandoná, Rebeca Martins de Lima and Vinicius Zanchin Baldissera.

RUSSIA'S STRATEGIC PIVOT TO AFRICA: GEOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD

Habib Badawi¹



Introduction

The global geopolitical landscape is undergoing significant transformation, with new power centers challenging the longstanding dominance of Western nations. Among these emerging players, Russia has increasingly sought to expand its influence beyond its traditional spheres of interest. In recent years, Moscow has undertaken a strategic pivot towards Africa, reviving historical ties and forging new partnerships across the continent. This renewed engagement comes at a critical juncture, as tensions between Russia and the West have escalated, particularly in the wake of the Ukraine conflict.

The resurgence of Russian interest in Africa is not merely a tactical move but a strategic reorientation of foreign policy. As Abramova (2024) argues, this rapprochement is driven by long-term strategic considerations rather than short-term tactical gains. This shift reflects a broader reassessment of Russia's global role and its aspirations to challenge the Western-dominated international order.

Research questions and objectives

This paper aims to examine the motivations, strategies, and implications of Russia's growing presence in Africa. It seeks to address several key questions:

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1. What are the primary drivers behind Russia's renewed interest in Africa?
2. How does Moscow's approach to African engagement differ from that of other global powers?
3. What are the potential implications of Russia's Africa strategy for global geopolitics and the emerging multipolar world order?
4. How might African nations navigate the increasing competition between global powers on the continent?

The significance of this study lies in its potential to shed light on the evolving dynamics of international relations in the 21st century. As Africa becomes an increasingly important arena for global competition, understanding Russia's role and objectives on the continent is crucial for policymakers, scholars, and stakeholders in international affairs.

Russia's engagement in Africa represents a microcosm of broader global power shifts. By examining this specific case, we can gain insights into the changing nature of international relations, the challenges to Western hegemony, and the emergence of new forms of cooperation and competition in the Global South.

Theoretical framework and methodology

Russia's strategic pivot to Africa can be understood through a composite theoretical lens that incorporates elements of neorealism, constructivism, neo-imperialism, soft power theory, and geoeconomics. This integrated framework allows for a nuanced analysis of the economic, geopolitical, and ideational factors driving Russia's engagement with the African continent.

Neorealist perspective

The neorealist theory, as articulated by Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer, provides a foundation for understanding Russia's behavior in terms of power balancing and security maximization in an anarchic international system. Russia's engagement in Africa can be seen as an attempt to: a) counterbalance Western influence and promote multipolarity; b) secure strategic resources and geopolitical positioning; and c) enhance its relative power in the international system. Neorealism helps explain Russia's efforts to establish military footholds in strategic locations, such as the proposed

naval facility in Sudan, and its focus on arms sales and security cooperation with African nations.

Constructivist elements

Constructivism, as developed by Alexander Wendt and others, offers insights into the role of ideas, identities, and norms in shaping Russia's Africa strategy. This perspective helps explain:

- a) Russia's emphasis on shared anti-colonial narratives and opposition to Western hegemony.
- b) The cultivation of a great power identity through engagement in Africa.
- c) The importance of status and recognition in international relations.

Constructivism illuminates Russia's efforts to position itself as an alternative partner to the West, leveraging historical ties and shared narratives of resistance to Western dominance.

Neo-imperialist framework

Drawing on neo-imperialist theory, as discussed by scholars like David Harvey (2003), we can analyze Russia's approach in terms of: a) economic exploitation and resource extraction; b) the use of military power and private military contractors to exert influence; and c) the creation of spheres of influence and client states. This framework helps explain Russia's focus on resource-rich countries and its willingness to intervene in complex security environments, as seen in the Central African Republic.

Soft Power and public diplomacy

Joseph Nye's (2004) concept of soft power, combined with theories of public diplomacy, helps explain: a) Russia's efforts to cultivate cultural and educational ties with African nations; b) the use of media and information campaigns to shape perceptions; and c) the leveraging of historical relationships and shared narratives. Soft power theory sheds light on Russia's investment in educational exchanges, media outreach, and cultural diplomacy initiatives in Africa.

Geoeconomics

Drawing on the work of Edward Luttwak (1990) and others, the geoeconomic perspective illuminates: a) the use of economic instruments for geopolitical objectives; b) the strategic importance of energy partnerships and infrastructure projects; and c) the role of state-owned enterprises in advancing national interests. Geoeconomics helps explain Russia's focus on energy sector cooperation, infrastructure development, and the use of economic leverage to gain political influence in Africa.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to analyze Russia's strategic pivot to Africa. This method is chosen for its ability to provide in-depth insights into complex geopolitical phenomena. The qualitative approach allows for a nuanced examination of the historical, political, and economic factors shaping Russia's engagement with Africa.

The research draws on a wide range of primary and secondary sources, including official documents, speeches, and policy papers from Russian and African governments, as well as academic literature, expert analyses, and media reports. Key sources include reports from think tanks such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Institute for Security Studies, and academic journals such as *The Washington Quarterly* and the *South African Journal on International Affairs*.

The paper combines historical analysis with contemporary case studies to provide a comprehensive examination of Russia's Africa strategy. A comparative approach is also used to analyze how Russia's engagement in Africa differs from that of other global powers, particularly China and Western nations. This framework allows for a contextualized understanding of Russia's actions within the broader landscape of international relations in Africa.

Historical context: Russia-Africa relations

The relationship between Russia and Africa represents one of modern history's most dynamic and evolving geopolitical partnerships. From the ideological engagements of the Soviet era through a period of post-Soviet withdrawal to contemporary reemergence, this relationship has

profoundly shaped both African development and global power dynamics. Understanding this historical trajectory is crucial for contextualizing current Russian activities on the continent and anticipating future developments in Russia-Africa relations. This section explores the three distinct phases that have characterized this relationship, examining how changing global circumstances, political ideologies, and economic interests have influenced Russia's approach to engagement with African nations.

Soviet-Era engagement (1950-1991)

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union was a significant player in Africa, supporting anti-colonial movements and newly independent states. This engagement was characterized by ideological solidarity, economic aid, and military assistance. Matusevich (2009) highlights the complex nature of Soviet involvement in Africa, which went beyond mere ideological export to include significant cultural and educational exchanges.

Major projects from this era included the Aswan High Dam in Egypt. These initiatives showcased the Soviet Union's commitment to supporting African development while simultaneously expanding its geopolitical influence (Zubok 2022).

The Soviet Union's approach in Africa was not uniform across the continent. Yordaniov (2012) provides a detailed analysis of Soviet involvement in Ethiopia and Somalia from 1947 to 1991, illustrating the complexities and contradictions in Soviet policy. The Horn of Africa became a significant arena for Cold War competition, with the Soviet Union and the United States backing opposing sides in regional conflicts.

Post-Soviet decline (1991-2000)

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 led to a sharp decline in Russia's presence in Africa. Economic constraints and a focus on domestic issues resulted in the withdrawal of most Russian personnel and the cessation of many aid programs. This period saw Western countries and, increasingly, China fill the void left by Russia's retreat.

Zubok (2022) argues that this retreat was not merely a result of economic constraints but also reflected a broader disillusionment with Soviet-era foreign policy commitments. The new Russian leadership under Boris Yeltsin

prioritized integration with the West, leading to a neglect of traditional Soviet allies in Africa and elsewhere in the Global South.

Foundations for renewed interest (2000-present)

The early 2000s marked the beginning of Russia's renewed interest in Africa. This was driven by economic recovery under Vladimir Putin's leadership and a desire to reassert Russia's global influence. Initial efforts focused on debt forgiveness and the revival of Soviet-era relationships. Marten (2019) identifies several factors contributing to Russia's return to Africa:

1. A desire to challenge Western influence and promote a multipolar world order.
2. Economic opportunism, particularly in the extractive industries.
3. The opportunity to project power through military cooperation and arms sales.
4. The search for diplomatic support in international forums.

This renewed engagement has been characterized by a more pragmatic approach compared to the ideologically driven Soviet era. Russia has sought to leverage its strengths in areas such as energy, mining, and military technology to build partnerships with African nations.

Drivers of Russia's African strategy

Contemporary shifts in the global order have precipitated notable realignments in international partnerships, particularly evident in the evolving dynamics between major powers and the African continent. The examination of strategic engagement patterns reveals multifaceted drivers that shape interstate relations across economic, political, and security domains.

Economic imperatives

Sanctions imposed by Western countries following the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 have compelled Russia to seek new markets and economic partnerships. Africa, with its growing

consumer base and vast natural resources, presents an attractive alternative to Western markets.

Gopaldas (2023) argues that Russia's economic engagement with Africa is driven by both necessity and opportunity. The need to circumvent Western sanctions has accelerated Russia's pivot towards non-Western markets, with Africa emerging as a key focus. At the same time, Africa's rapid economic growth and urbanization present significant opportunities for Russian businesses, particularly in sectors such as energy, infrastructure, and technology. Russia's economic strategy in Africa is multifaceted, encompassing:

1. Agricultural cooperation: Russia has sought to leverage its agricultural expertise to develop partnerships with African nations, particularly in grain production and export.

2. Arms sales: Africa has become a significant market for Russian military equipment. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2022) reports that Russia accounted for 44% of arms imports to Africa between 2017 and 2021.

3. Infrastructure development: Russian firms have secured contracts for major infrastructure projects, including nuclear power plants and transportation networks.

4. Resource extraction: Russian companies have invested heavily in African oil, gas, and mineral resources. For example, Trickett (2017) details Rosneft's involvement in Mozambique's offshore gas fields.

Geopolitical considerations

Russia's engagement in Africa is part of a broader strategy to challenge Western global dominance and promote a multipolar world order. By expanding its influence in Africa, Russia aims to diminish Western sway over the continent and position itself as a global power broker.

Allard and Masuhr (2022) argue that Russia's Africa strategy is rooted in a historical narrative of anti-imperialism and support for national sovereignty. This narrative resonates with many African leaders who are wary of Western interventionism and conditionality in aid and trade relationships. Russia's geopolitical objectives in Africa include:

1. Countering Western influence: By offering alternative partnerships in areas such as security cooperation and economic development, Russia seeks to reduce African dependence on Western nations.

2. Demonstrating global reach: A strong presence in Africa allows Russia to project power beyond its immediate neighborhood and claim the status of a global power.

3. Securing strategic locations: Russia has shown interest in establishing military facilities in strategic locations, such as the proposed naval logistics center in Sudan (Ramani 2021).

4. Shaping regional dynamics: Through targeted interventions and support for specific factions, Russia aims to influence political outcomes in key African nations.

Resource access and security

Africa's abundant natural resources, including oil, gas, and minerals, align with Russian economic interests. Securing access to these resources enhances Russia's global economic position and provides leverage in international markets.

Mlambo, Kushamba and Simawu (2016) compare Russia's resource-focused strategy in Africa with that of China, noting that while both nations seek access to African resources, Russia's approach is often more closely tied to geopolitical considerations. Russian companies, many with close ties to the state, have secured significant stakes in African resource extraction projects, particularly in the energy sector. The resource security dimension of Russia's Africa strategy includes:

1. Agricultural resources: Cooperation in agriculture aims to enhance Russia's food security and leverage its position as a major grain exporter.

2. Diversification of energy partnerships: By investing in African oil and gas projects, Russia seeks to maintain its global energy influence even as Europe attempts to reduce dependence on Russian supplies.

3. Securing critical minerals: Russia has shown interest in African deposits of rare earth elements and other minerals crucial for high-tech industries.

Diplomatic support in international forums

African nations comprise a significant voting bloc in international organizations, making their diplomatic backing crucial for Russia. This support is particularly valuable as Russia faces increased isolation from Western countries.

Handy and Djilo (2022) analyze Africa's divided stance on the Ukraine war, highlighting the complex factors influencing African nations' positions in international forums. Russia has actively courted African diplomatic support, emphasizing historical ties and shared opposition to Western hegemony. The diplomatic dimension of Russia's Africa strategy includes:

1. **Counterbalancing Western narratives:** African support helps Russia challenge Western-dominated global narratives on issues such as democracy, human rights, and international security.
2. **Legitimacy in international organizations:** African backing helps Russia maintain its influence in bodies such as the UN Security Council.
3. **Support for Russian initiatives:** Russia has sought African participation in forums it has established, such as the Russia-Africa Summit, to demonstrate its global diplomatic reach.
4. **Votes in the UN General Assembly:** Russia seeks African support on key resolutions, such as those related to the Ukraine conflict (United Nations 2022).

Dimensions of Russian Engagement in Africa: Economic, Military, and Diplomatic Initiatives

The examination of contemporary engagement strategies between major powers and African nations reveals distinct operational patterns across multiple sectors. This section analyzes Russia's systematic approach to African engagement through four key dimensions: economic cooperation and investment, military assistance and arms sales, diplomatic initiatives, and infrastructure development. Through empirical observation of documented activities and agreements, these interconnected elements demonstrate the methodological framework through which interstate relations are cultivated and maintained in the modern context.

Economic cooperation and investment

Russia has significantly increased its economic engagement with Africa, focusing on energy, mining, and agriculture. Key players include state-owned companies like Gazprom, Rosneft, and Rosatom. While the overall trade volume remains modest compared to China or Western nations (approximately \$18 billion in 2022), there is significant potential for growth.

Mishra (2023) characterizes Russia's economic strategy in Africa as "low-risk, high-reward," noting that Russia has been able to gain significant influence through relatively modest investments. This approach has allowed Russia to compete with more established economic players in Africa, such as China and Western nations, despite having fewer resources at its disposal. Key aspects of Russia's economic engagement include:

- 1. Agricultural cooperation:** Russia has leveraged its position as a major grain exporter to develop agricultural partnerships with African nations. This includes not only trade but also technology transfer and joint development projects.

- 2. Energy sector partnerships:** Russian companies have secured significant contracts in oil and gas exploration and production across Africa. For example, Rosneft's involvement in Mozambique's offshore gas fields represents a major investment in the continent's energy future (Trickett 2017).

- 3. Infrastructure development:** Russian firms have secured contracts for major infrastructure projects, including transportation networks, energy facilities, and industrial complexes. These projects often come with favorable financing terms, making them attractive to African governments.

- 4. Mining ventures:** Russian companies have invested in mining operations across Africa, particularly in gold, diamonds, and strategic minerals. These investments often come with agreements for processing and marketing the extracted resources.

- 5. Nuclear energy cooperation:** Rosatom, Russia's state nuclear energy corporation, has signed agreements with several African countries to develop nuclear power plants. These long-term projects not only provide energy solutions but also create lasting technological dependencies.

Military assistance and arms sales

A cornerstone of Russia's strategy has been providing military support and arms to various African nations. This includes weapons sales, training programs, and the deployment of private military contractors. This approach builds on historical ties and capitalizes on Russia's reputation as a major arms exporter.

Marten (2019) highlights the dual nature of Russia's military engagement in Africa, noting that it serves both economic and geopolitical objectives. Arms sales provide revenue for the Russian defense industry while also creating long-term dependencies and influence. Key elements of Russia's military assistance to Africa include:

1. **Arms sales:** Russia has become the largest arms supplier to Africa, accounting for 44% of the continent's arms imports between 2017 and 2021 (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2022). These sales range from small arms to advanced systems like fighter jets and air defense systems.

2. **Counterterrorism cooperation:** Russia has positioned itself as a partner in counterterrorism efforts, particularly in the Sahel region. This cooperation often includes intelligence sharing and joint operations.

3. **Peacekeeping missions:** Russia has participated in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa, using these deployments to enhance its military presence and influence on the continent.

4. **Private military contractors:** The deployment of Russian private military companies, most notably the Wagner Group, has become a significant aspect of Russia's engagement in Africa. Racz (2020) analyzes the complex relationship between these contractors and the Russian state, noting their role in advancing Russian interests in conflict zones.

5. **Training and advisory services:** Russian military personnel provide training to African armed forces, enhancing interoperability with Russian equipment and doctrines. This creates lasting ties between Russian and African military establishments.

Diplomatic outreach and soft power

Russia has complemented its economic and military initiatives with diplomatic efforts, including high-level summits, bilateral agreements, and support for African interests in international forums. Soft power initiatives

include educational exchanges and media outreach, although these remain limited compared to Western efforts.

Abramova (2024) argues that Russia's diplomatic engagement with Africa is strategic rather than tactical, aimed at building long-term partnerships and influence. This approach includes:

1. Bilateral partnerships: Russia has cultivated strong bilateral relationships with key African nations, often focusing on countries with strategic resources or geopolitical importance.

2. Educational exchanges: Russia has revived Soviet-era programs offering scholarships to African students, aiming to create a cadre of African elites with ties to Russia.

3. Media and information campaigns: Russian state-backed media outlets like RT and Sputnik have expanded their African coverage, offering alternative narratives to Western media (Siegel 2023).

4. Russia-Africa Summit: Initiated in 2019, this high-level forum brings together Russian and African leaders to discuss cooperation across various sectors. The summit symbolizes Russia's commitment to engaging with Africa as a bloc, similar to China's Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).

5. Support in international forums: Russia advocates for African interests in international organizations, positioning itself as a champion of African causes on the global stage.

However, Weiss and Rumer (2019) note that Russia's soft power initiatives in Africa face significant challenges, including limited resources compared to Western and Chinese efforts, and the lingering effects of Russia's retreat from Africa in the 1990s.

Infrastructure Development Projects

Russia has engaged in infrastructure projects across Africa, particularly in the energy sector. Rosatom's nuclear power plant agreements in several countries exemplify this approach, positioning Russia as a key player in Africa's energy future. Key aspects of Russia's infrastructure engagement include:

1. Digital infrastructure: Russian tech companies have shown increasing interest in Africa's growing digital economy, offering solutions in areas such as telecommunications and cybersecurity.

2. Industrial facilities: Russia has invested in the development of industrial complexes, particularly in the mining and energy sectors, often as part of broader resource extraction agreements.

3. Nuclear energy: Rosatom has signed agreements with several African countries, including Egypt, Nigeria, and Ghana, to develop nuclear power plants. These projects not only address energy needs but also create long-term technological dependencies.

4. Transportation networks: Russian companies have been involved in railway construction and modernization projects in several African countries, enhancing connectivity and trade potential.

However, as Marten (2019) points out, Russia's infrastructure investments in Africa are often more limited in scale compared to those of China or Western nations, reflecting Russia's more focused and strategic approach to engagement on the continent.

Case studies

The empirical analysis of specific regional engagements provides crucial insights into the practical implementation of strategic initiatives in Africa. This section examines three distinct cases — Sudan's maritime significance, the Central African Republic's security dynamics, and North African energy partnerships — to illustrate the varied manifestations of interstate cooperation. Through detailed examination of these cases, patterns emerge that demonstrate how theoretical frameworks of engagement translate into tangible diplomatic, economic, and security outcomes across different regional contexts.

Sudan and the Red Sea strategy

The proposed establishment of a Russian naval logistics center in Port Sudan highlights Moscow's strategic ambitions in the Red Sea region. This move, if realized, would provide Russia with a foothold in a critical maritime corridor and challenge Western influence in the area. Ramani (2021) analyzes Russia's strategy in Sudan, noting that it encompasses multiple dimensions:

1. Economic interests: Russia has invested in Sudan's gold mining sector and sees potential for further resource extraction.

2. Military presence: The naval facility would allow Russia to project power in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean, enhancing its global naval reach.

3. Political influence: Russia has cultivated ties with Sudan's military leadership, positioning itself as a key external partner during the country's political transition.

4. Regional dynamics: The presence in Sudan allows Russia to play a more significant role in Red Sea and Horn of Africa geopolitics.

However, the realization of this strategy faces challenges, including political instability in Sudan and opposition from other regional and global powers.

Central African Republic: military cooperation and resource extraction

Russia's involvement in the Central African Republic (CAR) demonstrates its willingness to engage in complex security environments. Through military training, arms sales, and the reported presence of private military contractors, Russia has gained significant influence in CAR, securing access to mineral resources in return. Olivier (2021) details the multifaceted nature of Russia's engagement in CAR:

1. Diplomatic protection: Russia has shielded the CAR government from international criticism, using its position in the UN Security Council to moderate sanctions and peacekeeping mandates.

2. Political influence: Russia has become a key supporter of President Faustin-Archange Touadéra's government, gaining significant political leverage.

3. Resource access: In return for its support, Russia has secured rights to explore and exploit CAR's mineral resources, particularly diamonds and gold.

4. Security provision: Russian private military contractors, particularly the Wagner Group, have played a crucial role in training CAR's armed forces and providing security to the government.

This case illustrates Russia's ability to leverage limited resources for significant geopolitical gain, albeit in a highly unstable environment.

North Africa: energy partnerships and political influence

In North Africa, particularly Libya and Algeria, Russia has sought to leverage its energy expertise and political relationships to gain influence. This includes involvement in Libya's civil conflict and energy sector partnerships with Algeria. Key aspects of Russia's engagement in North Africa include:

1. Algeria: Russia has cultivated strong ties with Algeria, focusing on energy cooperation, arms sales, and political alignment on regional issues. Algeria remains one of Russia's key partners in Africa.

2. Egypt: While maintaining its traditional relationship with the United States, Egypt has diversified its partnerships, with Russia playing an increasingly important role, particularly in nuclear energy development and arms sales.

3. Libya: Russia has supported the Libyan National Army led by Khalifa Haftar, providing military assistance and diplomatic backing. This involvement aims to secure a role for Russia in Libya's future political settlement and energy sector (Marten 2019).

Russia's approach in North Africa demonstrates its ability to navigate complex regional dynamics and compete with established Western influence in the region.

Challenges and limitations

The analysis of contemporary engagement strategies necessitates consideration of constraining factors and potential limitations. This section examines four critical challenges: Western response mechanisms, regional stability concerns, resource allocation constraints, and the dynamics of great power competition. Through systematic evaluation of these factors, this analysis provides insight into the practical limitations and strategic considerations that shape the effectiveness and sustainability of international engagement initiatives in Africa.

Western counterstrategies

The United States and its allies are likely to intensify efforts to counter Russian influence in Africa, potentially leading to increased competition and tension on the continent. Gopaldas (2023) notes that Western nations have

begun to reassess their engagement with Africa in light of growing Russian and Chinese influence. Potential Western counterstrategies include:

1. Diplomatic initiatives to reinforce traditional partnerships.
2. Efforts to highlight the potential risks of engagement with Russia.
3. Enhanced security cooperation and military assistance programs.
4. Increased economic investment and development aid.

Regional instability and security concerns

Political volatility in many African nations complicates long-term strategic planning and investment for Russia. The risks associated with operating in unstable environments may limit Russia's ability to fully capitalize on economic opportunities or maintain consistent influence.

Duursma and Masuhr (2020) highlight the challenges Russia faces in navigating complex local conflicts and balancing relationships with competing factions. The reliance on private military contractors, while providing flexibility, also carries reputational risks and potential for escalation.

Resource constraints and competing priorities

Russia's ability to sustain large-scale commitments across Africa may be limited, especially given ongoing engagements elsewhere and the economic impact of Western sanctions. Marten (2019) argues that Russia's engagement in Africa, while strategically important, remains relatively low-cost compared to its commitments in other regions.

Competing priorities, such as the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and tensions with NATO, may divert resources and attention from African initiatives. This could limit Russia's ability to compete with more economically powerful actors like China in the long term.

Competition from other global powers

China, in particular, has a significant head start in terms of economic engagement with Africa, presenting a challenge to Russia's ambitions on the continent. Mlambo, Kushamba and Simawu (2016) provide a com-

parative analysis of Chinese and Russian strategies in Africa, highlighting China's more comprehensive and resource-intensive approach. Other emerging powers, such as Turkey, India, and Gulf states, are also increasing their presence in Africa, creating a more crowded and competitive environment for influence.

Implications for global geopolitics

The evolving dynamics of international engagement in Africa present significant implications for the global geopolitical order. This section examines four key dimensions of these changes: the emergence of multipolar dynamics, the transformation of traditional spheres of influence, the intensification of great power relations, and the resultant opportunities and challenges for African states. Through analysis of these interconnected elements, this examination provides insight into how regional developments contribute to broader shifts in contemporary international relations.

Shift towards multipolarity

Russia's engagement in Africa contributes to the erosion of Western-dominated unipolarity, fostering a more multipolar global order. Allard and Masuhr (2022) argue that Russia's Africa strategy is part of a broader effort to reshape the international system and challenge Western hegemony. This shift has several implications:

1. Challenges to established norms and institutions of the liberal international order.
2. Increased complexity in global governance and decision-making.
3. Potential for new forms of international cooperation and coalition-building.

Impact on Western influence in Africa

The increased Russian presence challenges traditional Western partnerships and influence across the continent. This may lead to:

1. A reevaluation of Western approaches to engagement with African nations.

2. Potential for increased competition in areas such as development aid, security cooperation, and economic investment.
3. Shifts in African nations' foreign policy orientations and alliance structures.

Potential for great power competition

Africa may become a theater for intensified competition among global powers, raising the risk of proxy conflicts and economic rivalries. Siegel (2023) warns of the potential for democratic backsliding in some African countries as competing powers prioritize strategic interests over governance concerns. This competition could manifest in:

1. Diplomatic maneuvering for influence in regional organizations and international forums.
2. Economic competition, particularly in strategic sectors like energy and rare earth minerals.
3. Increased military presence and security engagements by various powers.

Opportunities and risks for African Nations

African countries may benefit from the increased competition for their resources and strategic partnerships, but they also face the risk of exploitation and neocolonial dynamics. Handy and Djilo (2022) highlight the diverse responses of African nations to increased great power competition, noting that many seek to balance relationships with multiple partners. Potential outcomes include:

1. Challenges to governance and sovereignty as external powers seek to influence domestic affairs.
2. Increased bargaining power for African nations in negotiations with global powers.
3. Opportunities for economic diversification and infrastructure development.
4. Risks of becoming caught in geopolitical rivalries or proxy conflicts.

Conclusion

This concluding analysis synthesizes the multidimensional aspects of Russia's strategic engagement in Africa through theoretical frameworks and empirical observations. The section examines four key elements: the theoretical implications for contemporary international relations, a systematic review of principal findings, an assessment of future trajectories, and identification of critical areas for subsequent research. Through this structured examination, the analysis provides comprehensive insights into the evolving nature of global power dynamics and their manifestation in regional contexts.

The kaleidoscope of power: Russia's African gambit in a multipolar world

Russia's strategic pivot to Africa represents a fascinating case study in the evolving dynamics of 21st-century international relations. Through the multifaceted theoretical lens we've applied – incorporating neorealism, constructivism, neo-imperialism, soft power, and geoeconomics – we can appreciate the complexity and nuance of Moscow's engagement with the African continent.

Like a kaleidoscope shifting its patterns, Russia's approach in Africa reveals the intricate interplay of power, identity, and economic interests in shaping global affairs. The neorealist pursuit of power balancing and security maximization is evident in Russia's efforts to counteract Western influence and secure strategic resources. Yet, this material-focused perspective alone fails to capture the full picture.

The constructivist elements of Russia's strategy — its emphasis on shared anti-colonial narratives and the cultivation of a great power identity — highlight the enduring importance of ideas and norms in international relations. Moscow's invocation of historical ties and its positioning as an alternative to Western partnerships demonstrate the power of narrative in shaping geopolitical alignments.

Through the neo-imperialist lens, we observe a modern twist on age-old patterns of resource extraction and spheres of influence. However, Russia's approach differs from historical imperialism, relying more on economic leverage, private military contractors, and strategic partnerships than direct territorial control. This nuanced strategy reflects the constraints and opportunities of the contemporary global order.

The soft power and public diplomacy aspects of Russia's engagement — from educational exchanges to media campaigns — underscore the multidimensional nature of influence in the information age. In an era where perceptions can shape reality, the battle for hearts and minds is as crucial as any material gain.

Geoeconomics emerges as a critical component of Russia's African strategy, illustrating how economic instruments are increasingly wielded for geopolitical ends. Energy partnerships, infrastructure projects, and the strategic use of state-owned enterprises blur the lines between economics and politics, challenging traditional notions of power projection.

As we look to the future, Russia's pivot to Africa raises profound questions about the nature of global order in a multipolar world. Will this engagement lead to a more balanced international system, as proponents of multipolarity argue? Or will it result in a new scramble for Africa, with competing powers vying for influence at the expense of African agency and development?

The implications extend beyond Africa and Russia. This case study offers insights into how middle powers and emerging economies might navigate an international system in flux. It challenges us to reconsider traditional dichotomies between Global North and South, East and West, and to envision new forms of international cooperation and competition.

Ultimately, Russia's strategic pivot to Africa serves as a microcosm of the broader shifts reshaping our world. It reminds us that in the complex tapestry of global affairs, power is multifaceted, identities are fluid, and the pursuit of national interests is ever-evolving. As scholars and policymakers grapple with these dynamics, they would do well to embrace theoretical pluralism, recognizing that no single perspective can fully capture the kaleidoscopic nature of 21st-century international relations.

As Africa becomes an increasingly important theater in global politics, the continent's own agency and aspirations must not be overlooked. The success or failure of Russia's strategy — and indeed, the engagement of all external powers — will ultimately depend on how well it aligns with the diverse needs and ambitions of African nations themselves.

Accordingly, Russia's African gambit offers a compelling window into the future of global power dynamics. It challenges us to think beyond traditional paradigms and to appreciate the intricate dance of material and ideational factors in shaping our world. As we move deeper into an era of uncertainty and transformation, such nuanced understanding will be crucial

for navigating the complexities of international relations in the decades to come.

Summary of key findings

Russia's strategic pivot to Africa is driven by a complex interplay of economic, geopolitical, and resource-related motivations. Moscow employs a multifaceted approach, combining economic cooperation, military assistance, diplomatic outreach, and infrastructure development to expand its influence on the continent. Key findings include:

1. Economic imperatives, particularly in the wake of Western sanctions, have accelerated Russia's pivot towards Africa.
2. Military cooperation and arms sales serve as a key pillar of Russia's influence strategy in Africa.
3. Russia's approach is characterized by targeted, high-impact interventions rather than broad-based engagement across the continent.
4. Russia's engagement in Africa is part of a broader strategy to challenge Western global dominance and promote a multipolar world order.

Russia's engagement in Africa is a critical component of its broader strategy to challenge Western dominance and promote a multipolar world order. This approach reflects the changing dynamics of global power and the increasing importance of the Global South in international affairs.

Future prospects for Russia-Africa relations

While there are significant opportunities for deepening Russia-Africa relations, challenges such as Western counterstrategies, regional instability, and competition from other global powers must be navigated. The future of Russia's engagement in Africa will likely depend on its ability to sustain long-term commitments and adapt to changing regional dynamics.

This study highlights the importance of understanding the dynamics of emerging multipolarity and the evolving strategies of major powers in regions like Africa. It challenges traditional Western-centric models of international relations and emphasizes the need for more nuanced approaches to analyzing global power dynamics.

Recommendations for further research

Future research should explore:

1. The effectiveness of Russian soft power initiatives in shaping African perceptions and alignments.
2. The implications of technological cooperation between Russia and African nations, particularly in areas such as cybersecurity and digital infrastructure.
3. The long-term impacts of Russia's engagement on African political systems and economic development.
4. The potential for cooperation or conflict between Russia and other non-Western powers in Africa.

In conclusion, Russia's strategic pivot to Africa represents a significant development in contemporary international relations. As the global order continues to evolve towards multipolarity, understanding the motivations, strategies, and implications of Russia's engagement in Africa will be crucial for policymakers, scholars, and stakeholders seeking to navigate the complexities of 21st-century geopolitics.

Appendix A: Timeline of key events in Russia-Africa relations

This timeline provides a chronological overview of significant events in the development of Russia's engagement with Africa from the Soviet era to the present day.

- 1960s-1980s: Soviet Union's active engagement in Africa during the Cold War.
- 1991: Collapse of the Soviet Union and subsequent decline in Russia-Africa relations.
- 2000: Russia-Africa Forum in Moscow, marking renewed interest.
- 2006: Putin's visit to South Africa, the first by a Russian leader.
- 2009: Dmitry Medvedev's tour of Egypt, Nigeria, Namibia, and Angola.
- 2013: Russia writes off \$20 billion in African debt.
- 2017: Russia signs nuclear power agreements with several African countries.
- 2018: Central African Republic allows Russian military trainers.
- 2019: First Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi.
- 2022: Russia-Ukraine conflict impacts Russia-Africa relations.

- 2023: Second Russia-Africa Summit in St. Petersburg.

Appendix B: Academic tables:

Table 1: Russia-Africa trade volume (2010-2023)

Year	Trade Volume (Billion USD)	Year-over-Year Growth (%)
2010	5.62	-
2011	7.25	29.0
2012	9.41	29.8
2013	11.02	17.1
2014	12.45	13.0
2015	11.12	-10.7
2016	12.01	8.0
2017	14.78	23.1
2018	17.56	18.8
2019	20.03	14.1
2020	14.35	-28.4
2021	17.62	22.8
2022	18.04	2.4
2023	18.32	1.6

Source: Russian Federal Customs Service 2023.

Table 2: Top 5 African trading partners for Russia (2023)

Rank	Country	Trade Volume (Billion USD)	Main Exports to Russia	Main Imports from Russia
1	Egypt	4.62	Agricultural products	Wheat, arms
2	Algeria	3.15	Natural gas	Wheat, arms
3	Morocco	2.48	Phosphates	Petroleum products
4	South Africa	1.95	Precious metals, fruits	Fertilizers, wheat
5	Nigeria	1.42	Cocoa, rubber	Wheat, fertilizers

Source: Russian Ministry of Economic Development 2023.

Table 3: Sectoral breakdown of Russian investments in Africa (2023)

Sector	Investment (Billion USD)	Percentage of Total
Energy and Mining	7.25	42.3%
Arms and Military Tech	3.84	22.4%
Infrastructure	2.56	14.9%
Agriculture	1.72	10.0%
Telecommunications	0.95	5.5%
Other	0.84	4.9%
Total	17.16	100%

Source: Russian Direct Investment Fund 2023.

Table 4: Russian Arms Exports to Africa

Region	Major Systems	Notable Trends
North Africa	• Su-30MKA fighters (Algeria) • T-90 tanks • S-400 air defense systems	• Largest regional recipient of Russian arms • Approximately 75% of African imports
East Africa	• Mi-35 helicopters • T-72 tanks • Air defense equipment	• Growing market share • Focus on counter-insurgency equipment
West Africa	• Mi-17 transports helicopters • Small arms • Patrol vessels	• Smaller but consistent market • Emphasis on maritime security
Southern Africa	• Su-30K fighters (Angola) • Military transport aircraft • Training systems	• Declining share since 2010 • Focus on modernization of Soviet-era equipment

Source: Hussain 2024.

Table 5: Comparison of major powers’ engagement in Africa (2023)

Aspect	Russia	China	United States	European Union
Trade Volume (USD)	18.32 billion	254 billion	64.3 billion	295 billion
Primary Focus	Energy, arms, minerals	Infrastructure, resources	Security, development	Trade, development
Military Presence	Limited, Private Military Companies	Growing, first base	Extensive (AFRICOM)	Training missions
Development Aid	Limited, mostly technical	Extensive loans	Large grants	Largest donor
Diplomatic Approach	Non-interference	Win-win cooperation	Democracy promotion	Normative power
Soft Power Strategy	Education, media	Cultural centers	Exchange programs	Education, culture

Sources: Droin, Mathieu, and Tina Dolbaia 2023.

Table 6: African voting patterns on UN resolutions related to Russian actions (2022-2023)

Resolution	In Favor	Against	Abstain	Absent
Condemning Russian invasion of Ukraine	28	1	17	8
Suspending Russia from Human Rights Council	9	9	23	13
Territorial integrity of Ukraine	30	1	15	8
Russian reparations to Ukraine	12	5	30	7

Source: United Nations voting records 2022-2023.

Table 7: Key Russian institutions in Africa policy

Institution	Type	Primary Role in Africa
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Government	Diplomatic relations, policy formulation
Ministry of Defense	Government	Military cooperation, arms sales
Rosatom	State Corporation	Nuclear energy projects
Rosneft	State-owned Company	Oil and gas exploration
Gazprom	State-owned Company	Natural gas projects
Wagner Group	Private Military Company	Security services, military training
Russian Direct Investment Fund	Sovereign Wealth Fund	Investment in African projects

Table 8: Theoretical framework application

Theory	Key Concepts	Application to Russia-Africa Relations
Neorealism	Power balancing, security maximization	Russia's efforts to counterbalance Western influence
Constructivism	Identity, norms, shared narratives	Emphasis on anti-colonial solidarity, alternative to West
Neo-imperialism	Resource extraction, spheres of influence	Russia's focus on resource-rich countries, use of Private Military Companies
Soft Power	Cultural influence, public diplomacy	Educational exchanges, media outreach (RT, Sputnik)
Geoeconomics	Economic tools for geopolitical ends	Energy partnerships, strategic use of debt forgiveness

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Russia's strategic pivot to Africa, analyzing the motivations, approaches, and implications of Moscow's renewed engagement with the continent. Utilizing a multifaceted theoretical framework that incorporates neorealism, constructivism, neo-imperialism, soft power, and geoeconomics, the research explores how Russia's African strategy reflects broader shifts in global power dynamics. The study investigates Russia's economic cooperation, military assistance, diplomatic outreach, and infrastructure development initiatives in Africa, using case studies from Sudan, the Central African Republic, and North Africa. It considers the challenges and limitations of Russia's approach, as well as the potential impacts on Western influence, African agency, and the emerging multipolar world order. The research concludes that Russia's engagement in Africa is part of a larger strategy to challenge Western dominance and promote multipolarity, with significant implications for international relations theory and practice.

KEYWORDS

Russia-Africa relations. Multipolarity. Geopolitics. Soft power. Neo-imperialism. Geoeconomics. Great Power competition.

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EGYPTIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER AL-SISI GOVERNMENT: PATHS TO DIVERSIFICATION OF PARTNERSHIPS

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Introduction

The second half of 2023 was marked by an important process involving Egyptian external action at the regional and global levels. In August, within the framework of the XV BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, the Afro-Arab country was among the six states formally invited to join the multilateral initiative starting in 2024. The expansion of the emerging bloc, based on the possible presence of actors located in strategic regional spaces such as the Middle East and North Africa, has assumed importance in the face of the uncertainties that drive a complex scenario of hegemonic transition. For Cairo, such a measure represented, among other things, the consolidation of a process of diversification in its external partnerships, strengthening ties with new global actors (China and Russia), as well as other emerging powers.

In the complex symbiosis between the search for preservation of autonomy and domestic security, as well as attempts to mobilize material resources aimed at confronting macroeconomic challenges and building a new development process (Hinnebusch and Shama 2014), such a move constitutes an important analytical window into the transformations that have occurred in Egypt's foreign policy over the past years. Constituting, in the view of Gamal M. Selim (2020), the third major restructuring in Egypt's history as a Republic since 1953, the perspectives on a regional and global repositioning of Cairo in the face of systemic and domestic dynamics involve a set of factors,

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such as the conciliation between a discourse of full resumption of external action after years of domestic instability following the fall of Hosni Mubarak (1981–2011) and the instrumentalization of its geostrategic position between Africa and the Arab World, in the midst of increasing external vulnerability.

In this sense, this article analyzes the main domestic and systemic characteristics involved in the transformations of Egypt's international insertion over the past two decades, considering the mediation between the preservation of traditional lines of external action and the consolidation of new partnerships, offering geopolitical and geoeconomic alternatives in the face of escalating global tensions. At the intersection of World-Systems Analysis (WSA) and theoretical aspects of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), this study evaluates Egypt's potential to occupy a historical position of articulation between global and regional dynamics, considering its condition as a Bridge State between two continents. Through qualitative analysis, combining a review of specialized literature on contemporary Egypt and journalistic texts, a multilevel perspective is developed, seeking to answer the following questions: what is the nature of the process of diversifying Egypt's external relations? How do contemporary macroeconomic and geopolitical challenges limit or provide opportunities for the production of an autonomous type of insertion by Cairo?

This text is divided into three parts. First, the main theoretical-methodological assumptions guiding the development of this study are established. Then, an analysis of Egypt's international insertion trajectory since the beginning of the military-led Republic in the 1950s is carried out. Finally, the main elements constituting the domestic and systemic environment surrounding external diversification efforts in recent years are highlighted.

Theoretical-Methodological Pathways between Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) and World-Systems Analysis (WSA)

In the diagnosis of the explanatory insufficiencies of the main theoretical currents of International Relations regarding the heterogeneity of behavior of States of the same stature in the international system, and in light of the emerging challenges with the formation of a bipolar order during the Cold War (Gonçalves and Pinheiro 2020), FPA emerged from the 1950s onwards in the face of the concern to understand foreign policy from the study of the decision-making process, considering the role of different actors, decision-making units, perceptions and ideas, as well as other domestic and systemic factors shaping the initiatives and reactions of the State in response

to international actors. In the midst of a relatively multifaceted development, in line with the more general transformations of field and the emergence of specific debates of the FPA, a set of new perspectives expanded theoretical diversity throughout the final decades of the 20th century.

Among the main changes, the abandonment of an excessively generalizing perspective from the first studies of comparative foreign policy gave way to more compact analyses, heterogeneous analyses in methods and objectives. Thus, contributions such as that of Charles Hermann's in "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy" pointed to new alternative for reading the changes that occurred in the foreign policy of the same State, reinforcing both the importance of analyzing the decision-making process and evaluating its results through a dual historical look involving both domestic politics and the characteristics of the system and the institutional behavior of the country.

Having as its original landmarks the diagnoses of the occurrence of multiple changes in international politics at the end of the Cold War and the emergence of new theoretical challenges from that context for FPA, Charles Hermann (1990) established a model structured around the recognition of four levels or degrees of change in the foreign policy of the same State, as well as the existence of multiple domestic and systemic sources about such transformations. In what he classifies as adjustment, the author draws attention to changes in emphasis or efforts, preserving not only the objectives, but also the materialization strategies. Raising a qualitative dimension, the changes in the program constitute the second level. Despite being marked by the maintenance of objectives, these transformations directly affect the methods and means, influencing the definition of new international insertion strategies. Titled as changes or redefinitions of objectives, the third type involves the transformation in the purposes of external action. Finally, international changes or reorientations constitute the highest level of transformation, based on the "adoption of a new approach to world affairs" (Gonçalves and Pinheiro 2020, 221, our translation)³.

As vectors capable of influencing changes of different natures, Hermann identified four sources. In the first place, the leader can favor transformations in foreign policy by transforming his particular visions into guidelines or foundations for production of concrete governmental initiatives, having as possible roots the charisma, the capacity for influence or the exploitation of authoritarian command structures. Still examining the decision-making

3 In the original: "*adoção de nova abordagem em relação aos assuntos mundiais*" (Gonçalves and Pinheiro 2020, 221).

circles, the bureaucracy can be seen as another agent of change. Through factors like the level of information and intelligence, these transformations are driven by power struggles and influence within governmental structures. Besides the leader and bureaucracy, domestic restructuring constitutes a third source by highlighting the role of the correlation of political and social forces in defining State policies. Beyond national borders, external shocks reside at an exogenous level of change production, encompassing phenomena that drive concerns for decision-makers at a domestic level, becoming the basis for changes in intensity, strategy or objective.

As a theoretical-methodological tool, Charles Hermann's model draws attention to its different possibilities for inclusion in studies on the development trajectory of a State's foreign policy. Its emphasis on evaluating so-called self-correcting changes, those occurring within the same government, reinforces the relatively dynamic nature of the process of constructing external action, which is susceptible to a wide range of fluctuations. Applied to other contexts of more significant transformations in domestic politics, involving transitions of government or regime, this analytical proposal broadens the understanding of the specificities that constitute a given actor's external relations.

In affirming a multi-level analysis, considering the complex interactions between a changing world system, the direction of political and social struggle at the domestic level and behavior of decision-makers, the premises of WSA are adopted as a search framework that aims both at the challenge of interpreting the global situation and as an alternative for assessing the development of historical capitalism over the centuries. Seen as an "alternative and counter-hegemonic approach to the mainstream of international relations" (Voigt 2007, 101, our translation)⁴, WSA was forged as part of the critique of the model of analysis that has been dominant in the Social Sciences until then, in the critique of the so-called Modernization Theory and the perspective of producing answers about the nature of the transformations occurring in global geopolitics and geoeconomics from the end of the 1960s onwards.

Considering that "the economic, political, and military factors that contributed to the United States' hegemony are the same factors that will produce the imminent decline of the United States" (Wallerstein 2004, 21, our

⁴ In the original: "*abordagem alternativa e contra-hegemônica ao mainstream das relações internacionais*" (Voigt 2007, 101).

translation)⁵, the disintegration of the cycle led by Washington since the late 1960s has shown signs of deepening in the last two decades. In the growing disconnect between the unilateralist discourse of the main US foreign policy formulators and the pace of global transformations, the rise of new states such as China, the Russian Federation, and other emerging powers, as well as the crisis of multilateralism, reflect some of the meanings of the disintegration of an order marked until then by a high degree of systemic institutionalization and centered on the Atlantic space. Impasses related to the relations between Nation-States, governments, societies and the environment take on even deeper contours with the rise of right-wing and far-right movements, marked by discourses of opposition to the characteristics of liberal democracies and the phenomenon of globalization. Such directions of internal and external political struggles show other setbacks for constituent aspects of the old global order, such as the accentuation of the internationalization of the globe, the valorization of the ideals of representative democracy and capitalism, in its most different facets, as the dominant mode of socio-economic organization.

At the intersection between the perspective of hegemonic transition and the configuration of significant changes in the regional and domestic environments, it seeks to understand the paths involving Egypt's foreign relations diversification process, considering its impacts on the country's contemporary trajectory. To undertake this exercise, we move on to an analysis of the development of Egyptian foreign policy throughout the second half of the 20th century.

Egyptian Foreign Policy between Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak

On July 23, 1952, King Farouk I was overthrown through a political process led by the Free Officers Movement. With General Mohamed Naguib as its public figure, the new government, inserted in the context of a kind of dual authority by sharing power with the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), lived with uncertainties of different kinds. If this complex process of political construction culminated in the design of a horizon of multifaceted transformations, the consolidation of power after the first years of the Revolution demonstrated the continuous nature of the political formation of the

5 In the original: "*os fatores econômicos, políticos e militares que contribuíram para a hegemonia dos Estados Unidos são os mesmos fatores que produzirão o iminente declínio dos Estados Unidos*" (Wallerstein 2004, 21).

military movement. In this context, from the perspective of foreign policy, the Egyptian military did not necessarily organize an immediate process of international reorientation⁶. In the coexistence between qualitative changes, which constitute a change of program, and the possibility of redefining objectives, the country's two main international agendas involved advancing the old nationalist demands, especially the total withdrawal of the British from Egyptian territory, in addition to the search resources for the dual modernization involving the army and the country's socio-economic structures.

In this sense, preserving one of the horizons constituted in the long trajectory of resistance to British domination and seeking alternatives for the realization of the emerging class demands in the process of fighting against the most different forms of reproduction of social and economic inequality in the country, the initial moves of the new government were marked by the resumption of negotiations with the British, the expansion of relations with the US and the opening of a secret dialogue with Israel. In the first case, progress was only achieved through the fragmentation of agendas, culminating in an agreement recognizing Sudanese self-determination and a referendum on the country's future, as well as progress in the evacuation of troops from the Canal Zone starting in 1954.

Regarding Washington, the prospect of closer ties with the new Egyptian government was affirmed from its early steps. The reaffirmation of Egypt's strategic importance in outlining a policy to contain communism and the interest in regional stability influenced the US position, while the military's diagnosis of possible competition between the capitalist superpower and the British state in regional politics stimulated the policy of rapprochement established by the military (Takeyh 2000). In addition to the signing of technical cooperation agreements and CIA collaboration in building Egyptian intelligence, the anti-communist nature of the Egyptian regime and US support for the progress to the direct negotiations between Britain and Egypt pointed to the possibility of building solid relations between the two countries. However, Egypt's reluctance to participate in the construction of a regional security treaty and Washington's objections to providing military assistance to the new government in its challenge of modernizing the army, contributed to the end of the short period of understanding between the two countries.

⁶ This perspective is reinforced by Eberhard Kienle (2022). According to this author, two central issues that shaped Egypt's foreign relations during the final years of the Monarchy and the period following its overthrow in 1952 were the pursuit of so-called full political independence and the crafting of a relatively prominent role at the regional level.

The overthrow of the Egyptian monarchy was viewed favorably by Israeli authorities. According to Avi Shlaim (2004), the prevailing assessment in the political circles of the neighboring country was that the military would be occupied with domestic issues, seeking some form of regional stabilization. In the assessment of a window of opportunity for the constitution of a lasting agreement between the two countries, Egyptians and Israelis established, through secret diplomacy, bridges between 1952 and 1955 with the aim of advancing on different issues of interest such as economic cooperation, free navigation and even support from Tel Aviv. Even though there was understandings between Nasser and Moshe Sharett, aspects such as the more general divisions issues over Israel's regional policy among its main policymakers, the emergence of conspiratorial and provocative acts, including border zone conflicts, as well as mutual mistrust contributed to the relative failure of this series of talks (Yahel 2016).

Despite the challenge of building a new political-institutional order with the emergence of the Republic, Egypt's foreign policy in the early years of the new regime also encompassed other initiatives that, in general, had a direct impact on the arenas valued in the post-war period. Regarding the Arab world, Reem Abou El-Fadl (2019) states that the military did not marginalize regional action. In addition to establishing initiatives such as the organizing of diplomatic missions and constitution of a Conference of States in 1952, Egypt remained one of the most important actors in political-diplomatic and strategic support to liberation movements in the Maghreb. Among African and Muslim countries, proposals such as organizing an Islamic front and supporting movements fighting against colonialism and imperialism established conditions for dialogue in relations to Asian and African actors (Ismael 1968).

A process of restructuring Egypt's foreign policy coincided, to some extent, with Gamal Abdel Nasser's consolidation and the stabilization of the regime from the end of 1954. The resolution of one of the fundamental objectives of Egypt's foreign policy with the evacuation of troops from the Suez Canal and the limited progress in the search for strategic support from the US paved the way for more substantive changes in the country's international insertion. Ideologically, the first signs of transformation came with the publication of "The Philosophy of the Revolution" (1954). Drawing attention to the multifaceted nature of Egyptian identity and its impact on the defining of the main vectors of external action, Nasser consolidated a proposal to recognize three circles of influence: the Arab, the Muslim, and the African. If this affirmation did not represent a radical break with the past, the attribution of a certain leadership potential to Egypt in these three

spheres represent a rise in expectations regarding the exercise of “a role of growing importance in world affairs” (Hrbek 2010, 174, our translation)⁷.

At the regional level, the period between the second half of the 1950s and the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 was marked by the existence of relative Egyptian hegemony. Defined by Silvia Ferabolli (2013) as a phase of political centralization led by Gamal Abdel Nasser, this condition was based on the appreciation of the diagnosis of Egypt’s demographic, historical and cultural weight among Arab States, the strengthening of Arab nationalism as a domestic political force and ideological foundation in favour for a deeper movement of regional construction, as well as the growing appreciation of its geostrategic position in relation to the increased interest of the superpowers in the region. The production of a regional geopolitical arrangement based on Cairo’s leadership assumed certain particularities. First, the country found itself increasingly drawn into various domestic and regional conflicts, culminating in pressures in favour of advancing union projects, such as the integration with Syria from 1958, as well as the support offered to republican forces in the Yemeni War in the following decade. Second, Egypt was unable to produce a stable order. The absence of regional consensus was made explicit by the rivalry between nationalist regimes and parties, animosities between Nasser and States more aligned with the West, and the interference of Cold War power systems.

The consolidation of a new phase in Egypt’s foreign policy also involved global rearrangements. Concerning the movement of expanding the frontiers of bipolar conflict, the deterioration of relations between Egypt and the US coexisted with a process of rapprochement with Moscow. In addition to breaking the Western monopoly on the war trade with the Middle East, Soviet support for structuring projects such as the Aswan Dam and the counterweight exerted in the context of the Suez War (1956) transformed Cairo into a strategic ally in building bridges with the so-called Third World. However, these relations faced certain challenges due to the anti-communist nature of the Egyptian regime, Cairo’s role with the Non-Aligned Movement and changes at regional level, leading to processes of distancing. These oscillations, although did not culminate in a process of rupture, favored timid gravitational influence in Egyptian foreign policy, such as the prospect of improved relations with the US in the first half of the 1960s.

Constituting a kind of fourth circle of Egyptian projection (Hrbek 2010), the country’s participation in the process of political construction

⁷ In the original: “*um papel de crescente importância nos assuntos mundiais*” (Hrbek 2010, 174).

of the Third World as a historical subject involved different vectors such as the demand for Non-Alignment as a strategy for autonomous international insertion, direct participation in the construction of the Non-Aligned Movement and the defense of a maximalist integration project within the African continent. Based on principles such as the self-determination of the peoples, the defense of development, the fight against racism and the struggle for disarmament, Egyptian foreign policy during Nasser's time has the prospect of creating a new global order which, based on Cairo's external projection, could produce solutions to maintain the strategy of defending Arab socialism as the foundation for the country's modernization and the search for some level in face of regional and systemic constraints.

A new process of reorientations of Egyptian foreign policy occurred between the 1960s and 1970s (Dessouki 2008; Selim 2020). Nasser's physical death (1970) symbolically represented the last stage of the decline of Arab nationalism. The humiliating defeat in the Six-Day War (1967) strengthened the case for conservative regimes in the region, paving the way for the expansion of the West's presence (Vizentini 2012). In addition, the Egyptian State's difficulty in responding to the set of transformations observed in domestic society influenced the erosion of Arab socialism. In the midst of this, the rise of Anwar Al-Sadat initiated the so-called "de-Nasserization." In an attempt to move away from the legacy of his predecessor, the new Egyptian president sought to change the correlation of political forces at the domestic level, moving closer to the so-called liberals and Islamic groups, as well as producing substantive changes in the regional and global relations framework.

In this context, the three structural transformations in Egypt's international position involved a strategic rapprochement with the US, the establishment of a separate peace with Israel and an increased dependence on the Gulf Arab States (Selim 2020). Sadat caused a kind of geopolitical and geoeconomic turn in Egypt's trajectory, stimulating the development of two processes: economic liberalization (*Infitah*) and rapprochement with the so-called Western world.

From the perspective of foreign policy, the alignment with the West would be sustained on three aspects. According to Ali E. Hillal Dessouki (2008), the Sadat government sought, through the establishment of closer relations with the US, to increase the margins for negotiation with Israel, in exchange for the recovery of territories lost in the 1967 War, and the formation of a more stable regional environment. Additionally, the aim was to attract both military and economic aid as well as a rapprochement with the Gulf Arab states. Claiming a certain naturalness about Egypt leadership at the regional

level (Hinnebusch and Shama 2014), Sadat aimed to reduce the country's levels of participation in conflicts and initiatives costly to the state, focusing on what was considered to be the country's immediate national interests.

During Hosni Mubarak's government (1981-2011), foreign policy was marked by the emergence of various domestic and external challenges. In the context of adjustments to the guidelines established by Sadat, Egypt's foreign relations were marked by the need to confront isolation in the Arab World after the Camp David Accords, the harmful effects of Sadat's economic opening policy, a reduction of domestic tensions after waves of de-Nasserization, and the strengthening of Islamism in the political scene. Despite the rhetoric, Mubarak strengthened ties with the US, consolidating the country as a strategic ally. According to Gamal M. Selim (2020), Mubarak's foreign policy was based on at least two principles. First, consolidating the regional system launched with the normalization of relations between Egypt and Israel, as well as the transformation of Cairo into one of Washington's main allies in the region. Second, the preservation of a strategic alliance with the Arab States of the Persian Gulf, based on a principle of economic dependence on oil exporters and the construction of informal security alliances.

Although consolidating the reorientation process that began in the 1970s, Mubarak also sought to establish a more active regional role, involving direct participation in sub-regional integration initiatives, support for peace missions and developing more substantive concerns about regional security, especially in the Horn of Africa, given the importance of Nile politics. Regarding Arab states, in addition to resuming diplomatic relations with many of the subsystem's actors, Egypt maintained close relations with Gulf States, in an articulation that directly involved geopolitical and geo-economic considerations. If, from a security standpoint, Cairo was an essential part of the protection policies for the petromonarchies, The former's increased economic dependence on the latter entities reinforced the asymmetries in the regional structure, with a focus on the importance of economic cooperation exercised by rentier States and the capital remittances provided by the thousands of Egyptian workers who made up part of the labor force in those countries. Accompanying other Maghreb States, a process of economic and diplomatic rapprochement with the European Union took on importance in the 1990s with the formation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, a policy which, despite enabling some level of economic diversification, still fell far short of Egyptian expectations.

Between Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak, Egyptian foreign policy in the second half of the 20th century underwent different processes of change

that, despite their multiple intensities and natures, reflected the challenges of a country pressured by the challenge of economic survival and vulnerable to the more general transformations taking place at systemic, regional and domestic levels. More than a decade after the end of the Cold War, a new, non-linear stage in partnership diversification was inaugurated as a result of the deepening political and social contradictions involving Egypt, as well as impulses from different dimensions. In a kind of historical crossing, this movement was challenged by the complex changes that occurred after the 2008 crisis.

From Mubarak's time to Al-Sisi's "Egypt ha returned": meanings of a historical crossing

The main foundations of the international reorientation process promoted by Sadat and largely maintained by Mubarak were still limited in the mid-1990s. The normalization of relations with Israel did not evolve in the direction of regional stability, being directly impacted by the friction between Tel Aviv and its neighbors, as well as the effects of such issues on Egyptian public opinion. In relation to their Arab neighbors, fluctuations in oil and natural gas prices directly affected the Gulf States' ability to assist the Egyptian economy, reducing investments and economic aid. In addition, policies of labor nationalization in the Gulf (Saudization) directly affected the number of Egyptians who contributed to the country's macroeconomy through capital remittances.

More dependent on the West (Goldschmidt Jr. 2008; Hinnebusch and Shama 2014), Egypt found itself strategically vulnerable in face of US efforts to produce a new regional order from an exogenous perspective. In the midst of this, processes such as the Gulf War (1990-1991) and later, the attacks of September 11 (2001) and the War on Terror required a difficult balance on the part of the Egyptian government between reacting to US pressures and containing dissent in the domestic environment.

In this environment of tension between the regime's external and domestic bases, issues such as anti-terrorism agendas and anti-American rhetoric added to the intensification of the country's contradictions. In a multi-party parliamentary structure, authoritarianism and limited liberalization coexisted, reflecting processes such as the reaction to the growth of Islamic fundamentalism, government wear and tear in the face of the adverse socio-economic situation and international pressures. Additionally, significant

demographic growth, accompanied by rising unemployment, a decrease in arable land, and widening social inequalities created an explosive situation, calling into question the stability of a peculiar neoliberal order.

Considering these aspects, the first signs of change in Egyptian foreign policy were visible during Mubarak's government. Amid a reduction in US military and economic assistance, Egypt sought to establish a degree of external autonomy (Vizentini 2012). Despite not breaking with the basic lines of the triangular relationship and Egypt's dependence on the Gulf states (Selim 2020), a first trend of diversifying partnerships would emerge from the rapprochement with emerging States, active participation in the process of setting up the African Union process and regional political stabilization efforts, including North Africa and the Middle East (Vizentini 2012).

One of the main symptoms of this transformation can be seen in Sino-Egyptian relations. The first African country to officially recognize the People's Republic of China during Nasser's time (1956), Egypt became a strategic partner for Beijing at the end of the 1990s. According to Gustavo Rocha de Menezes (2013), Egypt represented around 5% of Beijing's total trade with Africa, and was the fifth-largest trading partner in 2010. Driven by imports of more than six billion dollars, these relations showed a significant deficit for Egypt's trade balance, reflecting the predominance of exports of lower value-added products by the Afro-Arab country (Gadallah 2016).

After weeks of mass protests in January 2011, Hosni Mubarak stepped down after thirty years in office. What became known as the Arab Spring in Egypt was a political transition process lasting just over a year and a half, overseen by institutional forces such as the army and judiciary, and driven by conflicts and uncertainties arising from the difficulties of establishing a new and stable regime. As a point of regional convulsion, this milestone in contemporary Arab World history was both an external shock and a domestic restructuring movement, driving a change in the correlation of forces in the system of regional States, with multiple consequences for the global insertion of the main actors. Combining conjunctural and structural factors, the production of a phase of domestic and regional political instability assumed the character of a transition crisis (Vizentini 2012), straining the complex relations between States and societies in transformation.

In controlling the political transition process, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) rehearsed a series of changes in foreign relations. According to Gamal M. Selim (2020), perspectives such as improved relations with Iran and the potential mediation between Hamas and Fatah in Palestine signaled possible ruptures in foreign policy. However, in the midst of

the uncertainties surrounding the institutional transition, the perspective of maintaining the military's protagonism in the political and economic sphere and the very nature of the process of overthrowing Mubarak within the Armed Forces contributed to the adoption of positions that were relatively consistent with the levels of structural constraints that marked Egypt's external actions.

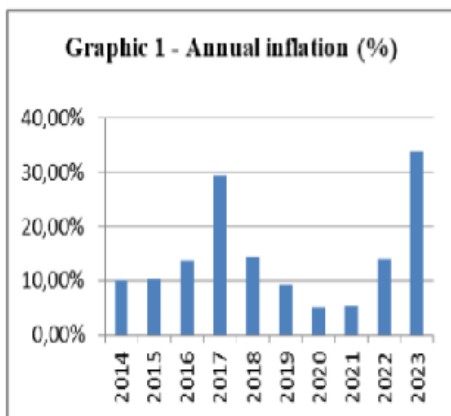
Victorious in an electoral process that confronted Mubarakists, liberals, Islamic political forces and so-called independent sectors (Ghotme and Sicard 2016), Mohamed Morsi's foreign policy generally reflected the conflicts between the Muslim Brotherhood's perspective of implementing significant changes in the running of the Egyptian State, gaining international recognition and the new government's attempts to accommodate the characteristics of the political transition process. Despite maintaining the general lines of the country's external action based on the triangular relationship and guarantees given to the Gulf States regarding the limits of the Muslim Brotherhood's institutional role in the regional environment (Selim 2020), Mohamed Morsi established a certain process of diversifying Egypt's external partnerships. Driven by economic and financial difficulties resulting from the distancing of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates from the new government, the Egyptian president established a kind of regional political turnaround, moving closer to Qatar, Turkey, and, to a lesser extent, Iran. On the global stage, as pointed out by Luiz Eduardo Fonseca de Carvalho Gonçalves (2017), it has established bridges with the BRICS, even suggesting a possible Egyptian entry into the emerging bloc, as well as seeking a greater role for the country in relation to the African continent.

A profound process of domestic restructuring was initiated in the face of a new phase of political convulsion in the country. According to Silvia Ferabolli (2013), a combination of the government's failures to act on Egypt's structural problems and the emergence of a destabilizing process involving political articulation between the liberal opposition, the media and mubarakist forces culminated in the production of a framework of political and institutional instability.

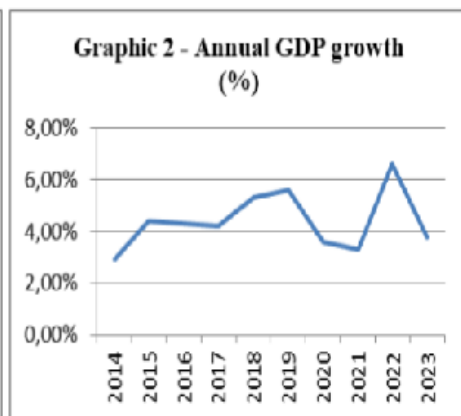
Morsi's downfall and the rise of Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi (2014-) ushered in a new era of uncertainty in Egypt. Beyond the dissent in the international community about the nature of the political process that would lead to the end of the country's first experience of civilian rule, domestic challenges involving the unstable relationship between the new government and the Muslim Brotherhood-led opposition and the preservation of the neoliberal order in the face of structural and cyclical problems in the Egyptian economy

further reinforced the importance of foreign relations as a vector for promoting internal stability.

Not necessarily constituting a return to the political-institutional foundations that organized the Egyptian republican regime until 2011 (Yefet and Lavie 2021), the new government claimed for itself the existence of four objectives that combined the search for economic growth, the transformation of the country within the framework of the development of contemporary capitalism, the protection of the State in face of what were considered as domestic and external threats, in addition to the improvement of the country's international position. From an economic standpoint, the country is going through a complex crisis, involving growth in external debt, trade deficits and inflation, as well as a significant devaluation of the Egyptian pound against the dollar (Piazza 2023). The following graphs bring together characteristics of the current Egyptian macroeconomic scenario:



Source: World Bank (2024a).



Source: World Bank (2024b).

Despite the end of the relative economic stagnation experienced at the beginning of the last decade, the advent of a phase of relative GDP growth coexists with the serious effects of Egypt's vulnerability, directly impacting the quality of life of the population. Amid such a scenario, attempts to raise external funds range from negotiating agreements with the IMF, instrumentalizing the country's geostrategic and geoeconomic position, guaranteeing injections of more than 100 billion dollars from the Arab States of the Gulf in ten years (Piazza 2023), in addition to deepening relations with emerging States, in movements such as the entry into the New Development Bank (NDB).

The economic scenario is directly linked to emerging challenges in domestic politics. As one of the bases of the process of action of the Egyptian State, the search for a complex balance between solidification of the neoliberal order and the elaboration of a kind of new social contract determines some of Cairo's main policies. From the perspective of relations with liberal elites and the military, the Al-Sisi government established a policy of advancing privatizations, putting pressure on the different forms of political organization of the workers, in addition to strengthening the security apparatus, seeking new investment sources for army modernization, and strengthening the economic position of the Armed Forces in the country (Ghotme and Sicard 2016; Achraimer 2023). Regarding broader sectors of society, the search for a more active role in dealing with problems such as unemployment coexists with controversial measures like increasing the price of electricity supply services. From the standpoint of domestic consolidation efforts, Al-Sisi has developed other legitimization strategies that have ranged from the renewal of religious discourse, an ideological alternative to the Muslim Brotherhood, to the valorization of a nationalist perspective, in the production of new forms of social control (Yefet and Lavie 2021).

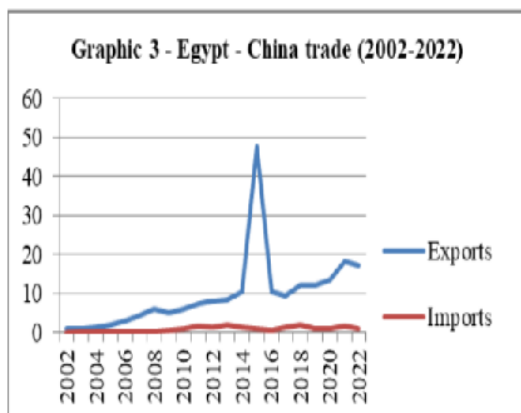
Driven by these uncertainties in the most different spheres and conditioned by the increased strategic competition in different arenas, such as the Arab World and the African continent itself, the Al-Sisi government consolidated a new stage in Egypt's international reorientation. Although specialized literature differs in relation to the time frame of such transformations, the sense of deepening in the process of regional and global repositioning of the Afro-Arab country was notable for the search for new attributes of international legitimacy, the struggle to overcome conjunctural adversities and the horizon of resuming a foreign policy classified as solid. According to Gamal M. Selim (2020), the defense of sovereignty and non-interference, the fight for the country's regional freedom of action and the search for balanced relations with global powers can be seen as three of the main vectors of such an undertaking.

From a regional relations perspective, the main Egyptian movements involved deepening ties with the Gulf Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia. In the reformation of a Riyadh-Cairo axis (Gonçalves 2017), Egypt was involved in the most different regional security arrangements undertaken by the House of Saud, in a pragmatic relationship involving the mobilization of financial resources in exchange for strategic support in different arenas. However, divergences between the two countries were recorded, such as the refusal to send troops in support of the Saudi intervention in Yemen (2015), as well as the production of a relative rapprochement between Al-Sisi and Bashar

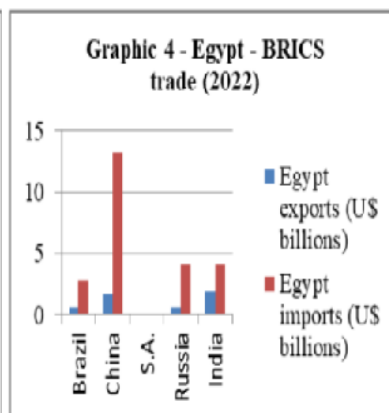
Al-Assad even before the change in the Saudi position on the Syrian crisis. On the African continent, Egypt's policy deepens the tendencies to regain a certain leading role in initiatives such as economic integration and the exercise of presidential diplomacy. Specific security considerations also drive Cairo's actions in different scenarios, such as support for Khalifa Haftar in the Libyan Civil War and the intensification of tensions with Ethiopia over control of Nile waters, culminating in a policy of strategic rapprochement with Somalia and Eritrea.

In the systemic framework, the tendencies towards a reduction in US influence and rapprochement with new global actors have deepened. In the first case, the production of an ambivalent relationship involved the mobilizations of a certain resentment from the military towards Washington's stance after the 2011 Revolution and the continuous criticism of human rights violations in Egypt following Al-Sisi's rise (Dessouki 2008; Gonçalves 2017). While the US security perspective towards the Middle East and a principle of building personal ties between Trump and the Egyptian president conditioned certain movements of rapprochement, the loss of US space in the framework of defining Egypt's position in the global political and economic architecture became evident. In relation to the European Union, oscillations between the two sides were recorded. Despite suspicions about the new Egyptian government, a certain pragmatism in trade relations has given the organization an important role in Egypt's foreign trade, as well as in political-strategic articulation on different agendas such as immigration and terrorism.

China and Russia are two of the main poles of diversification in Egypt's foreign relations. Regarding Beijing, its economic presence has become structural and structuring within the process of rapprochement between Cairo and emerging countries, as can be seen from the subsequent graphs.



Source: By the author, based on data published by John's Hopkins China – Africa Research Initiative (2024).



Source: By the author, based on data from Al-Ahram (2023).

Individually one of Egypt's largest trading partners, China's position was strengthened with by the inclusion of the Afro-Arab country in the Belt and Road Initiative and its support for infrastructure projects, such as the construction of the country's new capital and the expansion prospects for the Suez Canal, including participation in the formation of a Special Economic Zone. According to Christian Achraimer (2023), Al-Sisi's rise did not represent an obstacle to relations between the two countries. Also taking on a geopolitical dimension, ties with Beijing were important in Egypt's process of joining the BRICS in 2024. From the perspective of the Asian superpower, an increase in influence over Egypt also expands its presence in a strategic zone between North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.

Considered one of the most innovative elements of Al-Sisi's foreign policy (Gonçalves 2017), relations with Moscow have taken on a strategic character. Whether through the expansion of Russian presence in Egypt's Imports of war materials or support for projects related to the expansion of nuclear energy use, the Kremlin has become much closer to Cairo in the last decade. This position has become indispensable in the context of the Ukraine War. Although it does not necessarily align with Russia regarding votes in the multilateral sphere, the pursuit of maintaining solid ties with Putin, in a context in which food and energy insecurity has risen across the globe, is articulated within the perspective of tackling macroeconomic difficulties at a domestic level.

Amid governmental discourses about a full resumption of Egypt's external action (Halawa 2021), contemporary attempts to reaffirm the cou-

ntry's status as a regional power stimulate a deepening of historical efforts to reposition itself regional and global in recent decades. Also fueled by the perspective of using its geostrategic position as a means to obtain resources to deal with domestic contradictions and difficulties, Al-Sisi's country has developed a diplomacy based on trying to strike a balance between the different poles of power at the global level. In this process, autonomy and dependence coexist in a complex way in the face of the growing strategic competition effects in Africa and the Middle East.

Conclusion

As a Bridge State, Egypt has become an important geostrategic actor in the context of the transformations occurring between Africa and the Arab World, in line with systemic changes. Since the rise of the military in 1952, the country has undergone relevant reorientations in its external insertion, a process that brought different factors such as the conciliation and mobilization of different identities, changes in development strategies, reactions to the change that occurred at the regional and global levels, the rise of new leaderships, and changes in the framework of domestic politics.

This diversity of historical variables, contemplated in the light of Charles Hermann's model (1990), exposes the complexities involved in the process of defining different perspectives of the country's international insertion. If, from the perspective of producing an external reorientation, the consolidation of the Revolution with Nasser's rise and the full withdrawal of the British military paved the way for the development of the Non-Aligned Movement, in addition to the search for a more assertive policy in Africa and the Arab World. The transformations that occurred between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the following decade established new perspectives based on the definition of a strategic alignment with Washington and other movements ranging from the normalization of relations with Tel Aviv to the abandonment of leadership strategies in the multiple regions where Egypt is inserted.

Amid the accelerating decline of the US, the affirmation of new global actors based on growing importance of the so-called emerging world and the failure of the exogenous perspective of regional production in the Middle East, symptoms of changes in Egyptian foreign policy became evident since the last years of Mubarak's government. In connection with the challenges of preserving autonomy and security, as well as attracting resources to meet

growing socio-economic demands, Egyptian diplomacy has established new partnerships, particularly with China, India, Brazil, and Russia, while also expanding dialogue with other important commercial actors, such as the European Union.

This perspective of regional and global repositioning was maintained, to a certain extent, even in the face of the fluctuations caused by the Arab Spring. Under Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, the consolidation of new partnerships was related not only to changes at the systemic level, but also from a multi-level perspective, to political-institutional and individual or societal processes. Faced with the reorganization of the Republic based on a new phase of military tutelage, the reactivation of Egypt's geopolitical weight in different arenas boosted the instrumentalization of foreign policy as a factor in the establishment of the very institutional survival of the reshaped power structure forged after Morsi's fall. In relation to this process and in addition to the weight exerted by the executive power in the decision-making structure involving foreign relations, the different class demands arising from a heterogeneous coalition composed of military, liberal elites, salafists and other sectors dissatisfied with the short-lived Muslim Brotherhood's short experience of government.

Although this movement does not reverse the country's vulnerability to fluctuations in international politics and economics, the search for alternatives based on rapprochement with the so-called emerging world increases the capacity to confront the shadow of socio-political instability. Associated with this movement, the revival of a certain proactivity on different regional levels contributes to elevating Egypt's importance in dialogue between African and Arab spaces amidst international transformations, making it possible to extract resources in face of a context of significant macroeconomic difficulties that increase the uncertainties of the country's present and future.

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ABSTRACT

A decade after the beginning of Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi's government, Egypt is living with a complex domestic framework, involving the emerging challenges of political and institutional consolidation following the winds of the Arab Spring, the economic and social consequences of increasing external vulnerability, as well as reintegration efforts in different regional and global arenas. In the midst of such circumstances, changes in the development of its foreign policy reconcile a discourse of full resumption of external action from the last decade with the search for the instrumentalization of its geostrategic position between Africa and the Arab world in favor of new external investments and reversal of the adverse macroeconomic picture, characterized by the devaluation of the Egyptian pound, growth in inflation and trade deficit. This process, however, has roots in the efforts to diversify foreign relations, an aspect observed since the final years of the Mubarak government, through the changes that

occurred at the domestic level since 2011. Therefore, this article analyzes the main characteristics that involve the process of global and regional repositioning of Egypt since the last decade. At the intersection between World-Systems Analysis (ASM) and Foreign Policy Analysis (EPA), the potential of Egypt to occupy a historical position of articulation between global and regional dynamics is assessed, considering its condition as a Bridge State between two continents. Through qualitative analysis, combining the exploration of a process of review of specialized literature in contemporary Egypt and journalistic texts, we seek to answer the following questions: what is the nature of the process of diversification of external relations undertaken by Egypt? How do the contemporary macroeconomic and geopolitical challenges limit or provide opportunities for the production of a type of autonomist insertion by Cairo? It is argued that, amid the acceleration of the decline of US hegemony, Egypt cultivates an international insertion strategy of an autonomist nature, approaching the so-called emerging world, resuming its insertion in traditional regional axes of action, in a process that does not necessarily go through the abandonment of its ties with the so-called Western World.

KEYWORDS

Egypt. Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi. Arab Spring.

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THE COMESA-EAC-SADC TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY (AEC)

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Introduction

In 1963, at the time of the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the idea of promoting cooperation among newly independent states as a strategy for economic transformation was evident. Consequently, it did not take long for the perspective of integrating national markets into a single regional market to become the dominant orientation. Such integration was designated as the African Economic Community (AEC) (Ferreira 2005).

During the 28th OAU Summit in 1991, a “Magna Carta” for African economic integration was adopted, known as the Abuja Treaty, with the objective of creating a continental economic community to be achieved by the end of a thirty-four-year period (by the year 2028), as stipulated in Articles 4 and 6 of the treaty establishing the AEC. The idea of transforming the OAU into the African Union (AU), giving it new features, along with the foreseeable adoption of an economic program for the continent — which later became the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) — could prove decisive in overcoming the barriers to regional economic integration. To promote the

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creation of the AEC, NEPAD aligns with the broader principles and objectives of the former (NEPAD 2001). It is suggested that regional integration efforts be carried out within the framework of the major existing Regional Economic Communities (RECs). From this perspective, each state should be linked to only one of these RECs, which differs significantly from the current situation. At present, there is an overlap of integration processes across the African continent, highlighted by one of its main challenges: the multiple memberships of a single state in more than one community.

This issue, in itself, is identified by many authors as one of the main obstacles to the development of the integration process, which has hindered the establishment of the much-anticipated AEC. Reports from the AU and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa indicate that it is necessary to rationalize integration mechanisms in Africa (African Union 2007). A manifestation of the interest in rationalizing these mechanisms is the creation of the Tripartite Free Trade Area (COMESA–EAC–SADC). The Tripartite Bloc has agreed on the harmonization of trade agreements among the three Regional Economic Communities, the joint implementation of interregional infrastructure programs, and institutional arrangements through which the three RECs would promote integration. The establishment of this bloc aligns with the visions of the African Union and the African Economic Community regarding regional integration. Its objective is for the three RECs to work towards achieving the implementation of the AEC.

The approaches adopted in this article ultimately seek to answer the following question: How can the Tripartite Agreement enable Africa to effectively implement the African Economic Community? Answering this question is important as it clarifies that the establishment of the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) is one of the key projects aimed at addressing the issue of multiple memberships of states in different RECs, thereby accelerating the regional integration process and the effective implementation of the AEC. In turn, the implementation of the AEC will foster a strong continental economy and reduce external trade dependency. The pursuit of this answer will be conducted through a qualitative approach based on a hermeneutic exercise.

Regional integration process in Africa

The African regional integration process finds its main foundations in Pan-Africanist ideas, which were most visibly materialized in the Charter

of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In this context, regional integration in Africa is currently regarded as the outcome of a continental demand. However, despite its unique characteristics, African regionalism is fundamentally based on the general principles of regional economic integration. This section explores the key milestones of the regional integration process in Africa as a prerequisite for the emergence of the Tripartite Agreement, the focus of this study.

African Regionalism: the adopted model

In the literature on economic integration, Balassa (1973) proposes defining integration as both a process and a state. As a process, it entails measures aimed at eliminating discrimination between economic units of different states; as a state, it may correspond to the absence of various forms of discrimination among multiple national economies.

This economic integration can be classified according to various criteria. Based on strategy, three models of integration are identified. First, there is the *market integration model*, which is based on the liberalization of trade relations between countries (Namburete 2002). This liberalization does not have to be uniform; it may vary, as “[...] in considering institutional arrangements to promote regional economic integration, it is useful to think of an integration continuum” (Trebilcock and Howse 1999, 28). Within this model, depending on the degree of liberalization (Porto 2001), various stages or levels of integration are identified. Thus, according to the degree of trade liberalization, the market integration model comprises the following levels or phases of economic integration: (i) *Free Trade Area (FTA)* – This represents the first stage of economic integration. At this stage, tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in goods among intra-bloc states are eliminated, while states individually retain their external tariffs concerning non-member states; (ii) *Customs Union* – Incorporating the characteristics of the FTA, this stage adopts a Common External Tariff (CET), allowing the bloc to conduct trade as a unified entity representing all member states; (iii) *Common Market* – In addition to encompassing the elements of the Customs Union, this stage involves the free movement of goods, people, services, and capital among member states; (iv) *Economic and Monetary Union* – This represents full integration, involving the unification of monetary and financial policies and the adoption of a single currency (Balassa 1973; Torres 1993; Machava 2008).

The second model of economic integration presented by Namburete (2002) is *the integration model through projects*, which, in the author’s words, is based on encouraging cooperation through development projects as the most

important instrument of regional integration. This is because the priority for developing countries is to promote development projects in productive sectors and the creation of infrastructure. In other words, for this integration model, trade liberalization should be initially avoided as it is an approach designed for developed countries (Machava 2008).

The third model is *the integration for development model*, which is based on the premise that the incompatibilities arising from production structures and underdeveloped consumption patterns make it impossible to promote regional integration based on *laissez-faire* policies. Thus, Namburete (2002) argues that political cooperation among the integrating countries should begin from the outset. With this, understanding the different stages of economic integration presented above becomes crucial, as the Abuja Treaty, as will be seen later, outlines the African regional integration process inspired by the model presented by Bela Balassa. In terms of the integration model in Africa, the idea of integration through markets is clearly established, as Article 6 of the Abuja Treaty provides for the creation of an AEC based on classical theories of regional integration, ranging from the creation of a Free Trade Area in each Regional Economic Community, to a continental Customs Union, a Common African Market, and an African Economic/Monetary Union.

Furthermore, item c) of paragraph 1 of Article 4 of the Abuja Treaty, when presenting the objective of promoting “cooperation and development in all areas of human activity” (Tratado de Abuja 1991, 19, our translation)³ to raise the standard of living of African peoples, implicitly encompasses political cooperation. Moreover, one cannot ignore the fact that the regional integration process in Africa is strongly linked to national liberation movements and is therefore influenced by political motivations⁴. An analysis of item c) of Article 3 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union reveals that political aspects — “accelerating the political and socioeconomic integration of the continent” (Constitutive Act of the African Union 2000, 6) — characterize African regional integration⁵. According to paragraph 2, item b) of Article 6 of the aforementioned Treaty, priority is given to strengthening

3 In the original: “cooperação e desenvolvimento em todos os domínios da atividade humana” (Tratado de Abuja 1991, 19).

4 Under item a) of Article 3, the African Union aims to achieve greater unity and solidarity among African peoples. It is within this objective that the issue of *African camaraderie* lies, which led the then African leader Julius Nyerere to view the OAU as a *club of friends*.

5 We believe that the analysis of African Regionalism should not be limited to the Abuja Treaty and must also encompass the Constitutive Act of the African Union, as Article 98, read together with Article 99, both of the Treaty, stipulates that the AEC and its Protocols are an integral part of the AU Charter.

sectoral integration, namely in trade, agriculture, finance, transportation and communications, industry, and energy. That is, this enshrinement manifests itself as a model of integration through projects.

The establishment of the African Union in 2002 and the launch of NEPAD represent the adoption of certain aspects of the integration-for-development model, as will be analyzed later. Therefore, it can be said that African Regionalism does not adopt a single integration model; consequently, it is *sui generis*. However, it cannot be denied that it is more inclined toward the model of integration through markets, both from the perspective of the Abuja Treaty and from the perspective of each of the RECs recognized by the AU.

African Union (AU)

The AU is the successor to the OAU, created on May 25, 1963, whose foundations for its creation were laid in the three Conferences of Independent African States. These conferences aimed to enhance African identity, promote the spirit of Pan-African solidarity, and restructure the economic and social aspects of the continent. The prevailing idea was that states should adhere to non-alignment with any ideological policies (communism or capitalism). However, there was no consensus among the African leaders, which led to Africa being divided into two groups (Fonseca 2015): Monrovia⁶ and Casablanca⁷. In 1963, the two groups met in Ethiopia, where they engaged in a fierce dispute that resulted in the adoption of the Addis Ababa Charter (OAU). Under Article 2 of the Charter, the following objectives were presented: “to promote the unity and solidarity of the African States; [...] To promote international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (Organization of African Union Charter 1963, 3).

To achieve its objectives, the OAU, under Articles 7 and 20, adopted the following institutional structure: Conference of Heads of State and Government; Council of Ministers; General Secretariat; and five specialized commissions (Economic and Social Commission, Education and Culture

6 It advocated for simple cooperation between states, respecting national sovereignty — functional cooperation among states based on regional groupings. Due to the lack of capital and technological knowledge, it supported the need to maintain and strengthen ties of cooperation with the former metropolis, which held financial and technological capital.

7 It advocated for a total break with the colonial powers and non-alignment; supported the creation of a continental organization with a supranational character; and endorsed the reduction of trade exchanges with the former metropolis and the economic independence of the continent.

Commission, Health, Hygiene and Nutrition Commission, Defense Commission, and Scientific, Technical, and Research Commission). However, the OAU faced obstacles to its progress, from the lack of dynamism in its organizational structure to the lack of financial resources for its funding — due to non-payment of statutory obligations by member states — and internal political rivalries within the institution, due to the differing concessions in the leadership Summit (Ferreira 2005).

From this perspective, it can be argued that the OAU was conceived as a system of interstate cooperation rather than political or economic integration⁸ and that it was created as an instrument of liberation for the region. Although it was an instrument of liberation, it was concerned with activities of an economic nature. However, economic matters⁹ were not pursued due to political crises affecting the region. This is evident in the preamble and Article 2 of the Charter, which states that it is committed to promoting cooperation among African states and the economic development of their peoples.

Aware of the slow progress of the OAU, African leaders met on September 9, 1999, in Sirte, Libya, where they decided to replace the OAU with the AU. This decision was formalized at the OAU Summit in Durban, South Africa, on July 9, 2002 (Schutz 2014). The Constitutive Act of the AU enshrines a list of objectives in its Article 3, one of which is the acceleration of the political and socio-economic integration of the continent, as per paragraph c) of the aforementioned article.

Unlike the OAU Charter, which was predominantly political in nature, the Constitutive Act of the AU emphasizes economic matters. The AU adopted a highly innovative structure, encouraging the participation of other actors in the integration process beyond states. In the new organization, only the Conference of Heads of State and Government, the Council of Ministers, and the Secretariat remained. This made it possible to create new important bodies, such as the *Executive Council*¹⁰, composed of Foreign Ministers — responsible for promoting coordination between the RECs, the African Development Bank, and the UN Economic Commission for Africa;

8 Some of the principles adopted by the OAU, such as non-interference in the internal affairs of states and respect for sovereignty, proved to be obstacles to the realization of political and economic integration in Africa, as they went against the existence of a supranational entity.

9 Economic issues were placed on the back burner and entrusted to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), established in 1957 with responsibility for Africa's economic activities.

10 Cf. para. b), no. 2 of Article 5, read together with Articles 10, 11, 12, and 13, all of the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

*the Pan-African Parliament*¹¹; *the Court of Justice*¹²; *the Economic, Social, and Cultural Council* (responsible for the participation of Civil Society and other actors); and the *Financial Institutions* (African Central Bank, African Development Bank, and the African Monetary Fund), as per paragraph i), Article 5, read together with Article 19, all of the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

The AU, although it retains some principles from the OAU — “non-interference by any Member State of the Union in the internal affairs, equality of sovereignty” (Constitutive Act of the African Union 2000, 8) — makes these principles permeable to its intervention, as paragraph j) of Article 4 of its Constitutive Act allows Member States to request the Union’s intervention for the restoration of peace and security. This, to some extent, gives the African Union a supranational character, distinguishing it from the OAU. This provision is important, as economic integration can only progress in an environment of peace and security.

Lagos Action Plan (LAP)

The LAP was adopted in 1980 by the OAU and focused on analyzing the reasons behind the failure of the development model adopted on the continent during the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the obstacles imposed by developed countries to the implementation of a New International Economic Order. It was concluded that “Africa is unable to point out any significant growth rate, or satisfactory index of general well-being, in the past twenty years” (Organization of African Unity *n.d.*, 4).

The plan in question focused on the development of strategic sectors¹³. Therefore, the following perspectives were outlined for the period from 1980 to 2000: intensifying regional and sub-regional cooperation; projecting new patterns capable of strengthening intra-regional cooperation, particularly in the area of trade; and freeing itself from the integration model designed by the international system.

The PAL led to the Final Act of Lagos, which reaffirmed the States’ adherence to the strategy adopted at the Monrovia Conference and their commitment to achieving the AEC by 2000, based on a treaty, as well as ensuring economic, social, and cultural integration. Although well-intentioned

¹¹ It ensures the participation of the African peoples in the economic integration process, as outlined in paragraph c), no. 1 of Article 5.

¹² Cf. Article 5(1)(d): this is reflected in the legality of dispute resolution on a continent where the political arena has long been used as a means of resolving disputes.

¹³ Food, agriculture, industry, natural resources, science and technology, transportation, and communications.

ned, the PAL made little progress because it failed to take into account the importance of political integration and popular participation in the economic integration process of the continent, with the State as the main actor. Thus, it overlooked the fact that the greatest obstacle to Africa's development lies in the political realm — the lack of political will from African leaders to fulfil the obligations they had undertaken.

Abuja Treaty

The PAL and the Final Act of Lagos culminated in the Abuja Treaty. The plan was for the African Economic Community, established by the Abuja Treaty, to be created in six stages (section 2, Article 6 of the Abuja Treaty), including: (1) the creation of regional economic blocs where none existed, from 1994 to 1999; (2) strengthening integration within regional communities and harmonizing among these communities, from 2000 to 2007; (3) the establishment of a free trade area and a customs union in each regional community, from 2008 to 2017; (4) coordination and harmonization of tariff and non-tariff systems among regional communities, aiming for the establishment of a continental Customs Union, from 2018 to 2019; (5) the establishment of the African Common Market, from 2020 to 2023; and (6) the establishment of the African Economic and Monetary Union and the African Parliament, from 2024 to 2028. Thus, the Abuja Treaty serves as a strategic plan for the regional integration process at the African continental level, but due to various obstacles, the deadlines for its effective implementation have not been met.

In this context, in May 2013, the AU Summit adopted the 2063 Agenda, a continental agenda which includes one of its aspirations (the second) as an integrated Africa. To achieve this, a *Decade Plan (2013-2023)* was developed, according to which a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), a Customs Union, a Common Market, and an African Monetary Union would be operational by 2023 (African Union Commission *n.d.*). As can be noted, the *Decade Plan* is an undeniably ambitious plan, aiming for an Economic/Monetary Union by 2023. However, as it was already foreseeable, the plan was not fulfilled due to the various obstacles that African regional integration faces.

It is important to note that, in the process of continental integration in Africa, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) should not be overlooked. NEPAD emerged to provide a new vision for the creation of the African Economic Community (AEC) — established during the period of the OAU. Its goal is to promote the socioeconomic development of the African

continent, focusing on the provision of essential public goods at the regional level, such as transportation, energy, water, Information and Communication Technologies, poverty and disease eradication, and environmental conservation; as well as promoting regional research capacity, intra-African trade, and investments (NEPAD 2001).

NEPAD's focus is on streamlining the institutional framework for regional integration by identifying common projects compatible with national and regional development programs and harmonizing economic policies and investment practices. In this context, the African Development Bank is expected to play a leading role in financing studies, programs¹⁴, and regional projects. It is also noteworthy that there are various NEPAD projects in areas such as: (1) Agriculture¹⁵; (2) Promotion of the Private Sector¹⁶; and (3) Infrastructure and Regional Integration¹⁷.

Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

To implement the Abuja Treaty, the AU recognizes eight RECs (Caputo and Rodrigues 2014): Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); Southern African Development Community (SADC); Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD); East African Community (EAC); Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); and Arab Maghreb Union (AMU).

The relations between the RECs and the African Economic Community (AEC) are governed by Article 88 of the Abuja Treaty. According to paragraph 4 of this article, Member States, within their respective RECs, commit to coordinating and harmonizing the activities of their subregional organizations to streamline the integration process at the regional level. However, many states have violated this rationalization process, as most states belong to more than one REC, which delays the effective implementation of the AEC.

¹⁴ The programs proposed by NEPAD focus on communicable diseases, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis; information and communication technology; and debt reduction and access to markets.

¹⁵ Expand the scope of the integrated management action plan in Africa and improve the physical infrastructure and institutions that support agriculture

¹⁶ It aims to design the necessary guidelines and policies for the establishment of business incubators in innovative areas at the national level, drawing inspiration from international experience and established best practices, tailored to African needs and conditions.

¹⁷ It presents several projects in the fields of energy, transportation, telecommunications, and water resources, which are crucial to the development of Africa.

The issue of multiple membership is also related to the existence of RECs that are not recognized by the AU but continue to operate, such as the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), and Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) (Caputo and Rodrigues 2014).

We believe that the intention behind the rationalization of the integration process as outlined in the Abuja Treaty was good. However, it must be acknowledged that one of its greatest weaknesses is the absence of a sanctions regime for Member States that are in a situation of multiple membership, which goes against the goal of accelerating the effective implementation of the AEC, as outlined in Article 3 of the Protocol on Relations between the RECs and the AEC. It is important to note that multiple membership itself may not be problematic; what is problematic is the lack of rationalization of the policies of the various RECs to which a state belongs. In line with the focus of this study, the following introduces the three RECs that are part of the Tripartite Agreement.

East African Community (EAC)

The Constitutive Treaty of the East African Community (EAC) was signed on November 30, 1999, and entered into force on July 7, 2000, after ratification by the three founding countries: Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. The Republics of Rwanda and Burundi acceded to the Treaty on June 18, 2007, and became full members of the community starting July 1, 2007, while South Sudan joined in 2011 (Comissão da União Africana 2011).

According to Article 5, paragraph 2 of the Treaty, the East African Community aims for the gradual implementation, in stages, of the Customs Union (which was established in 2005 and became operational on January 1, 2010), the Common Market (established in 2013), and is now working towards the creation of a Monetary Union and, ultimately, a Political Federation. Its primary goal as a political and economic entity is to improve the living conditions of its populations by increasing competitiveness, value-added production, trade, and investment. Therefore, it seeks to achieve this goal by promoting sustainable development in the region, aiming to create prosperity, international competitiveness, security, and a politically united region.

Southern African Development Community (SADC)

On August 17, 1992, the Heads of State and Government of the SADCC¹⁸ signed the Treaty during the Windhoek Conference in Namibia, which served as the legal basis that would transform the SADCC into SADC¹⁹. The SADC Trade Protocol is a legal instrument that regulates the trade relations between the member states of the SADC (Botswana, Comoros, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Eswatini, Seychelles, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe)²⁰, which was signed in Maseru, Lesotho, in August 1996. However, due to political and economic tensions, the Protocol only came into effect on January 26, 2000. The protocol was amended in 2007 and 2008, with new provisions, including rules of origin, customs cooperation, security measures, dispute resolution, and sugar trade (Chichava 2011).

An analysis of paragraph a) of Article 5 of the SADC Treaty suggests that it adopts a model of integration for development, aiming to promote sustainable and balanced economic growth, as well as socioeconomic development that will ensure poverty alleviation, improve quality of life, and support disadvantaged societies. However, with the introduction of the Free Trade Area in 2008 by the Trade Protocol, in accordance with paragraphs 1 and 5 of Article 2, the idea of implementing a Market Integration Model was established, which was later reinforced in 2003 with the introduction of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP). The RISDP aimed to cover all areas of cooperation defined in Article 21 of the SADC Treaty, particularly in the trade domain, and in response to the integration model introduced by the Protocol, it envisioned an ambitious program that not only introduced the remaining phases but also set a timeline for transitioning from one phase to the next. This was a highly ambitious plan that has not yet been realized, with the Customs Union still not implemented.

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)

COMESA was established in 1993 as the successor to the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA), which was created in 1981. Formally, COMESA succeeded the PTA on December 8, 1994, after

18 SADCC stands for the Southern African Development Coordination Conference, which was established on April 1, 1980, and focused on cooperation on issues such as political independence, security, regional solidarity, and the fight against apartheid.

19 For a more detailed approach to the SADC, see, among others, Machava (2008, 61-106).

20 Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo, although members of the SADC, did not subscribe to the SADC Trade Protocol.

the Treaty was ratified in Lilongwe, Malawi. Its creation resulted from the fulfillment of the requirement in the PTA Treaty, which stipulated the transformation of the PTA into a common market ten years after the Treaty of the PTA²¹ came into force.

The main areas of integration promoted by COMESA are: trade in goods and services, monetary integration — including payment and compensation agreements —, investment promotion and subsidies, and infrastructure development (air transport, railroads, as well as maritime and land infrastructure, Information and Communication Technologies, and energy) (Haffner and Mampava 2010). The COMESA founding treaty, in Article 3, outlines the following objectives: (1) the creation of a free trade area that ensures the free movement of goods and services produced within the region, removing all tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade; (2) the creation of a Customs Union (launched in 2009), whereby goods and services imported from non-COMESA member states are subject to a single tariff across all COMESA states; (3) the free movement of capital and investment supported by the adoption of a common investment area and the creation of a more favorable investment climate in the COMESA region; (4) the gradual creation of a common monetary area, such as a common currency, and (5) the adoption of common rules for visa agreements, including the right of establishment, leading to the free movement of people (Associação Industrial Portuguesa 2014).

COMESA, EAC, and SADC: A Clash of Objectives?

Unlike the EAC and SADC, COMESA does not have significant objectives beyond the economic sphere, as can be inferred from its name: Common Market. However, the fact that COMESA is limited to the economic sphere does not make it less important than the EAC and SADC. The very structure of COMESA is designed to pursue only the economic objectives outlined in its Constitutive Treaty. Examples of this are the following specifics in the Treaty: the COMESA Authority, as provided in section a), paragraph 1 of article 7 combined with paragraphs 1 and 2 of article 8, is composed of Heads of State and/or Government and is responsible for formulating common market policies; the COMESA Council, as provided in section b) of paragraph 1 of article 7 combined with paragraphs 1 and 2 of article 9,

²¹It is composed of 21 states: Burundi, Ethiopia, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Angola, Namibia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland (currently Eswatini), Uganda, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Zambia.

is composed of Ministers from various portfolios and assists the Authority by recommending policies and monitoring the operation of the Common Market; the Committee of Central Bank Governors, established in section d) of paragraph 1 of article 7 combined with paragraphs 1 and 2 of article 13, is composed of Central Bank Governors and coordinates Financial and Monetary Cooperation; and the Intergovernmental Committee, as provided in section e) of paragraph 1 of article 7 combined with paragraphs 1 and 2 of article 14, is composed of Permanent Secretaries appointed by each Member State and is responsible for other areas of cooperation²².

As already seen, the EAC presents itself both as an economic entity and, on the other hand, as a political one. In the political sphere, its goal is the creation of a Political Federation (section 2 of article 5 of the EAC Constitutive Treaty), and to achieve this objective, it relies on the East African Legislative Assembly, an organ provided for in section f), paragraph 1 of article 9 combined with article 48 of the EAC Treaty, which, through the Special Summit held in Nairobi from August 27 to 29, 2004, was tasked, along with the *Wako Committee*, with accelerating the creation of the East African Federation.

SADC's objectives extend beyond the economic sphere. An indication of this is the establishment of the Organ for Politics, Defense, and Security Cooperation, as outlined in article 10A of the consolidated SADC Treaty. Under section b) of paragraph 1 of article 2 of the Protocol (on cooperation in Political, Defense, and Security matters), the Organ aims to promote political cooperation between Member States and the development of common political values and institutions. This Organ is subordinate to the Summit²³, composed of the Head of State or Government of each Member State, and includes, as per article 5 of the Protocol, a Ministerial Committee consisting of Foreign Ministers or Ministers of Defense or Security of SADC Member States.

To some extent, there is a relationship of conflict among the RECs forming the Tripartite Agreement. However, the main conflict of interest, as can be presumed, occurs between COMESA and EAC, COMESA and SADC, and not between EAC and SADC. This happens because COMESA spans both regions. From an economic perspective, SADC and COMESA share the same objectives. The overlap of objectives and also of some members is an important issue to consider in the relations between the two RECs. A point of

22 In addition to these organs, COMESA has a Court of Justice (article 19), responsible for the interpretation of its Treaty, and a Secretariat for administrative matters.

23 The highest political body of SADC, composed of the Heads of State or Government of all SADC Member States, as provided in Article 10 of the Treaty.

divergence between them is the principle of asymmetry in effect in SADC and absent in COMESA, meaning that the costs of economic integration and trade liberalization are more balanced in SADC than in COMESA. Paradoxically, economic progress is more significant in COMESA than in SADC. Moreover, due to its political origins, SADC's decisions and the conduct of its integration are guided by political cooperation rather than market forces, while COMESA is more focused on market forces, giving it a greater advantage.

The COMESA and the EAC have similar economic objectives and share overlapping membership. The level of development is higher in the EAC, which is the only REC to have reached the Common Market stage so far. From this, it becomes clear that the multiple membership of States in the three RECs is a manifest problem. The progress of economic integration, both in COMESA, EAC, and SADC, naturally involves the establishment of tariff structures and rules of origin in all three processes. In this regard, the Member States of the three RECs will have their trade transactions regulated by different legal norms, which may even conflict with each other.

The situation highlighted here in relation to the EAC, SADC, and COMESA is not exclusive to them. In fact, the most common problems for African economic integration lie in the overlap of RECs and the existence of tariff and non-tariff barriers between communities and states. Most states are members of many RECs, often competing with each other. The AU recognizes eight communities as pillars for the effective implementation of the CEA. However, the continent has 13 RECs with significant overlaps. This overlap hinders market integration through common trade policy instruments, for example, by establishing a Common External Tariff (CET), since a state cannot be part of two Customs Unions applying two different CETs.

Multiple membership has very negative consequences for the regional integration process, especially when the consensus in Africa is focused on consolidating regional economic integration to achieve continental integration. The movement of goods, people, and services is hindered by non-tariff barriers, and in some communities, these barriers constitute the main obstacle to trade (Caputo and Rodrigues 2014). Another obstacle is related to the financing mechanism for the AU's activities, which remains the traditional model inherited from the former OAU, characterized by significant weaknesses. Essentially, these are traditional sources of financing (Banze and Silva

2022): (1) internal sources²⁴: statutory contributions from Member States²⁵; and (2) external sources: funding from development partners²⁶.

Tripartite Agreement: Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA)

The Heads of State and Government of COMESA, EAC, and SADC met on June 10, 2015, in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, during the 25th African Union Summit, where they signed an agreement to establish the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA). Initially, the agreement was made up of 26 states from the three RECs, but today it includes a total of 29 member states (TRALAC 2011).

By March 2023, 11 countries had ratified the Agreement: Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Rwanda, Burundi, Botswana, Namibia, Eswatini, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The Agreement required 14 ratifications to come into force. As a result, it was indicated that the Agreement should come into effect by the end of April 2023.

This study does not aim to provide a detailed analysis of the legal framework that constitutes the TFTA, as such an analysis would be distorted, considering the legislation at the level of this zone is still in its early stages. The Agreement that establishes the TFTA serves as its legal foundation. It is known that the tripartite bloc includes three RECs, each with its own legal framework. One of the obstacles to the creation of an integrated economic space, in general, is the diversity of legislation, which creates a situation that does not favor economic operations, such as legal and judicial insecurity.

The Tripartite Agreement was cautious about the obstacle posed by legislative diversity to the creation of an economically integrated space. As a result, in paragraph 7 of Article 30, it states: “In event of inconsistency or a conflict between this agreement and the treats and instruments of COMESA, EAC and SADC, this agreement shall prevail to extent of the inconsistency or conflict” (Tripartite Agreement 2015, 15) thereby promoting legal certainty.

²⁴ The African Union Commission proposes adding alternative sources of funding to be identified, including contributions from Pan-African Financial Institutions — the African Central Bank, African Investment Bank, and African Monetary Fund.

²⁵ The failure to pay contributions by States due to financial incapacity hinders the maintenance of a balanced budget, impairing the fulfillment of the Union’s activities.

²⁶ It presents many inadequacies, as states face complicated demands from development partners, delayed fund disbursements, interference in the allocation of funds, and the promotion of their own integration and development agendas, which may contradict the priorities and objectives of African integration.

Main objectives of the Tripartite Agreement

The legal text constituting the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) establishes a series of objectives to be pursued, which include, among others, addressing the issue of overlapping membership and affiliation of Tripartite member states/partners in various RECs, job creation and income generation for the peoples of the member states, the progressive liberalization of trade in goods and services, the deepening of integration among member states, and the gradual elimination of import duties and other trade barriers within the Tripartite area (Mutubwa 2017). In this study, we highlight some of these objectives in light of the strategies defined for their realization, specifically:

- a) **Elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers to Trade (NTBs):** Many protectionist measures applied by African states take the form of NTBs and constitute obstacles to intra-regional trade (Hartzenberg 2012). Article 1 of the Tripartite Agreement defines Non-Tariff Barriers as “[...] any laws, regulations, administrative and technical requirements other than tariffs imposed by a partner state whose effect is to impede trade” (Tripartite Agreement 2015, 5). The agreement aims to eliminate NTBs following the model of previous free trade areas in Africa. Consequently, in paragraph 2 of Article 10, it recognizes the mechanisms for eliminating NTBs applied in each of the RECs (COMESA-EAC-SADC) and commits to harmonizing them into a single mechanism based on Annex III of the Agreement. Adopting a single mechanism for the elimination of NTBs will prevent goods in transit from having to comply with multiple obligations when moving from one region to another.
- b) **Liberalization of Goods Trade:** The liberalization of goods trade emerges as one of the key objectives of the Tripartite Agreement. However, the concept of free trade is not absolute, meaning that international trade liberalization comes with exceptions (Hoekman and Kostecki 2001). From this perspective, the Agreement stipulates in paragraph 2 of Article 9 that “the elimination or non-imposition of import duties shall not apply to goods which are not subject to liberalisation” (Tripartite Agreement 2015, 8). This measure is seen as a condition to progressively achieve liberalization. The primary justification for adopting this protectionist measure lies in the need to protect emerging national industries that are threatened by foreign competitors. In this context, protectionism within the TFTA, after its entry

into force, should be temporary, lasting only long enough for the nascent industry to compete with foreign goods. Failing to adopt this measure would destroy this nascent industry and undermine the development of intra-regional trade (Shayanowako 2011).

- c) **Elimination of Import Duties:** According to Article 1 of the Agreement, “Import duties” are defined as “means customs duties or charges of equivalent effect imposed on, or in connection with, the importation of goods consigned from any Tripartite Member/Partner State to a consignee in another Tripartite Member/Partner State” (Tripartite Agreement 2015, 4). The elimination of import duties is regulated in Article 9 and Annex I of the Agreement. Member states of the Agreement must not impose any import duties or charges of equivalent effect, except for exceptions granted by the Agreement (paragraph 1 of Article 9). The elimination of import duties will occur progressively, in accordance with the schedule contained in Annex I (paragraph 3 of Article 9). These provisions on the elimination of import duties are important because they allow for the reduction of costs in obtaining raw materials essential for industrial production, thereby reducing the cost of goods, which will directly benefit consumers.

Rules of origin in the context of the Tripartite Free Trade Area

Regarding rules of origin, the three RECs adopt extremely different criteria. COMESA opts for a generic, liberal, and simplified approach, being more inclined toward the productive sector. Its approach is summarized in the following rules: (1) wholly obtained goods; (2) wholly produced goods; (3) tariff classification criterion; (4) value-added criterion; and (5) specific transformation criterion (Inama 2022).

Because COMESA adopts this holistic and liberal approach, wholly produced goods should not exceed 60% of the value of raw materials sourced from non-bloc states. Regarding the value-added criterion, COMESA requires that the added value of production be at least 35% of the cost of imported production factors. However, the model applied by COMESA allows for the derogation of the value-added rule for a category of products considered crucial for the economic prosperity of the member states, with this exception applying to about 25% of the products. It is important to note that there are certain points of convergence between the COMESA and EAC rules. Like COMESA, the EAC adopts rules of origin with a generic nature. The only

point of divergence between these two regional blocs lies in the scale of granting goods of individual economic predominance, which is nonexistent in the EAC's rules of origin (Inama 2022).

A different situation arises in the SADC, which, in addition to applying generic rules, opts for the application of a specific product rule. This is a rule based on a list and is summarized in three criteria: (1) value-added rule; (2) CTH (Change in Tariff Heading) — tariff heading change criterion; and (3) specific process rule. The background of this list-based criterion is to make commercial deflation more difficult, thereby opening space for access to the preferences granted by the free trade area to products/goods that are effectively located within the region. Negotiations are conducted sectorally and for specific products (Inama 2022).

As explained in the preceding paragraphs, it is clear that the three RECs forming the Tripartite Agreement apply the rules of origin with a substantial difference. The application is more complex and restrictive within the SADC compared to the rules applied in COMESA and EAC. This substantial difference in the application of rules of origin creates challenges for members who belong simultaneously to both COMESA and SADC. This reality highlights the necessity for the harmonization of rules of origin into a single framework that can provide protection for the interests of producers, consumers, and exporters operating within the boundaries of the Tripartite Free Trade Area.

Therefore, it is understood that it is due to the complexity and restriction of the rules of origin at the SADC level that the Tripartite Agreement, in its Annex 4 — Annex on Rules of Origin —, establishes the principles that should guide the application of the Rules of Origin. Article 2 of this Annex states that (a) the rules of origin must be objective, simple, and predictable; (b) the rules of origin will facilitate intra-regional trade and will not create distorted or disruptive effects on regional trade; and (c) the rules of origin will be administered consistently, uniformly, impartially, transparently, and reasonably. These principles will certainly lead to the harmonization of rules of origin across the three RECs.

Challenges to the effective implementation of the Tripartite Agreement

Regional integration processes in Africa, both at the continental and regional levels, present challenges or problems, in the words of Mutubwa (2017), which, although common, are peculiar due to their specific characte-

ristics. In this section, we highlight some of these challenges, with attention to their impact on the achievement of the objectives outlined in the Tripartite Agreement.

The asymmetry of the economies of the states forming the agreement

The intensification of trade exchanges requires industrial complementarity among economies, implying differentiated levels of specialization. The low level of industrialization in Africa's economies reduces this possibility, which, however, should be stimulated by economic development and the effort to diversify economies, an aspiration of the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA). The implementation of the area itself is happening gradually and slowly, as it involves a large number of countries with significantly different socioeconomic structures.

Some countries perform exceptionally well, while others experience moderate growth. In this context, larger and more advanced economies, with industries and enterprises, will likely displace or absorb those of smaller states on the continent. This transformation will lead to a more productive reconfiguration of capital, but will also require large-scale economic disruptions, at least in the short term. This situation will particularly affect states with smaller economies that currently export few goods (Disparte and Bugnacki 2015).

On the other hand, it should not be overlooked that the existing infrastructure in Africa, in general, is a legacy of the colonial period and, consequently, was designed to export products to Europe rather than promote integration within the continent. A recent African Union report on the state of regional integration in the continent highlights that although transport, energy, and telecommunications infrastructures are critical factors for economic development and regional and continental integration, the "[...] African integration process continues to be limited by weak links and bridges between the continent's resources. Therefore, overcoming this obstacle is one of the first fundamental steps towards continental integration" (African Union 2023, 1-2, our translation)²⁷.

Considering that the Tripartite Free Trade Area covers a geographically larger area of contiguous land, creating an additional burden to improve

27 In the original: "[...] processo de integração africana continua a ser limitado pelas fracas ligações e pontes entre os recursos do continente. Por conseguinte, a superação deste obstáculo é um dos primeiros passos fundamentais a dar para a integração do continente" (União Africana 2023, 1-2).

regional infrastructure, the Tripartite Agreement includes joint planning for the implementation of transport infrastructure programs (road, rail, border control posts, and ports), air transport, energy, and information technology²⁸. However, in this context, it is understood that trade liberalization through the elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) and import duties (Tariff Barriers) will yield few results unless infrastructure issues are preliminarily addressed.

In addition, as Mutubwa (2017) emphasizes, it must be recognized that the weak negotiating capacity of most states within the Tripartite Free Trade Area, as is the case in various economic cooperation and integration forums, has led to stronger economies receiving greater benefits at the expense of those with weaker economies. Therefore, the adoption of a balanced negotiating platform and equitable sharing of benefits will be crucial to the success of the initiative.

Institutional fragility

The Tripartite Agreement establishes as one of its main objectives the creation and maintenance of an institutional framework for the implementation and administration of the Tripartite Free Trade Area (article 5, paragraph e, of the Tripartite Agreement). In fact, according to article 29, paragraph 1 of the Agreement, six bodies were established to ensure the implementation of the agreement, namely: (i) the Tripartite Summit; (ii) the Tripartite Council of Ministers; (iii) the Tripartite Sectoral Ministerial Committee; (iv) the Tripartite Task Force of the RECs' Secretariats; (v) the Tripartite Committee of Senior Officials; and (vi) the Tripartite Committee of Experts.

However, the structure of these bodies, based on a hierarchical structural model, and established by mirroring the institutional structures of the

28 Some of the aspects of the aforementioned programs include: (i) road transport: the physical development of the most important transit corridors, especially the North-South Corridor, the Central Corridor, the Northern Corridor, and the Djibouti Corridor; (ii) rail transport: the development of a comprehensive Tripartite railway strategy, with the main goal of addressing the issue of low railway traffic volumes; (iii) air transport: the three RECs are collaborating in the establishment of an uninterrupted upper airspace across the Tripartite region through investments in integrated communication, navigation, and surveillance/air traffic management systems and the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision; (iv) energy: improving regional competitiveness through energy production and interconnection projects. Examples of the latter include the Zambia-Tanzania-Kenya (ZTK) Energy Interconnection Project, the Zimbabwe-Zambia-Botswana-Namibia (ZIZABONA) Interconnector, the Ethiopia-Kenya Energy Project, the Malawi-Zambia-Uganda (OLWIYO) Interconnector, the Ethiopia-South Sudan Energy Interconnector Project, and the development of guidelines for renewable energy development. For further reference, consult the African Union, 2018, State of Integration in Africa (SIA IV), EA8199, Highlights, 5–8.

three RECs that form the Tripartite Free Trade Area, somewhat weakens their governance actions in the Tripartite context. This is primarily because, as Mutubwa (2017) notes, the construction of this tripartite governance framework is based on the experiences of the RECs' bodies, which are far from positive.

The institutional fragility of the Tripartite Free Trade Area stems from the lack of independence of the established bodies, a consequence of the prevailing status quo in each of the RECs that form it, which tend to influence the bodies established by the Tripartite Agreement (Mutubwa 2017). The approaches of Knott (2011) and Lawson (2016) regarding the functioning of judicial bodies in African RECs, particularly those forming the African free trade area, illustrate this lack of institutional independence, where decisions made by community justice bodies face significant obstacles to their effectiveness due to political influence or executive interference. This undermines the entire regional integration process, which could initially be resolved through the intensification of legal harmonization by strengthening regional institutions and creating an independent governance structure conducive to supranational integration (Knott 2011).

Political interference in the functioning of bodies in the RECs is most notably reflected in the suspension of the SADC Tribunal, thus supporting the thesis that "[...] while almost all African economic communities have a judicial body of some sort, they are unable to enforce their decisions. Furthermore, the powers of these courts have been eroded merely due to politically influenced decisions" (Disparte and Bugnacki 2015, *n.p.*, our translation)²⁹.

It is important to note that, unlike the RECs that form it (COMESA, EAC, SADC), the Tripartite Agreement does not provide for a Tribunal *per se*. However, its functional structure includes the Dispute Settlement Body, established in article 30 of the Tripartite Agreement, with the following functions: (a) to establish a jury and an appeal body; (b) to report on the Jury and Appeal Body; (c) to oversee the implementation of the rules and recommendations of the Jury and Appeal Body; and (d) to authorize the suspension of concessions under the Agreement (article 30, paragraph 2, of the Tripartite Agreement).

The Tripartite System provides, in articles 6 to 8 of Annex X (Regulation of the Tripartite Dispute Settlement Mechanism), four procedural stages for dispute resolution: (1) Consultations, (2) Good Offices, (3) Conciliation,

29 In the original: "[...] enquanto quase todas as comunidades económicas da África possuem um corpo judicial de algum tipo ou de outro, são incapazes de executar as suas decisões. Além disso, os poderes enumerados dos tribunais têm corroído meramente por causa de decisões politicamente influenciadas" (Disparte and Bugnacki 2015, *n.p.*).

and (4) Mediation. When a dispute arises between Member States of the Tripartite Agreement, it should initially be addressed through Consultations with the aim of reaching an amicable solution. During consultations, the parties may also resort to Good Offices, Conciliation, and Mediation (article 6, paragraph 1 of Annex X). If an amicable resolution fails, one of the disputing parties may appeal to the President of the Dispute Settlement Body to establish a Dispute Settlement Panel to resolve the issue. Petitions and Complaints must be submitted in writing, but parties may also be called to make oral arguments (article 7 of Annex X). After hearing the parties, the Panel issues a provisional report, which is open to comments by the disputing parties. Following the provisional report, a final report with recommendations is issued (articles 9 and 10 of Annex X). Only Member States have standing to appeal to the Tripartite Dispute Settlement System, according to the provisions of paragraph 1 of article 7 of Annex X and paragraph 7 of article 30 of the Tripartite Agreement.

This tripartite dispute resolution system is a faithful copy of the regimes established in each of the RECs forming the tripartite area, which, interestingly, are characterized as “largely moribund institutions whose jurisdictional competence and authority are of dubious merit” (Mutubwa 2017, 34). Hence, the concerns mentioned above regarding the effectiveness of the Dispute Settlement Body’s decisions remain intact. In fact, political interference in the functioning of the Dispute Settlement Body—largely determined by the fact that its members are politically appointed—negatively and significantly affects the independence of its members and the Body itself, as well as violating the principle of the separation of powers, which is integral to the functional structures of regional integration organizations (Mutubwa 2017).

Benefits of the Tripartite Free Trade Area

By its objectives, it is clear that the Tripartite Agreement has predominantly economic purposes, as even social development, presented as the general objective in paragraph (a) of Article 4, is primarily supported by economic development. In other words, the assumption is that economic development will drive social development. Indeed, the material scope of the Tripartite Agreement, which includes the liberalization of trade in goods, services, and other trade-related matters, supports this assertion, particularly as the majority of its text does not contain provisions directly related to the social dimension.

On the other hand, the Tripartite Agreement does not overlook the alignment of its material scope with multilateral rules, especially those of

the World Trade Organization (WTO), since it also underpins the need to strengthen the negotiating position in bilateral and multilateral trade agreements. Based on this, an important aspect of trade liberalization within the TFTA is outlined in paragraph 2 of Article 7, which allows a Tripartite Member State to maintain or enter into new Preferential Trade Agreements with third States, as long as it adheres to the Most-Favored-Nation Clause.

To apply the principle of National Treatment, rules of origin have been established based on Annex IV of the Agreement. For a product to be considered as originating from a Tripartite Member State, it must meet the criteria specified in paragraph (a) of Article 5 of the Annex. The products must be wholly obtained in the Member/Partner States and must have undergone sufficient work or processing within the Member State, in accordance with Article 7 of the Annex (Sufficiently worked or processed products). According to paragraph 1 of Article 9, for the implementation of the criteria related to rules of origin, the Member States of the TFTA are considered as a single territory, thus applying cumulative treatment.

In terms of intra-regional trade flows, Africa is the least economically integrated region in the world, with intra-continental trade accounting for about 10% of its total trade, while Europe and Asia represent 60% of intra-continental trade (African Union 2012). With this in mind, the Tripartite Agreement aims to facilitate the movement of goods within the three RECs. The entry into force of the agreement could bring several benefits: (1) growth in intra-industrial trade and development of geographically based specialization in Africa; (2) better resource distribution, improved competition, and reduced price disparities between African countries; (3) increased diversification and transformation of Africa's economy and the continent's capacity to meet its import needs from its own resources; (4) enhanced food security through reduced trade protection on agricultural products between African countries; (5) increased Foreign Direct Investment (FDI); (6) increased competitiveness of African industrial products by leveraging economies of scale from a large continental market; (7) greater participation of Africa in world trade and reduced dependence on foreign aid and loans (União Africana 2011).

The Abuja Treaty, which serves as the continental legal basis for the creation or existence of the RECs, does not explicitly foresee the creation of a Free Trade Area between the RECs. Its impact on the liberalization of intra-African trade in terms of establishing free trade areas and customs unions has focused on the RECs, which, in the third phase of establishing the African Economic Community (out of a total of six), should establish free trade

areas through the elimination of Tariff and Non-Tariff Barriers to trade and create a Customs Union through the adoption of a common external tariff (Article 6 of the Abuja Treaty). However, in the fourth phase of establishing the African Economic Community, the RECs are expected to coordinate and harmonize their tariff and non-tariff systems, with the goal of establishing a continental customs union through the adoption of a common external tariff (paragraph d), number 2 of Article 6).

The slow progress made by the RECs in establishing Free Trade Areas and Customs Unions within the context of the Abuja Treaty, in order to materialize the third phase of establishing the African Economic Community, delays the continental agenda of creating a Continental Customs Union³⁰. However, it should not be forgotten that, for example, SADC had aimed to achieve a customs union by 2010 (Southern Africa Development Community 2011), and to this day it remains stalled in the free trade area, which is still imperfect, as not all of its members have adhered to the legal instruments that drive this free trade area, as only 13 out of its 17 members, for example, have adhered to the SADC Trade Protocol.

It is in this context that the creation of the TFTA is seen as a positive innovation to the Abuja Treaty, aiming to accelerate the effective implementation of the African Economic Community. The Central and West African regions are currently excluded from the agreement; however, paragraph 2 of Article 41 of the Tripartite Agreement allows the accession of any Member State of the African Union to the TFTA. The successful implementation of the TFTA will solidify Africa's role in the global economic arena and provide a significant acceleration toward the effective realization of the African Economic Community.

Conclusion

Throughout the research, it became evident that the ultimate goal of the African regional integration process is the effective implementation of the African Economic Community (AEC), and that, according to the Abuja Treaty, this goal must be achieved by 2028. However, a variety of obstacles has prevented, and continues to prevent, the adherence to the timeline established by the Treaty.

³⁰ It should be noted that, according to paragraph 1 of Article 6 of the Abuja Treaty, the process of establishing the African Economic Community must be completed within 34 years, that is, by 2028.

It was shown that the multiple affiliations of states in the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) recognized by the African Union (AU) as promoters of the regional integration process; the existence of other RECs, which, although not recognized by the AU, continue to carry out their activities, leading to overlap among RECs at the regional level; and the excessive application of Tariff and Non-Tariff Barriers are the main obstacles to the creation of an economically integrated continental entity. Thus, the Tripartite Agreement appears as what Melo (2014) called “*The ‘one-size-fits-all’ constraint*”. In other words, the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) is an opportunity to overcome the multiple affiliations that have hindered deeper integration, a process characteristic, for example, of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). It was hoped that the adoption of Agenda 2063 in 2013 would accelerate the effective implementation of the AEC, but it has not produced the expected results (operation of the Continental FTA, a Customs Union, a Common Market, and an African Monetary Union by 2023).

Aware that these obstacles do not contribute to better integration of Africa in international trade, three of the RECs (COMESA-EAC-SADC), recognized by the AU, and most of their member states, who are also World Trade Organization (WTO) members, agreed to establish a Tripartite Free Trade Area, based on an agreement grounded in the exceptions provided in Article XXIV of the GATT-94. From this, it can be concluded that the legal foundation of the Tripartite Agreement is a Regional Trade Agreement (RTA).

The Tripartite Agreement represents an innovation to the Abuja Treaty, as the institutional framework of the Treaty does not foresee the creation of a continental Free Trade Area (FTA) in its six stages. Paragraph 2 of Article 40 of the Tripartite Agreement allows for the membership of AU Member States in the FTA (which suggests its expansion at the continental level to integrate the remaining RECs currently excluded by the Agreement). This will solve the obstacles of multiple affiliations of states in the RECs and the existence of RECs in some African regions, while also promoting the harmonization of trade agreements and tariff structures that are currently divergent.

This will enable the transition from the third stage of the Abuja Treaty (the creation of FTAs and Customs Unions at the REC level, hindered by the aforementioned obstacles) to the fourth stage, which involves the creation of a Continental Customs Union, and then to a Common Market. Finally, the transition will move towards the Economic and Monetary Union (the fourth and sixth stages, respectively), leading to the effective implementation of the AEC.

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ABSTRACT

The ultimate objective of regional integration in Africa is to create an economically integrated African market - the African Economic Community (AEC), within 34 years, from 1994 to 2028, by following the phases provided in the Abuja Treaty. The African Union, as the promoter of that process recognizes eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) for the fulfilment of its objective. However, the process faces several obstacles, from the states' multiple membership in RECs to the excessive Tariff and Non-Tariff Barriers. It is in this perspective that this study aims at demonstrating how the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Agreement intends to overcome those obstacles and gives Africa the economic integration of its markets. Following a qualitative approach, the study offers a pragmatic result by recognizing that the Tripartite Agreement is a huge step towards the effective implementation of the AEC. Nevertheless, it also recognizes that many challenges are faced for the implementation, including the asymmetries of the African economies joining the Agreement, the lack of infrastructures and the institutional weakness.

KEYWORDS

Regional economic communities. COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Agreement. African Economic Community.

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MOZAMBIQUE: VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM IN CABO DELGADO PROVINCE

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Introduction

The paper analyzes the terrorism in the Cabo Delgado Province, in the north of Mozambique, aiming to understand the conflict, inspect the process of radicalization of young Mozambicans and verify its causes using categories and typologies. Why has the province of Cabo Delgado become the newest epicenter of violent religious extremism and terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa? This is the question that guides the paper. The violent extremism and the terrorism pose significant challenges for the human security and the socioeconomic development of the African continent.

Reports and studies point out that the African continent, particularly the Sub-Saharan region, is becoming the epicenter of terrorism in the world, highlighted the emergence of extremists islamics groups in the Sahel States such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. In the Western Africa, Nigeria is the target from the Boko Haram terrorists stationed in Borno, in the northwest of the country, which has expanded to its neighbors Niger and Cameroon. In the Eastern region, Somalia experienced a civil war that lasted more than thirty-three years and faces the Somali group Al-Shabaab since the beginning of the 21st century, which has been spreading its tentacles through foreign states like Ethiopia, Eritrea and Kenya (González 2020).

In Southern Africa, Mozambique has been facing violent extremism since 2017, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, although instances of radicalization and religious extremism have been reported since 2010. The

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terrorists attacks are carried out by the islamist group Al-Shabaab, composed mostly by young Mozambicans and a minority of foreigners from the central and eastern regions of Africa. The violent extremism and terrorism in the province of Cabo Delgado constitute an internationalized interstate violent conflict that involves young jihadists and the Mozambican state. Since the beginning of the conflict there have been reports of the presence of a small number of international jihadists fighting in the forests of Cabo Delgado, originated from the Central and Eastern regions of Africa such as Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC), Uganda, Burundi, Somalia and Tanzania, as well as from Middle Eastern states such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Iran. These states are believed to provide the ideologues, clerics and financial sponsors of the jihadist movement.

Cabo Delgado Province and its districts constitute Mozambique's richest region in terms of natural, mineral and energy resources. It has dense forests, diverse wildlife, large deposits of minerals and precious stones, rubies, tourmalines, gold, graphite, lithium, heavy sands, critical minerals, etc. Additionally, it hosts one of Africa's largest oil and gas reserves. In this province are located medium-sized and mega-projects for the extraction and exploitation of these resources by Western and Chinese national and multinational companies. Paradoxically, it is the most impoverished province in Mozambique, with low levels of economic, social and human development.

Faced with the ineffectiveness of the defense and security forces (DSF) — made up of different units of the Police of the Republic of Mozambique (PRM) and the Armed Defense Forces of Mozambique (ADFM) — in combating terrorism, between 2019 and 2020, the government of President Felipe Nyusi sent private military corporations (PMCs) to the conflict. First the Russians of the Wagner Group, then the British of the Paramount Group, and finally the Zimbabweans and South Africans of the Dyck Advisory Group (DAG) (Coloma 2020; International Crisis Group 2021). Following the failure of the PMCs on the ground, from March 2021, the Mozambican State started counting with the support of troops from Rwanda and the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), stationed in Cabo Delgado to help the DSF in the fight against terrorism.

Different authors and groups have analyzed the origins, causes and consequences of violent extremism and terrorism in Mozambique. The terrorist attacks represent the biggest military phenomenon in Mozambique since the end of the civil war in 1992. By 2023, terrorism had caused the destruction of socio-economic infrastructure and homes, thousands of deaths, injuries, mutilations and forced displacement of populations from their homes and

areas of origin, along with widespread violence and trauma affecting men, women and children. Thus, the aim is to understand terrorism in Mozambique using typologies and categories from conflict analysis, as well as notions such as violent extremism, relative deprivation and new wars.

Theory

In order to understand violent extremism and terrorism in Cabo Delgado, conflict theories were analyzed, drawing on the perspectives of Samuel Huntington, Mary Kaldor and Ted Gurr. In the clash of civilizations theory, Huntington (1997) stated that with the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the USSR and its bloc, we would no longer have the great ideological clashes that characterized the bipolar conflict between the capitalist and socialist sides. Instead, there would be cultural and religious disputes, small wars between different groups, usually of an ethnic, identity and religious nature. For Huntington (1997), the dominant paradigm explained by Fukuyama (1992) assumed that the end of the Cold War represented the end of significant conflicts in global politics and the emergence of a relatively harmonious world, characterized by what Fukuyama described as the “end of History”.

In Fukuyama’s view (1992), the post-Cold War world represented the end point of humanity’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the pinnacle of human government. Undoubtedly, conflicts might still occur in places of the Third World, but the global conflict was over, and not just in Europe. The war of ideas in the non-European world, the Soviet Union and China was over. Although there are states that believe in Marxism-Leninism, liberal democracy had, in general, triumphed. Huntington (1997) argued that the post-Cold War world would be made up of seven or eight main civilizations: Western, Islamic, Confucian, Hindu, Buddhist, Orthodox, Latin American, Sub-Saharan and Japanese. These civilizations would correspond to the geographical, cultural and religious regions where they are located. They represent distinct identities, and the clash between them would be the source of the main international conflicts in the 21st century.

The conflict in Cabo Delgado is close to the phenomenon that Mary Kaldor (2012) refers to as “new wars”, a concept influenced by Huntington’s (1997) perspective on the clash of civilizations. According to Kaldor (2012), contemporary conflicts take place differently, with new war tactics

and strategies being employed. The traditional wars, or conventional wars, typically took place between two or more states, using a more traditional military apparatus with armed forces, regular combat and conventional armies facing each other, usually with the aim of conquering territories or forcing ideological change. However, conventional warfare is no longer sufficient to explain contemporary conflicts, which are characterized by new forms of confrontation, irregular tactics and different strategies (Kaldor 2012; 2013). Thus, the author proposes the term “new wars” as a hermeneutic perspective to explain current conflicts.

Kaldor (2013) argues that in the 21st century, organized violence is different from the wars of the 20th century. Contemporary wars are fought by combinations of state and non-state networks such as regular armed forces, private security companies, mercenaries, jihadists, warlords, paramilitaries etc. They are fought in the name of ethnic, religious or tribal identity. In the new wars, violence is largely directed against civilians as a way of controlling territory rather than against enemy forces. Banditry, rape, kidnapping of women, forced displacement of populations, massacres and atrocities against civilians are common weapons in the new wars.

The funding for the new wars often comes from private groups, looting, taxation of residents, traders, kidnapping, smuggling and trafficking of drugs, mineral and energy resources. New wars are associated with fragile or weak states that are unable to meet the demands of different national population groups in scenarios dominated by socio-economic problems, social inequality, climate change, etc (Kaldor 2013). According to this conflict expert, these wars are no longer merely conflicts between two or more sovereign states, but within the same state, between the established government and opposing groups, which may include clandestine, insurgents, guerrillas or even legitimate groups such as political or religious parties that have become radicalized. They often have an identity, ethnic or religious basis or are driven by a search for legitimacy, questioning the legitimacy of the state and its values.

These wars differ from the traditional wars in their objectives, which are generally related to particular identities, and in their methods of combat based on guerrilla warfare, insurgencies, or counter-insurgency between armed groups and the state. The financing of such conflicts is often linked to criminal activities and the support of external agents sympathetic to the causes involved. Such wars call into question the authority and legitimacy of states, privatizing the monopoly of violence over citizens. This type of conflict is different from traditional wars, with unpredictable tactics and the civilian

population becoming the main target of the conflict (Kaldor 2012). The new wars are becoming deeper and more complex, deeply rooted within states, and increasingly difficult to combat.

Ted Gurr is another theorist who contributes to the understanding of the conflicts in Mozambique through the theory of relative deprivation. Gurr (1985; 1993) defines conflicts as open and coercive interactions of contending collectivities. Such interactions encompass all forms of relations between groups and nations that involve threat, force and violence. However, not all conflicts manifest themselves through physical confrontations between opposing groups. Conflict between groups competing for positions and scarce resources is a regular feature of social life.

Gurr (1985) is interested in conflicts that have four main characteristics: there are two or more parties involved; the parties engage in acts of reciprocal opposition; they use coercive behavior aimed at destroying, injuring, frustrating or any form of controlling their opponents and; the contentious interactions are public, and their occurrence can be easily detected and recognized by independent observers. In his view, the feeling of deprivation and political, social and material disadvantage leads individuals to frustration. In turn, frustration leads to violence, and violence is a form of political participation by individuals who feel excluded in societies (Gurr 1970; 1993). The theory of relative deprivation makes it possible to understand the point of view of Mozambican jihadists. The feeling of being deprived of political and material resources, the lack of technical and educational training and the absence of jobs and opportunities have generated revolt among the local population, particularly among young people. These individuals have found in religion a source of security and identity.

With the end of the Cold War and the civil war in 1992, Mozambique was considered a success story in terms of political and economic liberalization, pacification and the transition to democracy. However, some twenty years later, in 2012 there was an upsurge of armed conflict between the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo), the party that controls the state, and the Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo). And in 2017, terrorism emerged in the country. The post-civil war conflicts in Mozambique are linked to the curse of abundance, the discovery, exploitation and dispute over natural and energy resources in regions where Frelimo traditionally had no political influence, or where the opposition had influence. There are two opposing projects in Mozambique. On one hand, the deprivation of resources for the majority of the population and the attempts by various social groups to survive; and on the other, the project of personal enrichment for the political

and military elites of Frelimo, the party-state. As a result, the tendency is for cleavages and intra-state conflicts to increase between the government on one hand and opposition parties, military juntas, rebel or insurgent groups on the other.

In Mozambique, violent extremism and terrorism are practiced by unemployed young people with no technical or educational training and no prospects of social inclusion. This phenomenon emerged with the beginning of the exploitation of natural and mineral resources, wood, fauna, precious stones, precious metals, graphite, lithium, oil and gas. Some of the young people worked in artisanal mining sites and saw their business violently usurped by the political-military elite of the Frelimo party-state, which now holds the licenses to exploit these resources. Violent religious extremism and terrorism would be a way for young people to make themselves heard and (re)enter the political economy of the region where they were born and reside. Local population groups, particularly young people, have been excluded from small, medium and megaprojects related to the exploitation of natural, mineral and energy resources.

The feeling of disadvantage, social and material deprivation caused by unemployment, lack of income, the perceived threat to the identities of local ethno-linguistic groups, and the presence of national workers from other regions of the country and foreigners, are some of the agents that have contributed to the conflict. The unilateral violence and war perpetrated by Al-Shabaab are manifestations of the conflict rather than goals or ends in themselves. Violence and terror are used as a means by young people to express their discontent with the state, which has come to be seen as a threat. The Cabo Delgado conflict centers on the inequitable way in which power, wealth and resources are distributed in Mozambique. Religious extremism and terrorism reflect how the State has dealt with this relative deprivation of resources. Violence and war would be consequences of the mismanagement of the conflict.

Methodology

A qualitative approach was used, consisting of a literature review and documentary research. The literature review was conducted from two perspectives, on one hand, a theoretical analysis of conflicts and, on the other, an analysis of the literature on violent extremism and terrorism in Mozambique. The documentary research consisted of examining reports

and newsletters produced by Mozambican pressure groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Centre for Public Integrity (CPI), the Centre for the Defence of Democracy (CDD) and the Institute for Social and Economic Studies (ISES), as well as international organizations such as the International Crisis Group (ICG) and the United Nations National Development Programme (UNDP). Additionally, it was employed the technique of building a bibliographic collection on terrorism in Mozambique, which included news articles and newspaper reports, technical and research reports and scientific articles.

In his review of the literature, Jeong (2008) analyzes conflicts from the perspective of International Relations, outlining the existing tools for studying conflicts in a comprehensive way, combining behavioral and structural analysis. He points out different categories for understanding conflicts: nature, context, socio-psychological dynamics, conflict situations, type of conflict (whether intractable, constructive or destructive), causes, levels of analysis, etc. When analyzing conflicts, he refers to different examples of conflicts, massacres, genocides and wars around the world.

This expert examines the dynamic forces that shape and reshape conflicts, the sources of discontent and animosity, identifies phases and the evolution of relations between the belligerents, the escalation of violence and the recession of violent cycles towards the peaceful resolution of differences (Jeong 2008). His work highlights the phases of conflict as escalation, entrapment, termination and resolution in both violent and non-violent conflicts, pointing out the usefulness and limitations of external intervention. The author seeks a more comprehensive interpretation of conflicts, comparing them, mobilizing concepts and theories to understand them and the prospects for resolution.

Ohana (2012) argues that conflict analysis is the systematic study of the profile, cause, actors and dynamics of conflict. It is understood as a systematic framework for obtaining an in-depth understanding of the origin of the conflict, the parties involved, the actors and the power they have or do not have to influence the course of the conflict. The author classifies conflicts from a typology, whose criteria encompasses, among others: the parties involved, the context, the motivations, the consequences, the duration, the intensity, the presence or absence of violence, the way in which it manifests itself, the scale.

The scholar distinguishes different methods for analyzing conflicts. In her view, there is no one correct method for analyzing conflicts, with a variety of methods that can be employed. Thus, some of these methods

include: conflict mapping; the ABC triangle; the onion of positions; interests and needs; the conflict tree; and the conflict pyramid (Ohana 2012). Among the methods listed by the author, two stand out, which I consider to be the most appropriate for the Mozambican case: the conflict tree and the conflict pyramid.

Origins, causes and nature of terrorism

Various national and international authors have studied and analyzed terrorism in Mozambique. This text highlights some works, articles and research reports that present innovative perspectives, concepts and theories that explain the origins, causes and nature of terrorism in Mozambique. The focus is on authors who have carried out field research, including Habibe, Forquilha and Pereira (2019), Morier-Genoud (2019), Weimer (2020), Rogeiro (2020), Feijó (2020), Chichava (2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2020d), Macalane and Jafar (2021), International Crisis Group (2021), Sönmez and Arslan (2021), Siteo (2020; 2022) and Bonate (2022).

In a dense manner, Siteo (2020) analyzes terrorism in Africa, its main groups, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, the regions in which they operate, in particular the presence of the terrorist threat in Mozambique. He seeks to understand who the attackers are, what they are claiming and whether the country was facing terrorist violence in the form of Islamic extremism. This internationalist carries out a conceptual debate on the categories of terrorism, extremism, radicalism and radicalization, isolating each concept, presenting the main differences and similarities, with the aim of producing distinctions that enrich the theoretical debate on terrorism (Siteo 2022).

In his view, it is necessary to adapt the concept of terrorism and extremism to the Mozambican reality. He defines terrorism as an act of violence perpetrated by individuals, groups or even states against civilian targets, aiming to impact a wider audience beyond the immediate victims and with a specific political objective. Extremism, on the other hand, is defined as an ideology, behavior or attitude adopted by an individual or group that holds a certain worldview that is intolerant of others and is willing to impose that view through violence. Extremism can be of two types: violent or non-violent. Non-violent extremism occurs when convictions are limited to the sphere of ideas and thoughts, while violent extremism imposes its beliefs and generates transformations through violence (Siteo 2020; 2022).

Morier-Genoud (2019) highlighted the rise of sectarianism and jihadism in Mozambique in the context of the growing dynamics of violent extremism in neighboring countries such as Tanzania, Kenya and the Great Lakes region. According to the author, after the first attacks, the insurgency turned into a typical guerrilla war. The attacks, which were initially carried out at night against small villages, started to be carried out during the day and against towns, army outposts, buses on the roads and, finally, district headquarters, releasing videos with a clear jihadi agenda. In 2019, the guerrillas pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/ISIS). From then on, ISIS began claiming responsibility for an increasing number of attacks in Mozambique and releasing videos through Amaq on social media.

Habibe, Forquilha and Pereira (2019) conducted field research in Cabo Delgado a month after the first armed attack by Al-Shabaab, between November 2017 and February 2018. The authors questioned the nature of the terrorist group, its motivations, ideology, funding and the political, social and economic implications of the phenomenon in Mozambique. They identified poverty and social exclusion as causes of the conflict. In their view, Mozambican Al-Shabaab is a religious fundamentalist group that has incorporated military cells. It claimed to follow the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad, opposing Western influence, advocating for the implementation of Sharia law and maintaining links with Somali Al-Shabaab as well as cells of Islamic fundamentalist groups in Tanzania, Kenya and the Great Lakes region. However, from the point of view of religious leaders and Islamic communities, the group preached and practiced a degraded form of Islam that deviated from the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.

Feijó (2020) identified asymmetries and socio-spatial and ethno-linguistic inequalities in access to power, disparities in housing conditions, ownership of durable goods, access to pensions for former combatants and state support, access to business, training and employment as factors that help explain the conflict in Cabo Delgado. Rogeiro (2020) highlighted the presence of Mozambican preachers in the mosques of Cabo Delgado, who had contact with militant jihadist groups from Kenya, the African Great Lakes region, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Sudan, Algeria and Somalia. These preachers gained notoriety in Cabo Delgado's districts disputes regarding jobs, under-development, lack of opportunities for young people, control of state structures, regional and municipal structures by Frelimo bureaucrats. These two factors made clashes between radical and traditional groups commonplace within the Muslim community, mosques, Koranic schools and associations.

The presence of a new wave of preachers from Tanzania, the DRC and Uganda has led young people to interpret the Koran in other ways and to adopt new practices in relation to fundamental issues such as women's rights, dress and worldview, alcohol consumption, food preparation rituals, school curricula, conditions of practice and worship, the application of Sharia law, banking and money lending rules, incorporation into the armed forces, and attitudes towards natural resources and their exploitation in a context of social inequality and income imbalance. In 2019, the Mozambican insurgency allied itself with ISIS, which capitalized on the situation by investing in local jihadist movements in this Muslim-majority province (Rogeyro 2020).

Chichava (2020a) argued that the party-state that has ruled Mozambique since independence was the one that created the conditions for the emergence of terrorism in the country. According to this analyst, it was the state's inability to deal with poverty, unemployment and the lack of expectations for young people, coupled with the brutality of the police in helping to set up companies that exploit natural and mineral resources, that contributed to the penetration of Islamists. In this scenario, some of the artisanal miners who were violently expelled by the police joined the Al-Shabaab terrorist group (CDD 2022). In this way, the actions and omissions of the party-state and the political and economic elites associated with it paved the way for the emergence of Al-Shabaab as a violent extremist movement. The author also highlighted the international dimension of the conflict, noting the presence of foreign jihadists, especially Tanzanians and Ugandans in Cabo Delgado, as well as the declaration of allegiance to the Islamic State (Chichava 2020d).

Weimer (2020) seeks to explain the violent attacks perpetrated against local institutions and representatives of the Mozambican state. From a historical perspective, he conducts a case study in three Mozambican provinces based on documents, interviews and an analysis of literature from anthropology and political economy. The scholar identified three causes of local conflicts: firstly, the political economy with historical roots dominated by Frelimo, which deals with discontent and dissent in an authoritarian and violent way, using war as governance. Secondly, the order of limited access to resources firmly established in Mozambique, which produces socio-economic exclusion of local social, economic and political actors and interests, particularly with regard to the extraction of natural resources. Thirdly, the prospect that there is no future for Mozambican youth, who are alienated from local communities and cultures, but have not been absorbed into society and the economy. This alienation renders young men particularly susceptible to global influences and promises, sometimes associated with radical religious

thinking and criminality. In this way, Cabo Delgado province has become vulnerable to the influence of militant Islam (Weimer 2020).

With a multidisciplinary team composed of teachers and researchers, Macalane and Jafar (2021) conducted fieldwork to investigate the causes of terrorism, its evolution and the mechanisms of resilience, based on the narratives of the populations affected. They employed a qualitative and quantitative methodology mixed with data collection, semi-structured interviews, documentary analysis and non-participant observation in four districts of Cabo Delgado province. The fieldwork spanned three months, between October 2020 and January 2021, involving 206 participants, of whom 94 were women. A total of 83 interviews were conducted, subdivided into 58 individual and 25 group interviews, utilizing the *snowball* sampling technique. The authors sought to understand the way terrorists act and the means they use, the empathy of the population with terrorists, civil-military relations, etc. These relations were characterized by extortion, aggression, violation of physical integrity and privacy, etc.

The terrorist attacks perpetrated by Al-Shabaab began in Mocímboa da Praia and spread to other districts with multidimensional consequences: destruction of private homes, public and private buildings, paralysis of social, education and health services, looting of commercial establishments, stagnation of economic activity, the death of thousands of people and the displacement of thousands more. Mocímboa da Praia became the epicenter of the terrorist attacks due to its geostrategic location, the occurrence of ethnic conflicts between *Makondes* and *Mwanis*, the spread of Islamic extremism and the adherence of a significant number of local youths to the terrorist group. There have also been excesses by the DSF against the population (Macalane and Jafar 2021).

According to the authors, Al-Shabaab is an Islamic jihadist-inspired group composed of people from various ethnicities and nationalities, which recruits and radicalizes young people. The radicalization process began in 2012 in Mocímboa da Praia. The government failed to pay attention to the initial signs of recruitment, radicalization and training of young people, and the DSF has demonstrated an inability to contain the wave of attacks, which require improvements in training and external support. The government needs to improve control of land and sea borders to prevent outsiders from entering the country, as well as provide young people with technical-professional training and employment, and inclusion in the mega-projects in the region (Macalane and Jafar 2021).

Another important report for understanding terrorism in Cabo Delgado is that of the International Crisis Group (2021), which highlights the need to contain the insurgency in Cabo Delgado. The report pointed out that Cabo Delgado could become the next frontier for the jihadist insurgency in Africa. By 2021, terrorist attacks and DSF operations had claimed around 3,000 lives, and insecurity had led to the suspension of a gas megaproject. The Islamic State (ISIS) claimed links to the insurgency, and states in the region were pressuring for troops to be sent to assist Mozambique.

The Mozambican jihadists were motivated by discontent with the state, which did little for them in the face of the exploitation of vast mineral and hydrocarbon reserves. Thus, Tanzanians and foreigners from other nationalities joined the cause, fueling the insurrection. Considered historically weak, the DSF has been seen as incapable of containing the offensive. And if not contained, the insurrection could spread, threatening national stability, in a context where the Mozambican state was trying to reach a peace agreement with the main opposition group in the country and ahead of the local elections in 2023 and the presidential elections in 2024. Instability on the East African coast could worsen, providing ISIS with a new front to exploit. The report recommended that the Maputo government accept military support from its external partners and use force to contain the insurgency, while also building a relationship of trust with the local inhabitants and an open dialog with the insurgents. It further advised regional governments to intensify their efforts to enforce laws and prevent transnational jihadist action (International Crisis Group 2021).

One of the innovations of this report is its presentation of the evolution and composition of Al-Shabaab, whose fighters are mostly Mozambicans, poor fishermen, frustrated small traders, old farmers and unemployed young people. The fighters from Tanzania belong to Islamist networks that proliferate on the East African coast and form the leading and ideological group. Young Mozambicans have joined jihadism for various reasons, primarily economic and to obtain material benefits, rather than ideological ones.

In turn, Bonate (2022) analyzed the conflict from the perspective of transnational jihadism as an ideology and a political movement that capitalized on local demands and grievances, especially against the state, triggering insurgency or channeling existing resistance, as well as seeing the conflict as a resistance against the world order dominated by the West. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (2023a; 2023b) pointed to economic pressures, poverty and unemployment as central factors for the violence in Cabo Delgado. In this report, Mozambique was identified as the global

epicenter of violence and extremism. According to Morier-Genoud (2021), material deprivation would be one of the causes of the conflict, particularly poverty, marginalization and a lack of prospects among young people, in a scenario where it would only serve as a meeting point. In this context, the fact that Cabo Delgado is one of the poorest provinces in Mozambique, while simultaneously holding vast natural gas reserves, created unmet expectations.

Analysts such as Santos (2012), Sönmez and Arslan (2021) and groups like CDD (2022) claim that Cabo Delgado is experiencing the curse of natural resources, in which all states where huge reserves of natural mineral resources are discovered end up experiencing conflicts and wars. In an emblematic opinion piece on Mozambique, Santos (2012) used the expression “curse of abundance” to characterize the risks faced by poor countries where natural resources are discovered that are coveted internationally. According to the author, the promise of abundance arising from the immense commercial value of the resources and the investments required to exploit them is so compelling that it begins to condition the pattern of economic, social, political and cultural development.

Another hypothesis suggests that the emergence of terrorism in Mozambique has geopolitical and economic reasons and points to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and other Persian Gulf states as the main financiers of terrorism in Cabo Delgado. With the discovery of Mozambican oil and gas reserves, these Islamic states might fear losing their hegemony in the international market to a competitor that could sell hydrocarbons at lower prices to the Western world. In this way, the Saudis, Qataris, etc. are allegedly financing terrorism in Cabo Delgado to hinder the exploitation of Mozambique’s oil and gas reserves.

Thus, the analysis of extremist violence and terrorism in Mozambique points to three perspectives. The first highlights internal factors such as state fragility, structural violence on the part of the state and rebel groups, social asymmetries and inequalities, ethnic tensions, lack of employment and prospects for young people, which provide the emergence of Al-Shabaab as a violent religious extremist group. The second focuses on external or international factors such as the expansion of ISIS across sub-Saharan Africa and the transnational jihadism caused by the expulsion of Al-Shabaab from Kenya and Tanzania, which found fertile ground in Mozambique, a fragile state that did not have full control of the illegal operations taking place in Cabo Delgado. A small group of authors point to a combination of both internal and external factors as being at the root of the conflict. The third argues the “curse of abundance” as an explanatory hypothesis, citing the greed and

financial support from Middle Eastern countries that feared competition from Mozambican oil and gas on the international market.

Conflict classification

In order to understand the situation in Cabo Delgado, the conflict analysis method is applied to examine the profile, causes, actors and dynamics of the conflict in a systematical way. Using the typology, classifications and categories proposed by authors such as Jeong (2012) and Ohana (2015), we can say that the armed jihadist insurgency in Cabo Delgado falls under the heading of violent intrastate conflict, involving jihadists on one side and the Mozambican state on the other. However, the conflict took on an international dimension when the Mozambican state requested external support from Rwandan troops and SAMIM, that began fighting terrorism in Cabo Delgado.

Violent religious extremism and terrorism in Cabo Delgado are rooted in jihadism, a violent subbranch of Salafism, a Sunni revivalist movement that rejects democracy and points out that human legislation contradicts divine law. They therefore want to establish an Islamic state governed by Sharia law. The purpose of the attacks in Cabo Delgado is to spread terror, since it is almost impossible to establish an Islamic state in Mozambique, a secular country where different religions have always coexisted.

The conflict in Cabo Delgado stems from material resources, such as the exploitation of oil, precious stones and timber. But it also encompasses issues of well-being, such as job opportunities, distribution of wealth, power-sharing with local populations and authorities, as well as cultural disputes and different moral values between the three ethnolinguistic and religious groups, namely the *Mwanis*, *Makwas* and *Makondes*, and between Christians and Muslims. Terrorism and war in Cabo Delgado are a consequence of how the Mozambican state has conducted its policies, managed resources, and addressed conflicts in the region. They reflect authoritarianism, violence, exclusion and other ways in which the state and local elites have been dealing with local populations, particularly young people and different ethno-religious groups.

Violent extremism, terrorism and war in Cabo Delgado are not the conflict itself, but rather the results of how the state has addressed underlying tensions. They are part of the weapons and trump cards that certain groups, particularly young people, use to engage in and influence politics. The conflict in Cabo Delgado is economic, political and social in nature, linked to

participation, wealth distribution and religion. It is driven by material needs and resources. They are related to the distribution of power between the state and the three ethnolinguistic groups of *Makondes*, *Makwas* and *Mwanis*. Additionally, it encompasses cultural and spiritual dimensions, involving moral and religious principles and values.

The conflict in Cabo Delgado is both intrastate and internationalized. It originated with attacks by Al-Shabaab targeting coastal populations of Cabo Delgado, which prompted an armed response from the Mozambican state. However, due to the weakness and fragility of the DSF, the state requested external assistance from the armed forces of Rwanda and SADC, thereby internationalizing the conflict.

The conflict was latent between 2011 and 2015, a period marked by religious formation and organization, during which, extremist and radical speeches were confined to mosques and madrasahs, alongside with the sending of young people to study in Islamic countries. From 2015 onwards, the conflict became manifest with sporadic attacks on government institutions and local populations, then direct confrontation and ambushes on the DSF and attacks on barracks, finally confrontation with Rwanda Defense Force (RDF) and SAMIM troops.

The conflict in Cabo Delgado developed quickly and impetuously. With the presence of the DSF, Rwandan troops and SAMIM, there was a certain stability in the region, with areas controlled by the jihadists and areas controlled by the DSF, RDF and SAMIM, without much progress in the operational theater. Thus, from being impetuous, the conflict has stabilized and tends to have long-term characteristics.

None of the warring parties is capable of winning the war militarily and the conflict is continuing without any major progress on the ground. Political elite figures with economic interests in the areas affected by the conflict — such as former president Joaquim Chissano — are already talking about negotiating with the jihadists. In less than five years, Al-Shabaab has carried out cruel and bloody attacks, something that Renamo took decades to do. On the other hand, the conflict can be classified as a low-intensity war, on a micro-social scale, as it is confined to Cabo Delgado Province, but with destructive consequences.

The radicalization process

According to religious leaders and local communities in Cabo Delgado, the young Mozambicans have been led astray by teachers who have studied abroad and interpret the Koran in Salafist and Wahhabi currents, which are different from those taught in Mozambican madrasahs. Some members of the group maintained indirect connections with spiritual leaders from Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, Libya, Sudan and Algeria, through videos or people who had studied in these countries, with scholarships funded by local and foreign businessmen, loggers and illegal miners from Tanzania, Somalia and the Great Lakes. On the other hand, Cabo Delgado and Mocímboa da Praia are located along an immigration route that originates in Somalia and passes through Mozambique towards South Africa. Along this route, the province is home to two mosques known for welcoming international immigrants, usually Somalis (Habibe, Forquilha and Pereira 2019).

After a few years abroad, when they returned to Cabo Delgado they joined the local Wahhabi mosques or built their own places of prayer, presenting different religious approaches to those normally practiced in Mozambique. During services, they advocated for civil disobedience and fostered tensions with the existing mosques. In addition, they demanded the removal of Christian symbols and statues of national heroes such as Samora Machel and Eduardo Mondlane, accepting only Muslim symbols. Domestic and community conflicts were to be resolved according to Islamic law rather than through local police stations.

In order to differentiate themselves from other Muslims, the members of Al-Shabaab built their own identity: they wore distinctive clothes, especially white turbans, short black gowns and pants that extended a little below the knees, short or shaved hair and large beards, they didn't allow their children to attend state schools, only Koranic schools built by them. They carried white weapons like knives and machetes to symbolize jihad, incited violence and disrespected community leaders, calling them *kafir*, and would not accept dialogue with state structures or groups different from their own². Their family members were forced to watch videos of speeches by a Kenyan cleric who preached radical Islam and women were compelled to wear burkas (Habibe, Forquilha and Pereira 2019).

Al-Shabaab has kidnapped hundreds of young women. The group comprises individuals from diverse socio-demographic backgrounds, the majority from the northern coast of Cabo Delgado, individuals from the

2 In Arabic, *kafir* means one who hides the truth, an unbeliever.

Mueda plateau, the Nampula coast, as well as foreigners from the east coast of Africa, such as Tanzanians, Somalis and Persian Gulf countries (International Crisis Group 2021).

According to Feijó (2021), Al-Shabaab rose up against the state and its traditional structures. They have built various bases in villages abandoned by the population or in the forests. These individuals maintain links with their families of origin, who provide logistics, camouflage and information. Others have broken with their families of origin and formed new family arrangements in the forests, often polygamous. Men and women are subjected to political-religious doctrine, in which themes such as exclusion, social injustice, corruption and the enrichment of the authorities are explored in an attempt to provoke individual resentments.

Opposed by the state, which attacked mosques and arrested dozens of Al-Shabaab members, its leaders proposed a social order based on Sharia law, evolving from Islamist sectarianism to armed jihadism. As a result, they began to attack state institutions and civilian populations. Al-Shabaab's local leaders exploited the differences between Christians and Muslims, distinctions that exist not only because of religion, but also because they intersect with social, political and power distinctions between communities and ethno-linguistic groups. The *Makwas* and *Mwanis* are ethnic groups with a Muslim majority and are coastal communities with a pre-colonial Islamic and Swahili past linked to the slave trade. The *Mwanis* allied themselves with Renamo and the Mozambican opposition after the first multi-party elections in 1994. The *Makondes*, a minority group, are Christians from the interior and the Mueda plateau, who hold the *status quo*, political and economic power and are the backbone of Frelimo. They are historical allies of this party and the state, portrayed as warriors and heroes of the anti-colonial struggle against Portuguese domination in the country's textbooks and history books.

Al-Shabaab's forms of recruitment include persuasion through family and informal networks, promises of money and material goods and, in other cases, coercion and kidnapping, fomenting terror for those who don't cooperate. Morale is high among the insurgents, fostered by the sharing of the spoils of war. There is a messianic promise to change the social order, combined with the distribution of concrete benefits such as food, clothing and protection, which have attracted vulnerable young people in a context of social precariousness and food insecurity. The insurgents maintain close relations with the local population, have an excellent capacity for insertion and camouflage, knowledge of the localities, light weaponry, easy movement and hiding places, which gives the group advantages. Robbery and looting of

stores and food warehouses were the group's main sources of supply. Al-Shabaab has never shown any interest in food security or food production, which demonstrates the existence of external supplies, possibly from Tanzania (Feijó 2021). For a long time, Al-Shabaab was designated as an armed insurgency by the Mozambican state, due to the armed attacks in which they attacked villages, civilians, hospitals and schools, kidnapped women and children, beheaded and burned alive young and old men (Rogeiro 2020).

Religious conviction and excessive violence are characteristics of the group, against both men and women. As the group has grown, it has increased in diversity, religious conviction, morality, motivation and violence. Beheadings with knives and machetes, along with brutal rapes against women, are common weapons of terror, as is the promise of money to young men. In 2020, Al-Shabaab demonstrated great recruitment capacity, a military performance over the DSF, characterized by violent attacks on district headquarters, access to logistics and military equipment. There was an internationalization of the group through the presence of foreigners from East African, Middle Eastern and Persian Gulf states, identified as Muslim or white, who possessed huge quantities of war material, as well as the constant concern of these international subjects with filming documenting all the group's actions, indicating the existence of external support (Feijó 2021).

In terms of evolution, strength and behavior, the jihadist group is assumed to be a heterogeneous movement, whose base or lower echelon consists mainly of Mozambican insurgents, particularly young people from the *Mwani* and *Makwa* ethnic groups, former fishermen and farmers, smugglers, coastal traffickers and unemployed youth, but also a small number of *Makonde* fighters made up particularly of young people expelled from the ruby mines in 2017 (International Crisis Group 2021). Some operational leaders were Mozambican, but the majority were Tanzanian Islamists expelled by the police and military authorities of that state over the last fifteen years because of illegal activities and radicalism. The Tanzanians were the ideological leaders. Some of the young Mozambican insurgents were kidnapped and forced to join Al-Shabaab or joined the group out of frustration with their socio-economic situation, lured by recruiters who offer money or promise future wealth and remain loyal to the group as long as they are paid. In 2021, it was estimated that Al-Shabaab had between 1,500 and 4,000 members, including non-combatants, mechanics, nurses and local communications specialists (International Crisis Group 2021).

The offer of money or the promise of money, as well as kidnapping and abduction are the main recruitment methods used by Al-Shabaab. As

the conflict unfolded, Al-Shabaab improved its guerrilla tactics, becoming more efficient, acquiring weapons, increasing its arsenal essentially with weapons taken from the DSF and its barracks. Initially, they only had AK-47 rifles and the occasional PKM machine gun. Gradually they acquired RPG-7 rocket launchers, 60mm and 80mm mortars and government and military vehicles taken from the DSF (International Crisis Group 2021).

The conflict in Cabo Delgado has changed Mozambican military grammar, with the emergence of terminology such as terrorism, armed insurgency, insurgents, jihadists, terrorists, Northern Operational Theater (TON), state of war, violent extremism, terrorism, Islamic radicalism, terrorist cells, DSF, Islamic State Agency (Amaq), *Ansar Al-Sunnah*, *Al-Shabaab*, *Daesh*, ISIS, Islamic State of Mozambique, SAMIM, Rwandan troops, Rwanda Defense Force, military drones, armored vehicles, oil and gas, on-shore, offshore, ethnic disputes, *Mwanis*, etc. Terms that have been uttered by military officers, political authorities, researchers, reproduced by journalists, analysts and the people.

Conflict typology

The situation in Cabo Delgado is an internationalized intrastate conflict, due to the presence of external actors within Mozambican territory. The main belligerents are Al-Shabaab and the DSF, which represent the Mozambican state. The main actors were joined by Rwandan troops and SAMIM forces as secondary actors, at the invitation of the Mozambican state. The Rwandan and SAMIM forces are intentional *spoilers*³. The conflict became international with the involvement of Rwandan troops and the multinational SAMIM force, which includes soldiers from South Africa, Botswana, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Angola, allies of the Mozambican state. Thus, it became an internationalized intrastate conflict.

Before the presence of foreign forces alongside the Mozambican state, reports pointed to the presence of Tanzanians, citizens from the Great Lakes region, such as Burundians, Ugandans, Congolese and Middle Easterners alongside the Mozambican jihadists, albeit in insignificant numbers. The foreign citizens who militate alongside the insurgents may be the financiers of the military actions or have economic interests. In 2021, Al-Shabaab pledged allegiance to Daesh. Proof of this were the threats made by Daesh to the

3 *Spoiler* refers to an actor who was not part of the original conflict, but who, with the unfolding and dynamics of the conflict, becomes an important actor.

state of Rwanda shortly after the launch of the Rwandan troops' operations in Cabo Delgado — at a time when Rwandan propaganda was at an all-time high — which quickly inflicted heavy casualties on the jihadists, destroying their main bases and forced them into retreat and in constant mobility. Daesh threatened to carry out bomb attacks on Rwandan territory.

The states of Rwanda, Tanzania and South Africa are international spoilers with direct or indirect interests in the conflict in Cabo Delgado, all of which have troops stationed in Mozambique. South Africa relies on Mozambican energy sources, which are geographically close and at low prices, and has an interest in stability in order to invest in a future gas pipeline linking Cabo Delgado to its territory. While Tanzania has an interest in the instability of the province, because it has huge oil and gas reserves in its territory and an exploration project similar to Mozambique's (Savana 2022b). It sees Mozambique as a competitor and seeks to attract international investors to its project. Rwanda also has a vested interest in Mozambique's stability, supplying troops and security to the Mozambican state from its own army and various private security companies. It provides military aid and security, and at the same time has access to Cabo Delgado's mineral resources, with an air bridge between Cabo Delgado and Kigali, through which precious stones and minerals are transported.

At first glance, this is a political-religious conflict, but there are socio-economic factors involved. There are ethnic-religious, moral and socio-economic motivations involving the majority *Makwa* and *Mwani* Islamic groups and the *Makonde* minority. Al-Shabaab members pointed to religious values, principles and ideals linked to the Islamic religion, such as the establishment of a religious state under Sharia rules, moral issues such as the wearing of beards, Islamic clothing, the ban on the sale and consumption of tobacco and alcohol, opposing the schooling of children in secular schools, the work of women, etc. They contested the local religious authorities, particularly those close to the Islamic Council, which is considered close to the Mozambican state, felt socio-economically excluded in the face of the exploitation of mineral and energy resources such as timber, precious stones, oil and gas, as well as resenting the influence of generals from the national liberation struggle with interests and businesses in the province, coming from the *Makonde* ethnic group, the same as the President of the Republic. As a result, unemployed young people who engaged in artisanal mining and gold panning (*garimpo*) were brutally expelled from their livelihoods, further exacerbating local discontent. It was within this boiling context that the armed attacks began (International Crisis Group 2021).

In terms of intensity, the conflict escalated rapidly and impetuously, as in just a few years, Al-Shabaab carried out dozens of massacres with extreme violence and cruelty, including beheadings with knives and machetes, cold-blooded murders with bullets to the back of the head, the burning of homes with the occupants inside, and the kidnapping of young women and teenagers to serve as sex slaves. Napoleoni (2015) pointed out that medieval methods, Sharia codes, violence, its display and spectacularization, as well as the kidnapping of teenagers and young women, are a characteristic of the Islamic State and groups loyal to it.

The massacres and cruelty of Al-Shabaab's actions over five years have surpassed those committed during the seventeen years of civil war between Frelimo and Renamo. The unilateral violence of the conflict perpetrated, first by Al-Shabaab on defenceless populations and then by the Mozambican government, has gone from an armed conflict to a war, in which civilian women, children and men are the main victims. It is an overt conflict with destructive consequences, even though for a long time Al-Shabaab never disclosed the reasons and motivations behind its actions. The conflict initially unfolded on a microscale, affecting only a few districts in the southern region of Cabo Delgado province. But it is gradually becoming a macro issue, having temporarily spread the attacks into the neighboring provinces such as Niassa and Nampula, and even into Tanzania near the border with Mozambique.

Terrorism and the state response

In 2017, military attacks began in Cabo Delgado. Initially, Frelimo Party installations and state administration facilities were attacked, kidnapping and killing state leaders and Frelimo members. As well as attacking the state's administrative infrastructure, the insurgents began to viciously attack the population, destroying social infrastructure, schools, health centers and hospitals. The violence was enormous, with the beheading of civilians, men, women, children and the elderly. In response, the PRM destroyed radicalized mosques and the homes of the alleged ringleaders of the armed attacks. However, the actions were poorly coordinated and lacked strategic intelligence. The Mozambican government responded belatedly to the conflict, taking around five years. Between 2017 and 2021, the Mozambican state ignored and downplayed the armed attacks, displaying a lack of compassion for the suffering of the people of Cabo Delgado. The government dismissed the perpetrators as armed bandits, thieves and criminals and, finally, insurgents, and only later referred to them as insurgents, resisting acknowledg-

ment of the group's religious ideological component. The first victim of the Mozambican state was the truth.

Information and news of the terrorist attacks was treated with secrecy. Local independent journalists who reported on the armed attacks were accused of collaborating with jihadism, while state media journalists were prohibited from covering the issue. Local independent broadcasters and reporters who attempted to shed light on the events faced threats, arrests, harassment and assaults. Some were kidnapped by the SDF, disappeared and were later reported dead⁴.

Habibe, Forquilha and Pereira (2019) pointed out that, although national and foreign media outlets paid attention to terrorism, information on the subject remained scarce, journalists and researchers found it difficult to access the attacked sites, imposed by the Mozambican state. Between 2017 and 2019, six journalists, three foreign and three national, were arrested (Habibe, Forquilha and Pereira 2019). In this way, the government adopted the formula of silencing the messengers instead of solving the problem, launching a campaign against the independent media. In addition to the disappearance of journalists, there were reports of kidnappings, torture and murders of civilians who were relatives of young people who were radicalized and/or suspected of collaborating with jihadism by the SDF. The SDF were accused of human rights violations ranging from floggings, physical assaults, curtailment of the right to come and go, kidnappings, forced disappearances and murders. This situation led to distrust, fear and self-censorship among the population towards the FDS, while simultaneously increasing the prestige of the Rwandan troops (Nhantumbo 2023b).

The Mozambican government's first energetic response to terrorism only came in 2021, after jihadists carried out a spectacular attack — recorded and broadcast on social media — around 30 km from the oil and gas exploration platform, threatening the megaprojects and interests of multinational corporations. From an intrastate conflict involving jihadists and the state, the conflict became international with the involvement of foreign troops from Rwanda and the SADC to help the Mozambican army. For Rwanda, sending troops to Mozambique is part of its military diplomacy agenda around the world, particularly on the African continent (Donelli 2022; Le Monde 2022).

4 Palma Community Radio reporter Ibraimo Mbaruco disappeared after sending messages to colleagues informing them that he was surrounded by uniformed DSF soldiers on April 7, 2020. Since then, he has never been found and his family claims that he was executed by the DSF (NHANTUMBO 2023a). The reporter was seen as an enemy of the DSF because he reported on terrorist attacks. The radio presenter disappeared after being approached by the DSF and was reported dead by the independent media in Mozambique.

It seems that these troops have been deployed not to protect the Mozambican population, but only to ensure the protection of the multinationals' infrastructures and to enable the exploitation of oil and gas and other extractive resources.

For two years, the Mozambican state ignored or did not take seriously the armed insurgency in Cabo Delgado that was sowing terror. In vain, it sent in the DSF, but they suffered heavy defeats and were humiliated, as happened in 2017, when the insurgents attacked the Macomia police station, set it on fire, took PRM police vehicles and ADFM armored vehicles, and posed in front of the police station bearing the flag of the Islamic State, with vehicles, armored vehicles and various weapons taken from the DSF (Savana 2022a). This emblematic photograph went around Mozambique and the world, demoralizing the Mozambican government and its army. In this photo, as in several others, armed jihadists were seen with their faces covered by military shirts and caps, but the majority were wearing t-shirts, sneakers, sports pants, shorts, sandals and flip-flops. Some wore boots, but they were all ragged, without uniforms or full military equipment. Their weapons, uniforms, vehicles and other equipment had been taken over from the Mozambican army.

The Mozambican state ignored these attacks until March 2021, when the insurgents carried out their biggest attack, raiding the town of Palma and Afungi, which is 25 km from the oil and gas exploration infrastructures. In this raid, they attacked, destroyed and set fire to houses with people inside, hospitals, schools, businesses, banks and other social and tourist infrastructures, especially the Amarula Hotel, where foreign, South African and European workers were staying. Dozens of national and international citizens were killed, especially oil and gas workers who were ambushed with firearms as they fled the Amarula Hotel, as well as 12 beheaded foreign citizens (Savana 2022a).

Since 2017, terrorist attacks on civilian populations and state and private infrastructure have resulted in thousands of people being killed, beheaded, burned alive, women and children raped, and the destruction of economic and social infrastructure. The attack on the towns of Palma and Afungi in March 2021, targeting oil and gas exploration infrastructure, constituted the "event", a milestone in the periodization of the conflict between before and after this attack. By threatening the economic "interests" of the Mozambican government and Western multinationals, the world began to pay attention to terrorism in Cabo Delgado. This attack changed the perception of the government and the international community, which began to classify the

situation as “terrorism”. South Africa sent helicopters to rescue its citizens, as did France. French multinational Total Energies, the largest foreign investor, suspended its oil and gas exploration project in Cabo Delgado “for reasons of force majeure”. The attack on Afungi turned out to be a cold shower for the Frelimo party and the political and economic elite, who had long been making plans with the petro and gas-dollars coming out of Cabo Delgado.

Conclusion

The article analyzed violent religious extremism and terrorism in Cabo Delgado. In their explanations, scholars pointed to three distinct explanatory perspectives for terrorism. The first asserts domestic reasons and causes — the hegemonic politics of the ruling party, bad governance, state structural violence, regional asymmetries, inequality, socio-economic exclusion of ethnolinguistic and religious groups, young people — behind the conflict. This perspective starts from internal factors, putting forward domestic socio-economic and cultural hypotheses to explain the conflict. The second current points to external causes such as the transnational jihadism of ISIS that has spread across Africa, a process in which Mozambique has become a target for religious extremist groups expelled from neighboring states and the region. This perspective highlights issues of regional and national security, weak border controls, illegal migration, smuggling and drug trafficking, etc. Neighboring states on the East African coast such as Ethiopia, Tanzania and Kenya would have done their “homework” by expelling extremist religious groups, who found refuge and an *eldorado* in Mozambique, a fragile state. The last perspective argues that Mozambique and the province of Cabo Delgado are victims of the curse of abundant natural, mineral and energy resources, which has aroused the greed of large Western multinational companies and international criminal groups.

In addition, a categorization and typology of terrorism in Mozambique were developed in the light of conflict analysis. The conflict was latent between 2010 and 2016, initially characterized by radical, extremist religious discourses and sectarianism opposing poor, unemployed young Muslims, with little schooling and professional training opportunities, who became radicalized outside the country and tried to impose new religious rules on the rest of the population regarding dress, commerce, use of alcohol, tobacco, etc. On the other side was the authoritarian, negligent and absent Mozambican state. The conflict had both religious and ideological motivations and causes, as well as differences over the exploitation of natural and mineral resources.

From 2017 onwards, the conflict became evident, characterized by armed attacks with extreme violence against civilian populations, executions and beheadings, kidnapping of women, young people and children, rape, sexual slavery, forced marriages with minors, burning of houses with occupants inside, use of children and adolescents in jihadism.

This intrastate micro-conflict developed rapidly, impetuously, violently and destructively, evolving into a fratricidal armed war, so far confined to the province of Cabo Delgado. Terrorism changed the course of Mozambican domestic and foreign policy, leading the state to resort to PMCs from the Wagner Group, *Paramount*, DAG, and troops from Rwanda and SAMIM, making the intrastate conflict international. Al-Shabaab's guerrilla war proved to be distinct from previous military phenomena and armed groups, constituting the worst military crisis Mozambique had experienced since the end of the civil war. The Mozambican government's response to the conflict was the militarization of Cabo Delgado, with a series of interventions that initially stabilized the war, but proved to be ineffective over the years. The conflict has gained further international involvement, with the partnership of the Western bloc — the US and the EU — which has offered military training and non-lethal material to Mozambican troops.

It is not clear who is financing the jihadists, although part of their income comes from criminal activities such as timber smuggling, wildlife trafficking, illegal mining, drug trafficking, robberies, and more. None of the warring parties are in a position to win the conflict militarily. As a result of the conflict, the Mozambican government has moved closer to regimes such as Rwanda, Uganda, the Central African Republic and Russia, signing secret agreements and Africanizing the conflict while regionalizing Mozambique's foreign policy, which was previously geared towards traditional Western states and partners such as the USA, EU and Japan. The conflict changed Mozambican military grammar, introducing new classifications and terminologies, while at the same time civil-military relations deteriorated, characterized by extortion, abuse, restriction of freedom, human rights violations and even deaths of citizens at the hands of the DSF.

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzed terrorism in Cabo Delgado Province, in northern Mozambique. It aimed to understand the conflict, examine the processes of radicalization of young people and verify the causes using typologies and categories of analysis. It used qualitative methodology, combined with a literature review and documentary research. It mobilized conflict theories: Huntington's clash of civilizations, Ted Gurr's relative deprivation and Mary Kaldor's new wars. Why has Mozambique become the newest epicenter of violent religious extremism and terrorism in sub-Saharan Africa? Three types of perspectives — domestic, international and the resource curse — explain the causes of the conflict. Alongside religious issues, the dispute over natural and mineral resources are the reasons for the conflict, which has changed the country's domestic and foreign policy, bringing the government closer to authoritarian and dictatorial regimes in Africa and Europe. Faced with the ineffectiveness of the national

defence and security forces, the state internationalized the conflict by authorizing the entry of private military corporations and foreign armies, militarizing and creating a salad of interventions in the country.

KEYWORDS

Mozambique. Extremist violence. Terrorism.

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TECHNOLOGICAL SPILLOVERS FROM FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN KENYA

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Introduction

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) plays a vital role in the economic development of countries by providing access to capital, technology, and managerial expertise (Asongu et al. 2018). In recent years, Kenya has appeared as a prominent destination for FDI in Sub-Saharan Africa, attracting investments across various sectors such as manufacturing, telecommunications, finance, and infrastructure (Ideue 2018). The government of Kenya has actively pursued policies to encourage FDI inflows as a means to stimulate economic growth and foster technology development (Mungai 2021). Technological innovation is the economic function through which new technologies are introduced into production and consumption. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) serves as a channel for technology transfer from multinational corporations (MNCs) to domestic firms in Kenya (Kotey 2019). MNCs often bring advanced technologies, managerial expertise, and best practices, which can

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significantly enhance the technological capabilities and competitiveness of local industries (Zhang *et al.* 2019). Through joint ventures, licensing agreements, and collaborations with local partners, FDI facilitates the diffusion of knowledge and skills, thereby contributing to technology absorption and innovation in Kenya (Wanjere 2022).

Moreover, various sectors in Kenya have experienced substantial technological advancements driven by FDI (Odhiambo 2022). For instance, the telecommunications sector has witnessed significant investments from international telecom companies, leading to the expansion of mobile networks, internet connectivity, and digital infrastructure (Chesula and Kilika 2020). This has not only improved access to communication services, but has also spurred innovation in mobile payments, e-commerce, and digital entrepreneurship (Ndung'u 2018). Similarly, the manufacturing sector has benefited from FDI through the introduction of new technologies and production methods, leading to increased efficiency, product diversification, and export competitiveness (Wei *et al.* 2020).

Furthermore, the government of Kenya has implemented a range of policies and incentives to attract FDI and promote technology development. These include tax incentives, investment promotion agencies, special economic zones, and industry-specific incentives aimed at encouraging investments in priority sectors such as agribusiness, renewable energy, and information technology (Thuita 2017).

Despite the positive impacts of FDI on technology development, Kenya faces several challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, regulatory constraints, bureaucratic red tape, and limited access to financing and skilled labour (Onyango 2017). Moreover, there are opportunities for enhancing technology development through strategic partnerships, knowledge exchange programs, and investment in research and development.

Literature review: theoretical review

The study reviewed both theoretical and empirical literature. Firstly, in this chapter, we will explore several prominent theories that provide a foundation for understanding the dynamics of FDI and technology development in Kenya.

Technology Transfer Theory

According to this theory, FDI serves as a channel for the transfer of advanced technologies, managerial know-how, and organizational practices from multinational corporations (MNCs) to domestic firms in host countries (Alfaro 2017). Through mechanisms such as licensing agreements, joint ventures, and collaborations, MNCs facilitate the diffusion of knowledge and skills, thereby enhancing the technological capabilities of local industries (Hansen and Lema 2019). In the perspective of Kenya, technology transfer theory suggests that FDI inflows contribute to the adoption and adaptation of new technologies, leading to improvements in productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness across various sectors of the economy.

Spill over Effects Theory

Which posits that FDI can generate positive externalities that spill over to domestic firms and industries. These spillovers may take the form of knowledge spillovers, where technological innovations and best practices disseminate throughout the local economy, benefiting not only the recipient firms but also their competitors and suppliers. In Kenya, spillover effects from FDI can lead to increased innovation, skill upgrading, and productivity growth in domestic firms, thereby contributing to overall technological development and economic performance (Te Velde 2019). However, the extent and nature of spillovers depend on various factors such as the absorptive capacity of domestic firms, the level of competition, and the nature of linkages between foreign and domestic enterprises.

Investment Climate Theory

The investment climate theory emphasizes the importance of a conducive environment for attracting and retaining FDI, which in turn promotes technology development and innovation (Qamruzzaman 2023). Factors such as political stability, regulatory transparency, rule of law, infrastructure quality, and access to finance play a crucial role in shaping the investment climate of a country (Nizam and Hassan 2018). Improvements in the investment climate through policy reforms, institutional strengthening, and infrastructure development are essential for maximizing the benefits of FDI for technology development and long-term growth (Wanjere 2022; Kipchirchir and Mose 2024).

Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory highlights the role of education, skills, and workforce development in driving technological advancement and innovation. Investments in human capital, such as education and training programs, are essential for building a skilled workforce capable of absorbing and utilizing advanced technologies brought in by FDI (Guimón *et al.* 2018). In Kenya, efforts to improve education quality, enhance vocational training, and promote lifelong learning are critical for maximizing the impact of FDI on technology development (Cheruiyot 2022). Moreover, policies that facilitate the mobility of skilled workers and encourage knowledge exchange between foreign and domestic firms can further strengthen the linkages between FDI and human capital development. In summary, these theoretical perspectives provide valuable insights into the complex relationship between FDI and technology development (Yang *et al.* 2022). By drawing on these theories, policymakers, investors, and practitioners can design strategies and interventions that leverage FDI to promote innovation, enhance productivity, and foster inclusive growth in the Kenyan economy.

Literature review: empirical review

The studies of Ali *et al.* (2023); Chan *et al.* (2023); Adikari *et al.* (2021); and Liang (2017) have found evidence of a positive relationship between FDI and technological innovation or productivity. These studies suggest that FDI inflows bring advanced technologies, managerial know-how, and best practices, which can enhance the innovative capabilities and productivity of domestic firms. Moreover, FDI promotes competition and spurs investments in research and development, leading to technological advancements and efficiency gains in the host economy (Alfaro and Chauvin 2020). Moreover, in Borensztein *et al.* (1998); Li *et al.* (2020); Read *et al.* (2021) the findings suggested that FDI had a positive impact on productivity growth, particularly in industries with high levels of R&D intensity and technology-intensive activities. Similarly, Singh (2019); and Zhang and Sun (2023) studies in emerging economies like China and India have shown how FDI inflows contribute to technological upgrading and innovation in sectors such as telecommunications, automotive, and electronics.

The empirical evidence underscores the importance of policy interventions aimed at attracting FDI and promoting technological development. Policies that enhance the investment climate, strengthen institutions, and

support human capital development are essential for maximizing the benefits of FDI inflows. Additionally, targeted policies to promote linkages between foreign and domestic firms, encourage R&D investments, and facilitate technology transfer can further catalyse technological development and innovation in host countries (Guimón *et al.* 2018; Zhang and Sun 2023).

In conclusion, empirical research provides robust evidence of the positive impact of FDI on technological development across different countries and industries. By understanding the mechanisms through which FDI influences innovation, productivity, and knowledge transfer, policymakers can design effective strategies to leverage FDI for sustainable economic growth and technological advancement. Table 1 shows FDI-technological innovations nexus.

Table 1 - Selected empirical studies

Author (s)	Sample (period)	Methods	Main findings
Borensztein <i>et al.</i> (1998)	Emerging countries (1970-1989)	ARDL	FDI has a positive effect on technological innovation
Adikari <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Sri Lanka (1990-2019)	ARDL	FDI has a negative effect on technological innovation
Yue (2022)	China (2000-2007)	OLS	FDI has a positive effect on technological innovation
Ali <i>et al.</i> (2023)	BRICS countries (2000-2020)	PMG	FDI has a positive effect on technological innovation
Li (2023)	China (2010-2019)	OLS	FDI has a positive effect on technological innovation
Kipchirchir and Mose (2024)	Kenya (1990-2021)	ARDL	FDI has a positive effect on technological innovation
Notes: ARDL: Autoregressive Distributed Lag; PMG: Panel Mean Group; GMM: Generalized Method of Moment; OLS: Ordinary Least Squares Regression.			

Source: Authors’ compilation (2024).

Research Methodology

This chapter explains the research methodology and highlights the following elements: the relevant data sources, data collection methods, variable description, data analysis techniques, and econometric models used in

the analysis of the relationship between foreign direct investment and technology spillover in Kenya.

Data Collection Method

The study employed quantitative research design to investigate the FDI-innovation nexus in Kenya from 1980 to 2022. Kenya was chosen as the sample area since it is ranked as Africa's fifth largest recipient of FDI (Okello and Badj 2023; Kipchirchir and Mose 2024). The study adopted a time series data approach based on endogenous growth model. The time series secondary data was obtained from the World Bank database and Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. Technological innovations were proxied for patent applications in line with previous empirical works (Adikari *et al.* 2021), while foreign direct investment was represented by FDI net inflow. In addition, human capital, economic growth and trade openness were used as the control variables. Table 2 provides a detailed description of study variables.

Table 2 - Measurements and variable definitions

Variables	Unit of Measurement	Definition	Data source	Expected sign
<i>Dependent variable</i>				
Technological innovation (TEC)	Numbers	Patent applications (residents and non-residents)	World Bank	Dependent Variable (Adikari <i>et al.</i> 2021)
<i>Independent variables</i>				
Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)	Percent	Foreign Direct Investment, net inflows (% GDP)	World Bank	Positive (Ali <i>et al.</i> 2023)
Human capital (HUM)	Percent	School enrolment, primary (% gross)	World Bank	Positive (Li 2023)
Trade openness (TOP)	Percent	Trade (% GDP)	World Bank	Positive (Ali <i>et al.</i> 2023)
Economic Growth (GDP)	Constant 2015 US dollars	GDP <i>per capita</i> is Gross Domestic Product divided by midyear population	World Bank	Positive (Adikari <i>et al.</i> 2021)

Source: Authors' compilation (2024).

Model Specification

The study adopted below baseline model to analyse the relationship between FDI inflow and technological innovation in Kenya.

$$(1) \quad TEC_t = f(FDI_t, HUM_t, TOP_t, GDP_t)$$

Where TEC shows the patent applications which are used as proxy for technological innovations in Kenya. FDI indicates the level of foreign direct investments inflows. GDP represents economic growth variables. TOP indicates trade openness. HUM shows the level of human capital and education. t represents time dimensions. To eliminate skewness the data variables were transformed into logarithms. Hence, we can re-write the above equation as follows:

$$(2) \quad \ln TEC_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \ln FDI_t + \beta_2 \ln HUM_t + \beta_3 \ln TOP_t + \beta_4 \ln GDP_t + \varepsilon_t$$

Where ε_t represent error term, β_0 shows the constant term and β_1 to β_4 are coefficients variables.

Data Analysis Technique

Phillips – Peron (PP) unit root test was employed to scrutinize stationarity in the sample series. F-Bounds cointegration test was applied to confirm presence of long-run relationship between study variables. Before estimation, lag length and best model estimator were identified.

Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) estimation method is used to analyse the determinants of technological innovation. ARDL is highly robust regardless of stationarity and endogeneity of study variables (Pesaran *et al.* 2001). Granger causality test was conducted to check for association between study variables. All models were subjected to diagnostic tests such as autocorrelation (Breusch-Godfrey test) and heteroscedasticity (Breusch-Pagan test) to avoid misleading conclusions.

ARDL Estimations

The study employed Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) estimation technique developed by Pesaran *et al.* (2001) to analyze the determinants of technological innovation in Kenya. The ARDL model used in research is specified in equation 3.

$$(3) \quad \Delta \ln TEC_t = \alpha_{01} + \sum_{i=1}^p \alpha_{1i} \Delta \ln TEC_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^w \alpha_{2i} \ln FDI_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^w \alpha_{3i} \Delta \ln COV_{t-i} \\ + \beta_{11} \ln TEC_{t-1} + \beta_{21} \ln FDI_{t-1} + \beta_{31} \ln COV_{t-1} + \varepsilon_{1t}$$

A multivariate regression model was used to illustrate the long run relationship of the dependent and independent variables. The study used a regression model as follows:

$$(4) \quad \ln TEC_t = \alpha_0 + \sum_{i=1}^p \alpha_{1i} \ln TEC_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^w \alpha_{2i} \ln FDI_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^w \alpha_{3i} \ln COV_{t-i} + \varepsilon_{it}$$

From cointegration result, long run relationship was confirmed and thus to obtain causality relationship using error correction term equation five was applied.

$$(5) \quad \Delta \ln TEC_t = \alpha_0 + \sum_{i=1}^p \alpha_{1i} \Delta \ln TEC_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^w \alpha_{2i} \ln FDI_{t-i} + \sum_{i=0}^w \alpha_{3i} \Delta \ln COV_{t-i} + \\ \phi_1 ECT_{t-1} + \varepsilon_{1t}$$

The lagged error correction term ECT_{t-1} , in equation 5 measures the speed of adjustment to the long-run equilibrium and also the long-run causality relationship. Where COV_t – Matrix of Control variables and ECT_{t-1} is the error correction term.

Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the empirical findings and discusses their implications in alignment with the study's objectives, following the methodologies discussed in chapter three. It begins with a presentation of the unit root test result, followed by the cointegration result, and finally, the ARDL estimation results.

Unit Root Test

The study applied Phillips-Perron (PP) unit root test to check if target variables are stationary or contain unit root. Table 3 shows the PP unit root outcome.

Table 3 - Unit root test results

Variable	Level		Variable	First difference		Order
	t-Statistics	P-Value		t-Statistics	P-Value	
TEC	-0.6957	0.4095	ΔTEC	-18.4839	0.0000	I(1)
FDI	-4.5505	0.0000	ΔFDI	-	-	I(0)
HUM	-1.1778	0.2144	ΔHUM	-21.8118	0.0000	I(1)
TOP	-1.1487	0.2244	ΔTOP	-6.4140	0.0000	I(1)
GDP	1.6998	0.9766	ΔGDP	-3.8295	0.0003	I(1)
Note: Null Hypothesis: data series has a unit root.						

Source: Authors’ computation (2024).

The PP unit root test confirms that technological innovation, human capital, trade openness and economic growth are non-stationary, while the FDI is stationary. Considering most variables are integrated of order I(1), including dependent variables, the study proceeded to investigate long-run relationship.

Choice of Lag Length

Vector autoregression (VAR) lag selection criteria was applied to confirm lag length and best model estimator. The selection criteria is important in reducing residual correlation problem. The result of the VAR selection criteria is presented in Table 4.

Table 4 - VAR lag order selection criteria results

Lag	LogL	LR	FPE	AIC	SIC	HQIC
0	13.5006	NA	4.40e-07	-0.4474	-0.2319	-0.3707
1	96.6550	140.0494*	2.09e-08*	-3.5081	-2.2153*	-3.0481*
2	121.5220	35.3373	2.26e-08	-3.5011	-1.1309	-2.6578
3	141.9897	23.6994	3.48e-08	-3.2627	0.1849	-2.0360
4	180.4015	34.3684	2.61e-08	-3.9685	0.5564	-2.3585
5	215.3523	22.0741	3.55e-08	-4.4922*	1.1100	-2.4989

Note *Indicates lag order selected by the criterion

LR: sequential modified LR test statistic (each test at 5% level)

HQIC: Hannan-Quinn information criterion

FPE: Final Predictor Error

AIC: Akaike Information Criterion

SIC: Schwarz Information Criterion

Source: Authors' computation (2024).

Based on VAR findings, a lag of 5 is the most appropriate, as it reported the minimum value. Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) estimation model was preferred since it had the lowest value when compared to other estimation criteria.

Cointegration Test

The F-bounds cointegration test, introduced by Pesaran *et al.* (2001), was used to explore the cointegration or long-run relationship between the study variables. Table 5 displays the F-bound cointegration test results.

Table 5 - F-Bounds test results

Narayan	Value	Significance Level	Bounds Critical values	
F-Statistics	6.4905		I(0)	I(1)
K	4	1%	3.74	5.06
		5%	2.86	4.01
		10%	2.45	3.52
Note: null hypothesis: no level relationship.				

Source: Narayan (2004).

Since F-statistics (6.49) is greater than the upper bound critical value (4.01), cointegration is confirmed. Based on the findings, the study proceeded to estimating long-run relationship.

Empirical Results

Following the confirmation of the long-run panel cointegration relationship between sample data, the study estimated the long-run and short-run

coefficients of the chosen ARDL model (1, 2, 4, 5, 2) based on the Akaike information criterion (AIC).

ARDL Long Run Form Result

The long run regression results of the effect of technological innovation on FDI are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 - Long run result

Variable	Coefficient	Std.Error	t-Statistics	Probability
FDI	1.6842	0.4092	4.1154***	0.0006
HUM	0.7725	0.2768	2.7906**	0.0117
TOP	-11.9049	3.0447	-3.9099***	0.0009
GDP	-16.1535	5.5086	-2.9324***	0.0085
Cons	69.3713	29.4836	2.3528**	0.0296
Econometrics Problems		Test	F-statistics	Probability
Serial Correlation		Breusch-Godfrey LM	1.3947	0.2852
Model misspecification		Ramsey RESET test	48.1296	0.0000
Heteroscedasticity		Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey	1.1477	0.3834
Goodness of fit		R-Squared	0.7814	
Note: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ are significance levels, in which the null hypothesis is rejected. Dependent variable: TEC.				

Source: Authors' computation (2024).

Foreign direct investment appears to exert a positive and significant effect on adoption of technology and growth in innovation. The study has identified a positive relationship between foreign direct investment and technological innovation in Kenya. Specifically, the result show that as FDI increases by 1 % in long run, technological innovation on average will increase by 1.68%. As Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) increase the stock of technology and innovation tend to increase in Kenya through spillover effects. More FDI inflow will bring higher innovation and stimulate technological advancement. This implies through learning experiences provided by supply linkages and technology licensing that domestic firms take on advanced techniques and management practices employed by foreign-owned and foreign-operated firms. Through joint ventures, licensing agreements, and collaborations with local partners, FDI facilitates the diffusion of knowledge and skills, thereby

contributing to technology absorption and innovation in Kenya (Wanjere 2022). As captured in theoretical literature competition and spillover effect originating from FDI inflow will influence technological transfer and innovations performance in Kenya. Our research results are similar with Ali *et al.* (2023) study in BRICS states and Li (2023) in China. However, our findings contrast with Adikari *et al.* (2021) study in Sri Lanka who reported a negative relationship.

From the result, as human capital increases the adoption and stock of technological innovation tend to increase. An increase in human capital formation by 1% will lead to an increase in technological innovation by 0.77%. This result implies education and human capital development has a substantial role in improving adoption of new technology and subsequent development of new innovations. The findings agree with similar study by Li (2023) in China. Host countries' human capital endowment will influence technological absorption and subsequent innovations.

Trade openness hindered technological innovation in Kenya. An increase in trade openness by 1 % reduced technological innovation by 11%. Li *et al.* (2021) argued that the trade mode dominated by primary products would drive many enterprises to reduce production costs by employing cheap labour, resulting in a decline in enterprises' attention to technological innovation. Considering Kenya is a primary producer, it may be affected by price fluctuations and high labour-intensive activities. This result contrasts a similar study by Ali *et al.* (2023) which reported a positive relationship. Trade will accelerate innovations through technology transfer, labour transfer, competition, economic growth and improved total productivity. Increase in volume of trade will catalyse increase in innovation technology.

As the country experiences economic growth (GDP) the stock of technology and innovations tend to diminish. This implies, increase in GDP growth by 1 % reduces technological innovation by 16%. In its present form, economic growth can hinder technological progress (through increasing returns to scale, reducing the rate of innovation) (Ayres 1996). Government's *economic growth* target constraints significantly inhibit enterprise *technological innovation*. The findings support a similar result by Ayres (1996), however, it goes opposite to Ali *et al.* (2023) findings in BRICS countries.

ARDL Short Run Form Results

Table 7 below shows the short run estimation results.

Table 7 - Short run results

Variable	Coefficient	Std.Error	t-Statistics	Probability
ΔFDI	0.6980	0.1648	4.2335***	0.0004
ΔHUM	0.0224	0.1093	0.2056	0.8392
ΔTOP	-3.5398	2.0397	-1.7354*	0.0988
ΔGDP	20.3672	9.3062	2.1885**	0.0413
ETC ⁴	-0.9683	0.1544	-6.2677***	0.0000
Cons	69.3713	11.0613	6.2715***	0.0000
Econometrics Problems		Test	F-statistics	Probability
Serial Correlation		Breusch-Godfrey LM	1.3947	0.2852
Model misspecification		Ramsey RESET	48.1296	0.0000
Heteroscedasticity		Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey	1.1477	0.3834
Goodness of fit		R-Squared	0.7647	
Note: * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$ are significance levels, in which the null hypothesis is rejected. Dependent variable: TEC.				

Source: Authors' computation (2024).

Based on Table 7 result, the short run result for relationship between FDI and technological innovation are the same. As FDI inflow increase on average, technological innovation will grow. FDI inflow advances diffusion of knowledge, management practices and advanced technologies (Wanjere 2022). The findings agree with previous empirical studies by Wanjere (2022) in Kenya, Ali *et al.* (2023) study in BRICS states and Li (2023) in China. However, the same study contract Adikari *et al.* (2021) study in Sri Lanka who concluded FDI is detrimental to technology advancement.

Table 7 results have shown that short-run human capital development may not have much influence on technological innovations. This can be attributed to the quality of education offered in Kenya and lack of adequate investment in the education sector. Also, because effects from the education sector would have very long lags (Mose 2023). However, according to literature human capital leads to diffusion of technologies and efficient adoption of technology (Li 2023). The short run findings contradict long run result.

The regression result confirms that just like in the long run the effect of trade openness on technological innovation is negative and significant. According to Li *et al.* (2021) this can be attributed to Kenya's production

⁴ ECT: The coefficient of error term.

sector being dominated by primary products that drive many enterprises to reduce production costs by employing cheap labour, resulting in a decline in enterprises' attention to technological innovation. However, the findings contract similar findings by Ali *et al.* (2023).

Increase in economic growth will lead to advancement in technological innovations. This result contradicts the long run result. Economic growth involves utilization of new technology to uncover new ideas and improve productivity. Increase in output means increase in high technology spending which is connected with increase of need for high technology and innovations. The result supports empirical studies by Ali *et al.* (2023) while contradicting those by Ayres (1996) in BRICS member states.

The constant variable was positive and significant in the short-run and long-run implying unobservable determinants outside the model encourage technological innovations in Kenya. These findings show that the value of the overall coefficient of determination (0.76) is high enough, meaning that the regressors explained about 76 per cent of the variations in technological innovation development and the remaining percentage is explained by other unobservable random factors captured by the error term that also stimulate innovations. Further, the diagnostic test result tells us that the model is free of both autocorrelation and heteroscedasticity problems and implies that the estimates of the regression coefficients in question are consistent and efficient and the standard errors are unbiased.

The coefficient of error term (ECT) was significant and had an appropriate negative sign (-0.9683). This implies the speed of adjustment back to the equilibrium is about 0.9683, meaning any disequilibrium or shock the economy will be able to correct about 96% in the current year and thus it will take about one year to go back to the equilibrium after any shock. This means in Kenya any disequilibrium will exist for a short time. The significant ECT confirmed the long-run relationship between independent and dependent variables. Also, the model's long-term causality and lagged error correction term (ECT) are significantly negative.

Granger Causality Test

Pairwise causality test was adopted to test for short run relationship between FDI and technological innovations. Table 8 shows the Granger causality result.

Table 8 - Pairwise causality results

Direction	F-Statistic	P-Value	Status
FDI → TEC	2.71073**	0.0374	
TEC → FDI	0.10110	0.9956	One way causality

Source: Authors’ computation (2024).

One way relationship running from FDI to technological innovation was detected. This implies that as FDI inflow increase, technological innovations will increase as well. As FDI inflow increase on average technological innovation will grow in short run. FDI inflow advances diffusion of knowledge, management practices and advanced technologies (Wanjere 2022).

Conclusion

Although the effect of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) on economic growth has received a great deal of attention, less is known about the effect of FDI on technological innovations on host countries. In line with this argument, the study analyzed how FDI foster technological innovations in Kenya for the period from 1980 to 2022. The study employed advanced econometric methods such as unit root test, cointegration, lag length criterion and Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) estimation approach. The result from ARDL estimator indicates that increase in FDI and human capital formation leads to increase in technological innovation in Kenya. In contrast, trade openness and economic growth have significant negative effects on technological innovation in the long-run. Moreover, a one-way causal relationship exists between FDI and technological innovation. In conclusion, FDI has the potential to play a transformative role in Kenya’s journey towards becoming a technology-driven economy.

As per result, FDI plays a substantial role in expanding technological innovations in Kenya. By adopting proactive policies and strategies that harness the benefits of FDI, Kenya can position itself as a hub for innovation, entrepreneurship, and technological excellence in the region. To maximize the benefits of FDI for technology growth, it is essential for Kenya to create an enabling environment that attracts investment, fosters innovation, and builds human capital. By implementing policies that enhance the investment climate, strengthen institutional capacity, promote research and development, support human capital development, and facilitate technology spillovers,

Kenya can leverage FDI as a driver of sustainable economic growth and technological advancement. Improvements in the investment climate through policy reforms, institutional strengthening, and infrastructure development are essential for maximizing the benefits of FDI for technology development and long-term growth.

Government and multinational corporations (MNCs) should adopt the mechanisms of licensing agreements, joint ventures, and collaborations to increase diffusion of knowledge. In Kenya, efforts to improve education quality, enhance vocational training, and promote lifelong learning are critical for maximizing the impact of FDI on technology development. Moreover, policies that facilitate the mobility of skilled workers and encourage knowledge exchange between foreign and domestic firms can further strengthen the linkages between FDI and human capital development. Then, the level of education and human capital development are very important to stimulate absorption of technology. Kenya needs to improve on the quality of education and increase accessibility to all citizens in order to improve digestion of technology. This study is limited to Kenya, and the same study could be done in other panels of countries.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of foreign direct investment (FDI) inflow on technological innovation in Kenya. The result can help the government to formulate policies that attract FDI inflow to promote new technology, innovation, knowledge and financial capital inflow. It uses the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) estimation approach with time series data from 1980 to 2022 for Kenya. The results indicate that foreign direct investment and human capital lead to an increase in technological innovation over the long term. On the other hand, trade openness and economic growth are found to negatively impact technological innovation in the long run. Additionally, the result indicates that there is a causal relationship, in the Granger sense, between FDI inflow and technological innovation. The government should develop policies designated to create an environment conducive to attract foreign direct investment. The policies should focus on encouraging joint ventures and collaborations with local partners, industry specific incentives, investment promotions and tax incentives. FDI inflows bring advanced technologies, managerial know-how, and best practices, which can enhance the innovative capabilities and productivity of domestic firms.

KEYWORDS

Foreign direct investment. Technological innovation. Patents.

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE MODERNIZED NIGERIAN RAILWAY SYSTEM BY THE CHINESE

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Introduction

Railways in Nigeria date back to the colonial times when the Europeans constructed them to foster their economic engagement. After independence, the railway system in Nigeria almost nosedived not until 1995, which experienced the most efficient modernization attempt through Chinese support.

Indeed, various interventions were made under the military regime to revamp the Nigerian Railway, yet none so far have been as impactful as the Chinese intervention. The 1995 China-Nigeria Railway deal, under General Sani Abacha, saw about 87 percent completion of the rehabilitation, which became a pointer in the subsequent years that China could be that foreign investor Nigeria needed in the modernization of the Railway. Through various administrations since 1999, China has become actively involved in the modernization of the railway, which has tremendously increased the patronage of the railway in Nigeria. Upsurge in the awareness of railway and high level of patronage has not only boosted economic activities along coastal regions but also had positive implications for development.

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Railway in Nigeria is now a common means of transport in routes where hold up (traffic) is the order of the day. In regions where railway lines are, numerous people now shun the road to travel by the train knowing fully well that they would enjoy no delay in their trip. It is gradually becoming a major means of transport for both corporate people and businesspeople who desire to meet their schedules. For instance, businesspeople who travel the Lagos-Ibadan expressway have avoided the road due to traffic, opting instead for comfortable coaches with well conditioned environments. The impact of the upgrades made by China, even though it has its challenges, is commendable. The current length of the Lagos-Ibadan railway is 157 km, which runs on a double gauge with a design speed of about 200 km/h with 10 stations. The NRC earned approximately N1.08 billion from passenger patronage in the second quarter of 2021, alongside an increase in freight service revenue, which rose from N26 million to N71 million. Since the modernization, railway service patronage has increased, with a total of 565,238 passengers traveling by railway in the first quarter of 2021 (Emewu 2021).

After 1999, the involvement of China in the Nigeria railway took a new shift. There has been tremendous improvement in freight services, which has helped many companies move their containers and heavy duties around the country without fearing accidents or delays. Amidst these advancements, there is still more ground to cover and more improvements to be made. Yet, the question that demands a serious answer is whether Nigeria has the capacity to sustain the modernization and if the continuous dependency on China for these services is safe. China has been able to provide the Nigerian Railway with a complete overhaul through funding that comes from China Exim Bank, under the auspices of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The railway development has contributed economically to Nigeria beyond its generation of revenue; it provides daily income for some small business owners. It has helped contribute to the financial stability of businesses that have benefited from the freight services. It contributes to economic growth by reducing transportation costs, improving logistics, and increasing the movement of goods and people. It has facilitated the flow of raw materials, goods, and products to markets, thereby boosting trade and stimulating industrialization (Kemi 2022). It has created employment opportunities directly within the railway sector as well as indirectly in related industries such as manufacturing, construction, and services. Beyond the economic impact, the railway also contributed to infrastructural development which has led to environmental development. The infrastructure development changes the overall outlook of Nigeria especially in places where these facilities are present. Railway modernization has contributed to environmental sustainability

and mitigates the negative impacts of transportation on air quality and congestion. The modernization of Nigeria's railway system has the potential to catalyze economic growth, foster regional development, create employment, promote environmental sustainability, enhance social inclusion, and facilitate cultural exchange (Kemi 2022). However, to realize these benefits, it is essential to ensure effective planning, investment, governance, and stakeholder engagement in the development and operation of the railway infrastructure.

The impact of the modernization since the partnership of China with Nigeria on the railway deal has been commendable, it has recorded socio-economic impacts, amongst others. Although these welcomed developments are not void of its challenges, especially with the stakeholders involved in the modernization plan. These stakeholders include the China Civil Engineering Construction Company (CCECC) and Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC). The subsequent subheadings shall critically examine the identified impacts and challenges.

History of Sino-Nigeria railway engagement

China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) rose into prominence in 1976 due to its execution of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway project, which was the biggest economic-aid project undertaken by China in Africa in the 1970s. With China's go-out policy (as a result of economic reforms) and the desire to engage its firms in international contracting and construction, the presence of Chinese firms, both state and private, began to be greatly felt in Africa. Specifically, China gained entrance into the Nigerian railway sector in 1994 when The Chinese Chamber of Commerce was founded under Gen. Abacha's administration (Brown 2006). Gen. Abacha's effort was quite commendable in gradually and steadily improving these bilateral ties, signing about \$600 million agreement in 1995 to rehabilitate the railways and apply to roll stock and engines, although, the contract was short-lived due to a lack of funds from the Nigerian government (Oni and Okanlawon 2011). Hence, CCECC gained prominence in Nigeria in 1995 when the contract was awarded. The contract was a kind of 'reward' for the role China played when General Abacha was facing sanctions from Western countries.

When the United States and European countries isolated Nigeria due to its human rights abuses, mainly the hanging of Ken Saro Wiwa in 1995, along with eight others from Niger Delta, China, in its 'usual' manner,

maintained non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and did not come forward to criticize the Nigerian government. This stance attracted the Nigerian government to China. Hence, General Sani Abacha's government made a reversal to the East (Oni and Okanlawon 2011). China became the Nigerian government's 'favourable' partner, and, subsequently, the railway rehabilitation contract was awarded to the Chinese-state firm, CCECC (Bukarambe 2001). The execution of that contract was not completed. The railway rehabilitation, which was scheduled to be completed in four years, was later abandoned. Reasons such as inadequate funding and the non-disbursement of funds by the Nigerian government were cited by both the Nigerian government and the Chinese firm. However, the passenger patronage increased from 784,491 in 1994 to 2,889,977 in 1995 as a result of the rehabilitation project undertaken by the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC), which began in 1995 (Brown 2006).

In 2002, after decades of neglect, the government under President Olusegun Obasanjo commissioned a twenty-five-year strategic vision to modernize the railway network; this vision was amended and ratified again in 2012. The plan aimed to rehabilitate and transition existing rail routes toward higher-capacity standard-gauge tracks and to connect all thirty-six major states and economic hubs with new railway networks (Onuoha 2013). Efforts aimed at rehabilitating the Nigerian railway system to enhance its performance included technical cooperation between the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) and the Rail India Technical and Economic Services between 1979 and 1982 and with the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation between 1995 and 1999. These agreements focused on improving rail tracks, rehabilitating existing locomotives, coaches, and wagons, as well as supplying a few new ones and reopening previously closed routes (Akinjide and Bello 2005). China's rehabilitation project has improved the Nigerian railway sector.

Dependency theory

Theotonio dos Santos (1971) accentuated the historical phase of the dependency relationships. In his definition, dependency is a historical condition that shapes the structure of the global economy in a way that favors certain countries to the detriment of others, thereby limiting the development opportunities of subordinate economies. This presents a situation in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which their own is subjected.

The external forces that favor the developed countries include multinational corporations, international commodity markets, foreign assistance and any other means by which the advanced industrialized countries can represent their economic interests abroad. Thus, these external forces that benefit the developed countries are the same factors that slow down the development of developing countries such as Nigeria. Therefore, the theory suggests that the presence of Chinese FDI has slowed down progress because Nigeria is regarded as a mere raw material deposit used to satisfy the desires of China at the expense of national development.

In essence, dependency theory explains the underdevelopment of some nations and how the interactions between the developed and underdeveloped countries have been the factors responsible for the economic breakdown of the Third World countries. Thus, dependency theorists explain inequality as the consequence of imperialism. This explains why Nigeria is regarded as a producer of raw materials and a depository of cheap labor, being denied the opportunity to market its resources in any way that competes with China. China only sees Nigeria as a place to realize its goals. Hence, this theory explains in part why Nigeria is not highly developed despite the fact that the necessary ingredients are present. Also, China has made no determined effort to develop the country once it gets what it wants.

Another aspect of the dependency theory posited by Ferraro (1996) is the diversion of resources, which is not only maintained by the power of developed states, but also through the power of elites in the dependent states. Dependency theorists argue that these elites maintain a dependent relationship because their own private interests coincide with the interests of the dominant states. The elites in a dependent state are consciously betraying the interests of the poor; the elites sincerely believe that the key to economic development lies in following the prescriptions of liberal economic doctrine. Typically, Nigerian politicians and elites have their interests wrapped up in the deals that have hindered the nation's development. Indeed, this theory stresses the reliance of developing countries such as Nigeria on China, because of better technological advancement, better service delivery and 'stress-free' deals. Many argued that China uses the infrastructure strategy to increase a continuous dependency of Nigeria on China and sidelining development in the process. It is with this submission that this theory is considered appropriate for this research.

Economic impact

Globally, it has been a renowned phenomenon that railway modernization contributes immensely to the development of a nation through various initiatives and the exposure it brings. Railway modernization contributes to economic development by improving transportation infrastructure, increasing connectivity and trade, generating cost savings, creating jobs, enhancing productivity, promoting sustainable development, stimulating urban development, and fostering tourism growth. Railway modernization has enhanced the economic development in Nigeria. Nigeria still has a long way to go in revamping the railway sector, but, in the meantime, the upgrade has positively affected citizens and many businesses across the nation. According to the NRC records, millions of people are being conveyed weekly using the train facilities and thousands of freight services have boosted the economy and the national revenue. Many Nigerians see the upgrade as an optimistic sign of development and embrace its advancement. The subsequent heading below examines various economic contributions of railways to the Nigerian economy and citizens.

Employment in the rural and urban areas

One of the most important aspects of the economic impact of the modernization of the railway is the creation of jobs. The upgrade affords diversification of operations which gives room for job opportunities. The job creation cut across the rural and urban dwellers because of the development that railway brings to the hinterlands. This essentially boosted the economy and brought about a steady developmental pattern. The major stakeholders in the railway upgrade are the CCECC and the NRC, these two organizations provide a platform where people can earn their livelihood.

Chinese Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) job creation

There is a large, appreciable, and notable contribution of job opportunities created by the Nigeria railway modernization. Zette (2005) stated that the expansion and improvement of the rail network creates more jobs by connecting business and activity centers in an efficient way. Railway construction and upgrade leads to an increase in human capital, which gives room for the creation of many departments that provide people with job opportunities.

These opportunities cut across various cadres: those boarding passengers, those in the train stations, the cleaners, the operative personnel, etc. The Chinese Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) is one of the major stakeholders in the modernization of the railway system in Nigeria, and it has over the years created numerous job opportunities based on their engagements.

The employment opportunity in the railway sector cut across various stakeholders, including both the Chinese (CCECC) and the Nigeria Railway Corporation, who recruit personnel at various levels, from skilled to unskilled labor (Bello 2022). There are many artisans employed by the Chinese contractor, not by the Railway Corporation (NRC) itself. The Chinese have the technical team; these are the consultants of the entire project. This team consists of both the Nigerian consultant in charge of the railway modernization projects in the country and Chinese experts who work directly with the Exim Bank to supply the funding terms and conditions, and the annual percentage remittance to Exim bank. There is a large corporate league that oversees the upgrade of railway modernization in Nigeria which in itself increased the labor demand, amplifying its economic impact (Cheng 2022).

The Chinese employ local workers, especially in places where the routes of the rail are located. Modern railway systems require regular maintenance and repair to ensure safe and efficient operations. This creates jobs for technicians, mechanics, and maintenance workers, both in railway depots and workshops located in various regions, increasing employment opportunities. Also, areas that are virgin lands where there are no rail lines, the Chinese companies usually go through acquisition and clearing of the land which in most cases is done by the indigenous people to provide a means of daily earnings for them (Cheng 2022). The company also contributes to the community by schools, providing furniture and water. There are instances where clinics were built for the communities, which provide employment opportunities for the staff of these mini establishments. This gives the community more employment power, railway upgrade does not only benefit the urban dwellers alone, even the rural people gain access to the amenities that comes with the traction of the modernization of railway (Akor 2022). Usually, the company examines the peculiar needs of the neighboring community and seeks for means where the indigenous people of the community can benefit from the project. Although these things are supposed to be the responsibility of the government, the Chinese contractor sees the need for a corporate social responsibility to support the community and not act as the government (Bello 2022).

Also, indigenes who own the land where the railway tracks are laid struggle to adjust to the reality of the loss of their lands, which could have been used for farming. The company also tries to ensure they engage them in menial jobs for compensation. This becomes difficult for many because of the ancestral connection they have with their land. There are already obvious tensions that these projects bring, which is why the company seeks ways of ensuring to provide some relief within its means and affordability (Cheng 2022). The company also tries to balance the employment provided amongst tribes to avoid conflict. For instance, during the Abuja-Kaduna project, where the route primarily went through villages, there was a need for both skilled and unskilled workers. The recruitment was made open to the communities and neighboring areas without any form of discrimination, they were all put on a test, the most qualified were engaged on the project (Bello 2022).

After the Abuja-Kaduna project, some skilled workers were transferred to work in the Lagos-Ibadan line based on their skills, and some of them are already regarded as part of the company. Some workers were also sent from Lagos back to work in the Kano-Kaduna area. As long as there is efficiency and effectiveness, the company retains workers who are willing to be mobile. However, workers often decline transfers from the southwest to the north, stating they do not want to work in the north due to various security challenges (Bello 2022).

The company also has a scheme called “catch them young”. A visit is often paid to universities; final year students in some Nigerian universities are brought in, and are introduced to what the company does, and asked for their willingness to work with the company after graduation. This was done in 2015. Some obliged, while some demanded to know how much the company is willing to pay, making it clear that they were not ready to work for free; otherwise, they said they would rather work for an oil company that probably pays better CCECC, over the years has made concerted effort to ensure that jobs are created through the modernization of the railway in Nigeria, especially through the involvement of university students. The focus of the company went beyond those who are engineering-inclined, including law and every other department relevant to the company. This is another method the company uses for Nigerian inclusiveness (King 2022).

Furthermore, the company (CCECC) is regulated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria regarding the number of expatriates, interpreters and cooks (the Chinese are quite rigid with food, they eat only what they are accustomed to, hence the need for their own cooks). All of these are regulations that serve as checks, because there must be Nigerians working with the

Chinese (this is part of the regulations and specifications of the ministry). Every project has work force specifications; the number of Chinese experts and Nigerian experts depends on the project. By the virtue of exposure and years of experience, some Nigerians, though very few, have been able to become experts through observations and training (King 2022). Working closely with the Chinese expatriates has its implications, as even Nigerians become experts themselves, although in most cases these are not deliberate initiatives from the Chinese company (Bello 2022). According to the documentation accessed from the Chinese embassy in Abuja, the Lagos-Ibadan railway alone supported the employment of 20,000 people. CCECC also organizes training sessions to contribute to the cultivation of talent for Nigeria's railway modernization (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Federal Republic of Nigeria 2023).

Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) job creation

The Nigerian Railway Corporation is another stakeholder in the railway sector. The Corporation serves as the end users after the Chinese have handled over various projects upon completion. The modernization, over the years, has increased the wide range operation of the corporation, from skilled workers to unskilled workers. The corporation has experienced growth in human resources since 1995. The Nigeria Railway Corporation often employs indigenous people to ensure the tracks are not tampered with or stolen — a job similar to community policing to deter vandalism. Upgrading railway systems requires the manufacturing and supply of new trains, locomotives, signaling equipment, and other components. This has stimulated manufacturing industries, providing employment in factories and supply chain businesses located in both rural and urban areas. The Nigerian railway Corporation has an extensive operational chain; including those in the urban and rural areas, as well as full-time and contracted staff (Kolawole 2022).

To ensure the safety of the tracks, the corporation has 'whistleblowers' within various communities to alert the Corporation anytime there is a vandalization or an attempt on the tracks. They also inform the corporation when there are hindrances on the tracks to avoid accidents. The upgrade and modernization of the railway have led to an increase in the workforce of the Corporation. For instance, every infrastructure set up by the railway sector needs facility managers and various personnel to maintain the facilities. The advancement in the ICT of the railway corporation has also increased the number of hands needed to prevent glitches. More than ever, the Corpo-

rations now have needs for cleaners and other unskilled workers to keep the facilities operational (Idiat 2022).

Revenue generated through freight and transportation

The railway upgrade led to an increase in freights services, establishing a vital link between the port and the rail, thus expediting the flow of import and export goods, alleviating port congestion, and contributing significantly to the growth of Nigeria's largest port, the Lagos Apapa Port (Ogochukwu *et al.* 2022). More businesses have been drawn to railway transportation since the upgrade and modernizations. The high-speed railway has significantly impacted industrial business movement and concentration, as well as the secondary labor force (Mohammed 2021). The economic impact of the rail network encouraged the movement and concentration of companies and staff. Introducing high-speed rail widened the pathway for production circulation and the interaction demand for factor flows between urban and rural units, affecting the distribution trend of enterprises.

One of the most efficient ways for transporting large supplies of commodities, manufactured goods, and achieving economies of scale for passenger transport is rail (Rodrigue and Comtois 2013). The Associated Port & Marine Development Company partners with the Nigerian Railway Corporation to operate a world class, efficient railway freight transport system in Nigeria. The goal of their partnership is to decongest the Nigerian port system, reducing delivery time to end users, saving cost on cargo delivery. With improvement on electronic data interchange, container real time report, direct report to line and many other services has increased, generating revenue.

According to Rodrigue and Comtois, rail transportation has been playing a crucial role in economic development in terms of improving the land transport technology and positively changing the movement of freight and passengers. Rail can transport heavy mineral resources, enhancing economic performance by increasing productivity and improving distribution. (Rodrigue and Comtois 2013). Moreover, by carrying heavy bulk freight over long distances, rail transport reduces production and commercial costs. Consequently, economies of scale are achieved (in tonnage transported), while road transport usage is limited.

The safety of the railway and its almost predictable means of operation have increased patronage. Many companies with heavy duties see the need to reduce cost by using the train freight service. Companies are often willing to pay a premium for expedited delivery of their goods, thus generating

additional revenue for the NRC. Apart from deductions in the second quarter of 2021, the NRC generated N1.18bn (Nigerian Naira), which is a significant raise in revenue (Lawrence 2022).

Upgraded railways have improved reliability and punctuality, reducing the risk of delays and associated costs for freight companies. This reliability has attracted more business from shippers looking for dependable transportation options. Railway operators (NRC) negotiate long-term contracts with freight companies, providing them with a predictable revenue stream over an extended period. These contracts often offer volume discounts or other incentives to encourage businesses to commit to using the railway services (Lawrence 2022). Many have affirmed that the predictable timing has made companies subscribe to the service in recent times. Indeed, both as a means of transport and freight, many companies use trains because of their safety and the ability to carry heavy loads.

Small business owners

Rail transport has made varying degrees of impact on the development of the countries where they exist. The rail lines have become zones of economic activity, serving as focal points for the expansion of settlements and economic input and output (Kolars and Malin 1970). At various train stopovers, there are traders and hawkers displaying their businesses hoping that the train passengers alighting from the train or waiting for the train would patronize their business. Some of the traders affirmed that this is their primary means of livelihood, and with the increase in the number of passengers, their businesses have also grown significantly. At these various stopovers, there are people selling snacks, drinks, food and all manner of things that they believe passengers might need.

In terms of the economy, railways play a major role in integrating markets and increasing trade. Railways facilitate all forms of local development by providing access to people, information and employment opportunities. For some of the hawkers, the daily station routine offers an assured customer base as long as the train service is active (Arike 2021). The money they earn daily is used to feed their family, and cater for the school fees and the general welfare of their children (Hikmat 2021). They use the predictable schedule of the train service to their advantage, preparing each day to meet customer needs. Some train passengers are also able to secure business contracts with fellow passengers they meet on board after casual conversations.

Transport infrastructure brings firms closer to a larger customer base and a larger pool of workers, which can stimulate hiring and investment by local firms. The upgrade and modernization of the railway has also created a daily means of livelihood for drivers who come to pick up passengers at the train station. For instance, the Ibadan station is far from the city, so the train station is filled with many commercial drivers waiting for passengers to transport to town. This provides a significant source of income for these drivers; they are grateful to have a place to go daily, and they feel assured of patronage (Lalekan 2021).

Tourism

For some individuals and families, the train experience is one of a kind for them. For some, it is an opportunity to get to know Nigeria better, and appreciate the beauty of nature in a very comfortable setting in the train (Kim 2021). This has generated revenue due to the increased patronage of the railway (Lawrence 2022). Railway as a form of tourism seeks to enhance travel experiences, including nostalgia, a sense of history and authenticity. Furthermore, in the experiential travel scene, it offers services that meet travelers' expectations. Railway heritage attracts both the young and old generations looking for new experiences, or feeling nostalgic. The ability of marketing to harness people's enthusiasm for new experiences has increased the attractiveness of railway patronage (Kim 2021). People love to travel because the trip has a remarkable inherent utility. The experiences of traveling on a steam train have become an attraction, and the journey leads to excitement. Many opt for the new coaches to experience them firsthand. The coaches are modern, and designed with facilities that offer passengers comfort and the pleasure of traveling. All the coaches are air-conditioned and have tinted windows. This has indeed led to an upsurge in people's preference for using the train as a means of transport. The tourist railway stimulates the railway market by emphasizing both the values of railway heritage and the quality of the travel experience.

Investment in railway and its improvement on GDP

An infrastructure network, ranging from roads and bridges to freight rail and ports, as well as electrical grids and internet provision, plays a critical role in every nation's growth and prosperity. It also improves households' social and economic welfare. Studies have shown that accessible and quality infrastructure enhances economic growth in both developed

and developing countries. Improved rail connectivity promotes tourism by making it easier for people to travel to various destinations. Additionally, it encourages development in regions along railway lines, boosting local economies and contributing to GDP growth. Rail transport is generally more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly compared to road transport. Increased investment in railways has led to a modal shift from road to rail, resulting in reduced carbon emissions and environmental damage, which have positive long-term effects on GDP by mitigating the costs associated with environmental degradation (Pedroni and Canning 2004).

Social harmonization

The railway upgrade has increased the number of people using rail as a means of transport. It has also increased socio-cultural interaction, which in itself impacts on national development. The use of railways brings people of different cultures and tribes together, fostering engagement and interaction. People find common topics to discuss while on the train to make the journey smoother. The amazement caused by the modern facility of the rail wagons encourages people's interaction. It also develops a nationalistic view and helps foster national interest, in a way that people see themselves as one while on the train (Kim 2021).

The common goal is to reach destinations while the journey remains smooth. Modernized railways in Nigeria enhance connectivity, making transportation more accessible to a wider segment of the population. This accessibility has led to greater social inclusion by enabling people from different backgrounds to access education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and cultural activities more easily. Railway networks facilitate cultural exchange by enabling easier travel between regions and countries. This promotes understanding, tolerance, and appreciation of diverse cultures, ultimately fostering social cohesion and harmony. Railway modernization has a multifaceted impact on social harmony by improving accessibility, fostering economic development, promoting environmental sustainability, reducing congestion, facilitating cultural exchange, enhancing safety and security, and promoting community engagement and participation. These benefits contribute to creating inclusive, resilient, and cohesive societies where people can thrive and live harmoniously together. The subsequent headings below examine various contributions of railway upgrade to social harmonization across the country.

Networking

Train is one of the best means of social interaction. Sitting with people for a period of hours gives you the chance to have some chitty chat that affords the opportunity to network. Passengers often engage in conversations with fellow travelers during their journey. Whether it's small talk, sharing experiences, or discussing common interests, train journeys provide opportunities for social networking among passengers. Just by sitting next to someone in the train and wasting time with conversations, connections can be made that lead to business opportunities. Over time, some passengers have confirmed how a chat on the train led to a significant contract, such as makeup jobs, which later brought additional referrals (Obisesan 2021).

Passengers can share their journey updates, photos, and experiences on platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, using specific hashtags related to the railway or train journey. This has also increased the awareness and promoted railway services and modernization in Nigeria. Train travel often involves traversing through various regions and cities, each with its own unique culture, language, food, and customs. Train passengers have the opportunity to interact with people of different regions, observe their way of life, and engage in cultural exchanges, thereby broadening their understanding and appreciation of different cultures. Trains provide shared spaces where people from diverse backgrounds come together. Passengers share cabins fostering interactions and opportunities for cultural exchange. These shared experiences lead to the formation of connections and friendships across cultural boundaries. Nigerians find it most exciting to relate on trains to encounter new ways of life, they develop a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity and become more open-minded individuals (Obisesan 2021).

Beautiful love stories

Sometimes, people simply strike up conversations with fellow passengers during a train journey. These chance encounters can lead to a connection that evolves into a romantic relationship over time. Perhaps they sit next to each other. Some people intentionally choose to travel by train with the hope of meeting someone special, which some train travelers affirmed worked for them. They might be open to the idea of finding love during their journey and actively seek out opportunities to connect with other passengers (Kim 2021).

The impact of train travel cannot be erased from some people's life as it affords them the opportunity of meeting with their life partner which has given them a beautiful life together. Train commuters connect over shared

interests, such as a love for adventure, literature, or music. Finding someone who shares your passions can create a strong foundation for a lasting relationship. People can also meet their life partners while commuting on trains. Frequently seeing the same faces on their daily travels can lead to friendships that evolve into something more meaningful (Obisesan 2021).

Family bonding time

The modernizations of the Nigerian railway have given some families ample opportunity to explore this means of transport to strengthen family bonds and create memories together. Oftentimes at the railway station, you will see families with their children boarding and using the first class cabin to give them a worthy travel experience. This has fostered family connection and for some family train travel has become a getaway time. Train travel offers a unique shared experience for the entire family. From the excitement of boarding the train to watching the landscapes together, watching movies played on the train screen together, every moment becomes a shared memory. Train journeys often provide uninterrupted time together without the distractions of traffic or electronic devices. This creates an ideal environment for conversation, or simply enjoying each other's company. The new coaches simply offer a more relaxed atmosphere compared to other modes of transportation. Train travel has led to memorable moments that families cherish for years to come. Whether it's appreciating the beauty of nature through the train window or meeting interesting fellow passengers, these experiences can strengthen family bonds and create lasting memories (Kim 2021).

Education

The modernization of railways in Nigeria led to the creation of the Transportation University in Kastina. The University of Transportation is part of the technological transfer attempt and social contribution of the Chinese to Nigerian society. This initiative was conceived during the contract negotiation of the Lagos to Kano Railway Modernization Project on May 15, 2018, between the Federal Ministry of Transportation and Messrs China Civil Engineering Construction Company (CCECC Nigeria Ltd), with the sole purpose of technology transfer in the area of transportation. The establishment of the University is aimed at properly safeguarding and sustaining the huge investment of the Federal Government of Nigeria in the transportation sector while addressing the need for a transport-focused education and research-based institution to complement the shortage of human capacity in

the transportation sector, with a deepened focus on the nation's rejuvenated railways (FUTD 2018). For the University project, CCECC Nigeria Limited promised to commit an amount not exceeding fifty million United States Dollars (US\$50,000,000.00) as an obligation, and the development of the University will span through the period of the construction of the Lagos to Kano Railway Project.

The Federal University of Transportation, Daura (FUTD) has three faculties: the Faculty of Basic Engineering, the Faculty of Traffic and Transportation Engineering, and the Faculty of Logistics, Management and Planning. Within these faculties there are eleven dynamic departments, including Civil Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Highway Engineering, Railway Engineering, Aviation Management, Highway Management, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Maritime Management, Railway Management, and Transportation Management and Planning (FUTD 2018).

The modernization of the Nigeria railway sector by the Chinese also led to the creation of empowerment and education initiatives for Lady Engineers. In Abuja, there is a concrete unit responsible for rail maintenance, known as the Lady Engineers. This section is staffed entirely by women, who work exclusively in that department. This is an attempt to encourage the female child, and empower them to learn about technology. The women are recruited from the local communities and they are trained for a specific duration under the guidance of a supervisor in all intricacies of engineering (Bello 2022).

Challenges of the modernization in the Railway sector

Modernization of the railway system in Nigeria has its unique challenges. Every developmental measure comes with its own challenges, and the various stakeholders involved in the modernization process face diverse obstacles. The subsequent paragraphs identify the challenges confronting the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) and the Chinese company handling the railway construction (CCECC).

The challenges facing the Chinese investor/CCECC

There are three parties involved in every project set up: the contractors, the consultant and the clients (Bello 2022). Every government wants a particular project completed within a time frame, so the political influences

often come into play at times. The contractor will always express his own time frame, which is convenient. Sometimes there is a conflict of timing between the government (Client) and the contractors and consultants. For instance, in the Lagos–Ibadan project, the agreement was three years but as the project advanced along the way, there were constraints that made the three years agreement impossible. The obstacle on the project took more than nine months to solve. The implication is that for nine months, work was not done, which had an adverse effect on the initial agreement on the timeline. It is important to make the client (government) aware of the challenges. The construction started in 2017, with its foundation being laid by the then vice-president, and was expected to be completed in three years, which would have been 2020, but COVID-19 came and affected the project. Moreover, the then minister was not giving the contractors the breathing space so that the work could be completed (King 2022). The pressure of the minister was very commendable, as it helped facilitate the project. The subsequent paragraphs identified the key challenges of the Chinese investors in Nigeria.

Delays in providing necessary facilities disrupt the overall project timeline

The provision of necessary facilities such as stations, maintenance yards, signaling systems, and security infrastructure significantly impedes progress and also dampens the zeal of the worker (Bello 2022). A lack of coordination among various stakeholders, such as construction teams, government agencies, and utility providers, hinders the delivery of the facilities on schedule. Railway projects must comply with various regulatory standards and requirements related to facilities, particularly those concerning accessibility, environmental impact, and safety. Failure to meet these standards results in regulatory hurdles, fines, or legal challenges, further delaying the project and increasing costs.

Willingness to be able to work

It is important to look at what is reasonable and not unnecessarily prolong the project. Usually, the contractors have the tendency of prolonging the project, which is one of the challenges faced in a project. There are constant pressures from the government especially under the Buhari administration to ensure that the project is delivered on time. Most times, it depends on how the contractor sees the supervising agency; if he can bully them, the project will last as long as there is no pressure. But if the govern-

ment's projected completion is within its tenure, then the pressure becomes heightened, and, in such cases, workers would have to work even at night to ensure the work is completed within the stipulated time. The Buhari government was bent on completing the project within his tenure. For instance, the Abuja-Kaduna project started during President Jonathan's administration but could not be completed, and it was completed during Buhari's administration. If the Buhari administration was not interested in railway development, the project possibly would have lost its driving force. The Lagos-Ibadan project was started and finished during Buhari's administration. When it comes to projects, many contractors often want to run the project at their own pace. How fast the project goes is determined by how engaging the government is in the daily report of the project (Bello 2022).

One of the major reasons the contractors delay in adhering to the time frame agreed is attributed to various factors such as the availability of materials, and the time required for shipping these materials, as well as engaging expatriates, among other factors. There is always a little change in the time agreed, though the contractors ensure that there is no drastic change in the agreed duration. Projects that should take 3 years but end up taking 8 years are usually delayed because there was no proper conception and planning from inception (Bello 2022).

Climatic condition

A lot of construction activities do not occur in Nigeria in the early part of the year because of the climatic condition. It is easier for contractors to work around November to February before the rainy season begins. When rain starts, the contractors have to reduce the work force and the pace of work. Climate plays a significant role in determining the duration of the project. Though there are aspects of projects that are feasible during the rainy season, some parts, such as certain bridge works, are not possible during this time, particularly tasks involving the upper structure.

The way this challenge is addressed is by planning and reshuffling activities, identifying work that can be executed during a specific period and ensuring it is completed so that, overall, the project meets the scheduled time frame (King 2022). Though weather is a valid challenge, it is not considered a tenable excuse for contractors. Contractors are expected to have factored weather conditions into their planning before agreeing to a time frame with the government. However, it is important to note that climatic conditions often vary and are not always predictable.

Fund and policy bureaucracy

Funding and government policies are key issues that affect a project. Due to a policy challenge, the project got delayed for 9 months. The major one for that project occurred when workers were working on the rail line and encountered a water pipe that was supplying water to a community or even an entire state, which was not foreseen by any of the parties involved. The dilemma was whether to relocate it, or replace it, or dig a new water channel for the community. The discussion of various alternatives became a key issue. If it is to be relocated, the implication is that the community will be without water for a period of time. Therefore, the question of which alternative to choose and who will provide the alternative remains a significant policy issue, requiring ongoing discussions. Whichever decision is made usually impacts the project and its delivery time (King 2022).

Unforeseen challenges

There are many times when unforeseen challenges are met by the contractors and consultants during the course of the project. An example of such challenges is the presence of electrical poles and electrical facilities on the corridor of the rail lines. It is not the duty of the contractors to relocate electrical poles and facilities, so there is a need to alert the concerned authority to address the impending hindrance to the project. How long it takes the concerned authority to respond and resolve the problem makes a lot of difference on the project. If it is a challenge they can be attended to immediately, it helps, but if not, the authority may delay the process. Every Nigerian organization and institution has its own bureaucracy which drags issues that need prompt response. The issue of securing approval from various quarters is draining and highly tiring. No matter how willing or fast the contractors are, without resolving these issues, it is likely the project will not advance as planned.

Security challenge

Security challenges are also a concern for project delivery and advancement. Kidnapping and other security challenges are issues beyond the control of the contractors, these are issues that can only be dealt with effectively by the government. Workers also avoid work sites when there are security challenges. The need to keep the working equipment safe from theft and vandalization is also another major challenge. Railway construction sites are also vulnerable to unauthorized access by trespassers, vandals, or thieves

(Cheng 2022). The security challenge is proactively addressed by conducting thorough risk assessments (King 2022). Implementing security measures such as lighting, alarms, and security personnel can deter potential criminals and protect assets. Most importantly, it requires a comprehensive approach that involves collaboration between project stakeholders, government agencies, law enforcement, and security professionals.

Health and family issues

Employees dealing with health or family issues experience reduced productivity or absenteeism. This leads to delay in project timelines and increased costs due to overtime or hiring temporary workers. Workers slow down when they have health challenges, and some would even have to be excused from site if the health problem persists or intensifies. These issues compromise the safety of workers on the project site, leading to accidents or injuries. When team members are dealing with personal health or family crises, it affects overall morale and motivation which leads to decreased cooperation, communication breakdowns, and a lack of cohesion among project team members. Often, they have to leave to attend to such health emergencies. For instance, there was a time when a key personnel was absent due to health issues. It caused a disruption in project planning and coordination efforts. This resulted in miscommunication, errors in decision-making, and inefficiencies in project execution (Mohammed 2021).

Similarly, when workers are distracted by family issues, they do not fully focus on their tasks, increasing the risk of accidents. Some also leave the site to attend to family issues. These challenges, over the years, have been recurring problems that need to be effectively managed to ensure they do not cause delays in the project. Delays or setbacks caused by health or family issues strain relationships with stakeholders such as investors (contractors), government agencies, and the public. They perceive the project as unreliable or poorly managed, leading to reputational damage and potential conflicts. The health issues are resolved by providing prompt medical attention for the workers, though this depends on the project and the handler. It is not a common operation (Mohammed 2021).

Pandemic: the Covid-19

Lockdowns and restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the virus led to disruptions in the workforce. Construction workers were unable to work at full capacity due to social distancing measures, quarantine requirements, and illness among staff. Many railway projects rely on materials and components sourced from various regions globally. Supply chains were severely disrupted during the pandemic due to factory closures, transportation restrictions, and delays in procurement, causing shortages of essential materials and equipment needed for construction. Pandemic-related regulations and safety protocols often required adjustments to construction practices and project plans. Obtaining necessary permits and approvals became more complicated and time-consuming due to changes in regulatory frameworks and administrative delays (Oyewole 2022).

Challenges facing the Nigeria Railway Corporation (NRC)

As stated earlier, the NRC is an important stakeholder in the Nigeria railway sector. As the end-users, the corporation is also faced with challenges. Adopting modern railway technologies such as high-speed trains, automated signaling systems, and digital ticketing systems requires expertise and investment in research and development. Integrating these technologies into the existing framework remains a major challenge for the Nigerian Railway Corporation. NRC accuses the government of not involving the corporation enough, which is the reason why they do not fully get involved in the operation of the Chinese contractors until the project is completed and handed over. The Corporation has its own engineers who supervise the project when it is done, but the engineers do not get involved in the production phase (Oyewole 2022).

Nigerian Railway Corporation currently lacks the capacity to maintain the modernized railway upgrades underway in the country due to the lack of integration between the Corporation and the Chinese contractors. The government, through the Ministry of Transportation, seems to be the only one having direct dealings with the Chinese, without a mandated connection between NRC and CCECC. This lack of synergy has been a major challenge for the corporation. It is expected that when the bilateral talks and MoUs on railways are signed, the NRC should be duly represented and given the opportunity to also make contributions that can foster efficiency. One of the

major challenges faced by the NRC in the modernization of the railway service is the lack of incorporating the NRC officials into the upgrade system. The corporation, as the end users, often waits until the project is completed before becoming involved (Bello 2022).

Modernizing the railway system requires a skilled workforce trained in operating and maintaining modern equipment and systems. Ensuring an adequate supply of trained personnel and overcoming any resistance to change from existing staff is a significant challenge. An upgrade means increased work, patronage and effectiveness. The corporation has been pleading with the government to carry out a restructuring of the NRC workforce to accommodate the overhaul modernization that is envisioned (King 2022). The NRC is also faced with developing and implementing policies and regulations conducive to railway modernization while ensuring safety, efficiency, and environmental sustainability. This process is very complex, requiring coordination among various government agencies and stakeholders.

Security challenges are also an area the corporation needs to pay adequate attention to. Ensuring the security of railway infrastructure and operations against vandalism, theft, sabotage, and terrorist attacks is a significant challenge, especially in regions prone to unrest or insurgency (King 2022). Addressing these challenges would have required a coordinated effort involving government agencies, private sector partners, international organizations, and local communities to ensure the successful modernization of the Nigerian railway system.

Conclusion

It is safe to say Nigeria has a lot of catching up to do in terms of modernizing its railway sector. However, it is not out of place to state that the effort made so far is not like it used to be in the 1980s, when the railway was almost in a state of coma. The new upgrades have given Nigeria a fresh outlook and have been impactful. Railway modernization has contributed to economic development, social harmonization and infrastructure development. The China-Nigeria partnership on railway deals has transformed the sector over the last 25 years and more. China has proven to be highly efficient in her technological delivery, providing the modernized train service in Nigeria. More ground is yet to be covered, and the need for consistent commitment through policies made by various administrations to prioritize the railway sector will yield long-term positive results. The restructuring of Nigerian

Railway Corporation to accommodate the gradual but effective changes that come with railway modernization is needed. Finally, for maximum utilization of the railway services in Nigeria, the need to unbundle the railway sector calls for urgent attention. Introducing public-private partnership to reduce the government's management monopoly over the sector will ensure that the absence of Chinese involvement does not lead to a relapse of the railway system in Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

Railway modernization has a long term effect in enhancing national development when there is commitment to improving the sector. China has been heavily involved in the revamping and rehabilitation of the Nigerian Railway sector, and her role in the process gave railway a new outlook in recent times. The contribution of railway modernization as a means of transport fosters infrastructural development and economic advancement. Hence, this article examined the Socio-Economic impact of railway modernization in Nigeria, the promotion of social harmonization through railway travels, and the notable economic development recorded as a result of the railway upgrade. The purpose of this article is to investigate the extent of the impact of the railway in recent times on Nigerians and how it has enhanced socialization. The paper adopted the historical and analytical method to analyze data. The paper also identified various intricacies and challenges of the railway modernization faced by the stakeholders involved. The article concluded by stating that China's involvement in the Nigerian railway modernization upgrade has a positive impact on the Nigerians, although there is more improvement that needs to be done to sustain the modernized facilities.

KEYWORDS

Socio-Economic. Modernization. Infrastructure.

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TOO POOR FOR PEACE: WOMEN IN NIGERIA'S NIGER DELTA AMNESTY PROGRAMME

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Introduction

The Niger Delta region is one of Africa's conflict spots. The resource-based conflict, which began in the 1950s as an ideological struggle challenging the rights of the Nigerian state over the resources of the region and the basis for the distribution of the oil-generating wealth, later became existentialist due to negligence on the part of the oil companies, decline in derivation revenue, and environmental devaluation from oil pollution (Okonofua 2016). Unlike the earlier resistance that was intellectually led targeting the state and multinational oil companies, the later agitation had as its front burner militia and cult groups whose targets were not limited to foreign companies and the Nigerian state, but other groups and persons perceived as threats to their interests.

In response to their modes of operation which include: pipeline vandalism, bunkering activities, kidnapping of expatriate oil workers, and a host of so many others, the Nigerian government resorted to military measures. Rather than quelling the crisis, militarization turned the region into what

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Ikelegbe and Umukoro (2016) call 'a melting pot of violence and insurgency' — a development that drastically affected the Nigerian economy, particularly in the second half of the first decade of the Twenty-First Century. Realizing that excessive force was ineffectual in engendering the clement environment needed for oil exploration in the region, the government, under President Umaru Musa Yar Adua, charted a new course for peace by adopting the Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Disintegration (DDR) mode of peace-building, hence, the Niger Delta Amnesty Program (NDAP) also known as the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP). NDAP was loudly acclaimed for having reduced, significantly, violence in the region (Ajibola 2015).

However, in the last six years, militancy has once again become a common occurrence in the area, resurrecting activities like oil bunkering, kidnapping, and attacks on oil facilities (Ebeide, Langer and Tosun 2020). It is partly for this reason that NDAP has been criticized. One major point from which the program is faulted is its exclusivity, especially the invisibility of the female gender (Umejesi 2014). This paper aims to examine the basis of women's exclusion in the DDR program in the Niger Delta. Does women's exclusion in the Niger Delta variant conform to the common grounds for women's exclusion in the DDR program? This question is pertinent given the uniqueness of NDAP as a locally planned, sponsored, and implemented program. The paper is divided into four sections, in addition to the introduction and conclusion. The first section examined the general grounds for women's exclusion in DDR; the imperative for the inclusion of women in the NDAP was projected in the second section. Section three made a critique of the NDAP using a gender lens, and the last section provided some explanations for women's exclusion in the NDAP.

Women's Exclusion in DDR

DDR, as a post-conflict mechanism geared towards durable peace, aims at the collection of arms, neutralization, and *reintegration* of former combatants and conflict-affected civilians into society. It is located within a broader view of conflict transformation which, according to Lederach (2003), aims at building peace desirable by all stakeholders. Its goal is to produce life-giving opportunities that will bring about the change necessary to minimize violence, increase justice, and promote human rights. DDR is both short and long-term.

In the short term, it is directed towards reduction or end to violence. The main targets in this phase are combatants who are disarmed and demobilized. As a long-term process, it moves beyond the demobilization and rehabilitation of ex-combatants to the reintegration of both the ex-combatants and the victims, and the promotion of human rights, justice, and economic development. Muggah (2009) affirms this duality noting that the overall goal of any DDR program, as a peacebuilding model, is a continuum that extends from its narrow and minimalist phase (security) to a broad and maximalist level (development) where human rights, justice, development and democracy are ensured.

In recognition of this duality, the United Nations DDR Resource Center (2006) recommends that issues of human rights, justice, and development should form an integral part of DDR. However, believing that the aims are not the same, most actors are not in favor of engaging the two together in post-conflict reconstruction. Yet, a clear separation of the two at the conceptualization phase of the DDR program has remained a hard nut to crack. The enthusiasm that accompanies the idea of DDR is often killed at the implementation stage, where the theoretical frame begins to stagger. In most cases, the weak and the vulnerable are at the receiving end of its poor implementation which, more often than not, ends in exclusion.

One of the pillars upon which the NDAP is faulted as an instrument of durable peace is its lack of inclusiveness, especially among the female gender (Folami 2016). The question of women's inclusion in peace processes has formed a topical issue since 1325 (Paffenholz, Prentice and Buchanan 2015). Other global and regional frameworks have emphasized the imperative for women's engagement in post-conflict integration (African Union 2025). Peace process, Ariño (2020) argues, requires not only women's presence but also a 'negotiation agenda that integrates gender if substantive debate and transformation are to take place'.

The imperative for women in post-conflict integration is anchored on three grounds. (1) War affects women in ways different from men, and in most cases, women bear the brunt of war. Therefore, unless gender is mainstreamed in postwar peace programs, the impacts of conflict on women cannot be adequately discussed and addressed. (2) Contrary to the patriarchal notion that women are soft and not suitable actors in conflict situations,

women play vital roles as conflict drivers. (3) Women are naturally imbued with enormous potential for the peace process⁴.

Unfortunately, DDR seems to be one of the post-conflict peacebuilding measures that have significantly recorded the underrepresentation of women. Of the 14,000 demobilized in Burundi in 2005, only 438 (3%) women were involved (Mazurana and Cole 2012). Though no track of gender constituents of the reintegration of former combatants exists in Congo in the July to November program of 2002, the subsequent October to February 2005 program which enrolled 8884 ex-combatants had only 297 (3%) women. A similar programme that came shortly after in March took care of 444 ex-combatants of which 7 (1.6%) were women; the Rwanda programme of 2005 involved 54, 159 ex-combatants with only 334 (0.6%) female⁵. The Sierra Leone program often applauded for its inclusivity had only 8% of women and girls (Mackenzie 2009).

Exclusion of women in DDR programs, as underscored in literature, may be by policy design, by choice to avoid risk, and for personal safety and reputation. The policy-informed invisibility in most internationally-led programs is anchored on the conceptualization of ex-combatants. A narrow definition and understanding of what ex-combatant implies has coloured most DDR programs. Men are prioritized in most cases as ex-combatants leading to the exclusion of women who are relegated to the status of victims (Shekhawat and Pathak 2015). Women, as Knight (2008) notes, are often refused eligibility for disarmament and demobilization because they are not accorded recognition as part of the combat having been projected as 'trophy wives, cooks or information gatherers'.

Feminist literature further emphasizes this, arguing that women are excluded from DDR programs because they are in most cases reconstructed by officials of such programs as 'supporters', 'dependents', 'camp followers', 'bush wives', or 'sex slaves' (Specht 2006; Mackenzie 2012). Even when female ex-combatants are included, UN-led officials tend to reproduce gendered inequalities against women. A study of 11 conflicts by Coulter *et al.* (2008) estimated that about 6.5% of all registered DDR programs were women, and the primary reason for this was that women were not identified as ex-combatants.

4 According to feminist theories, women are incapable of violent action unlike men viewed as violent beings. Feminists also link women's inclination toward peace to their role as mothers-caregivers and nurturers. In other words, women's socialization in the role is antithetical to violence (Hooks 1999).

5 The Rwanda DDR program came in phases. The 2005 program was one of the phases.

Furthermore, the bogus and vague conceptualization of DDR accounts for women's exclusion. Without explicit exclusion at the conceptualization stage, DDR may appear to have accommodated women. This is not often the case at the implementation stage where programmes are narrowed to the detriment of the female gender. Poor and weak communication is another explanation for the invisibility of women. With poor communication, women often believe they are not eligible for DDR (Steenbergen 2020).

Finally, funding and cash payment are equally emphasized. To meet the donor's capacity, the number of those enrolled in DDR programs is often reduced *ab initio*. Where underestimation appears to be the case, the total number enrolled is cut to meet the budget; and women, as found in Rwanda and some other places, are often the most affected (Small Arms Survey 2007). Cash payments have been featured in past programs as incentives to male combatants with women treated as secondary beneficiaries. According to Farr (2003), there is evidence in some areas where the male beneficiaries did not share the monetized incentive with their descendants. It is for this reason that alternative approaches that will pay attention to education and food assistance are being advocated.

The literature further underscores the fact that women do not often feel comfortable presenting themselves as combatants. This, Boutet (2019) argues, may be informed by stigmatization associated with such inclusion, especially in a context where women are traditionally relegated to the private sphere. The fact that most DDR camps often lack facilities for the female gender accounts for women's reluctance to take part in such programs. Most women who found themselves in DDR camps leave before the end of the program due to a lack of health care and protection against harassment (Mazurana and Cole 2012). Not being able to access the demobilization stage, women are denied the most needed resources of reintegration, required for healing and survival.

The imperative for women's inclusion in NDAP

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is Africa's largest wetland, richly endowed with natural resources that account for 70 percent of Nigeria's revenue and foreign exchange reserve. Unfortunately, the region is noted to have suffered marginalization in participation in the oil economy and its benefits (Thompson 2010). Beginning in the 1950s, grievances framed around this issue formed a driving force for regional agitations for development attention

and resource control. Increase in exploration activities of oil companies, environmental pollution, land degradation, and decline in revenue derivation to the Niger Delta states, all together generated a new wave of agitations in the 1970s and 1980s. Anchored on mobilizations at the community and ethnic levels, the new agitations internationalized the struggle, especially with the active involvement of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in the 1990s, and the eventual execution of its leaders⁶. By the end of the last decade of the Twentieth Century, what started as a demand for development attention and inclusion had turned into a youth-driven militant agitation for revenue control.

Since then, the Niger Delta has remained a theatre of violent conflict involving the militant youths and their communities, the government, and oil-producing companies. Between 2000 and 2009, insurgency in its varied forms including pipeline vandalism, illegal bunkering, gun duel with security agents, abduction and kidnapping of oil workers especially expatriates, and a host of many others, left the region devastated more than ever with overall adverse effects on the national economy.

Government response to the crisis in the region has taken various forms among which were: the setting up of commissions of inquiry⁷, the establishment of the Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC), The Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), the Ministry of Niger Delta and a host of many others⁸. Unfortunately, none of these has tackled adequately the issues of pollution, rights, and equitable distribution of oil wealth, which are at the centre of these agitations. Moreover, government interventions more often than not ended in the hands of community leaders and politicians proximate to the state, with little or no impact on the most affected population.

The government's decision to adopt military measures against insurgency added another twist to the crisis. Rather than the desired end, arguably, it emboldened the insurgents to develop multiple strategies for depriving the

6 Ken Saro Wiwa and the other Ogoni activists were executed by the Nigerian Government in 1995.

7 Sir Willink Commission was set up in 1958 to inquire into the minority agitation. Among its recommendations was the need for the establishment of the Niger Delta Development Board to address the problem of underdevelopment in the region.

8 A series of conferences and dialogues were equally convened to address the Niger Delta issues. For instance, the former President Obasanjo called for dialogue with the Niger Delta People in 2007. Following his acknowledgement of the deplorable state of the region, he set up the Council for Social and Economic Development of Coastal States to oversee the challenges of the region.

Nigerian state of a good chunk of revenue from its oil economy. By 2007 for instance, oil production had dropped from 2.3 million barrels per day (bpd) to 7 hundred thousand bpd (Obi and Rustad 2011). Realizing that militarisation had escalated the conflict further, the government charted a new course in 2009 along the lines of DDR to grant amnesty and pursue a reintegration program in the region.

Contrary to the patriarchal view of women *vis-à-vis* conflict, the Niger Delta women are conspicuously visible in all the stages of the conflict as victims, agents, and drivers of the phenomenon, but also as precursors of peace. As victims, women are most affected by environmental pollution and land degradation. Given that the majority of them are uneducated, their main source of survival is found in the agricultural sector. It is therefore not surprising that women constitute about 70 percent of the region's labour force. Oil spills, gas flaring, and other oil-related activities that severely affect the region destroy the basis of the local economy on which the female gender depends for survival. Appropriation of land for oil pipelines further creates an acute shortage of land for agriculture (Ihayere *et al.* 2014).

Women of the Niger Delta are victims of sexual violence orchestrated by the crisis. Cases of rape by government security agents and militiamen abound. For instance, in 1999, security men allegedly raped Ikwerre women from Choba who were protesting against what they believed was an injustice to their community by a US-based oil company — Wilbros⁹. Also, a 2008 report published by the Centre for Democracy and Development revealed some cases of rape in the region. In addition to rape, the presence of affluent oil workers in impoverished communities of the Niger Delta provides a space for a thriving commercial sex market in the region. As rightly captured by Jeroma (2003), the multinational oil workers displayed their unchecked sexual tendencies to the fullest by taking advantage of poor, hungry, and illiterate young girls, making them victims of lust forcefully.

The biting poverty in the area, Akoda (2010) observes, equally compelled married women to respond to the lustful demands of oil workers with the futile hope of finding an end to their challenges. These views affirm Turner and Brownhill's (2007) observation that there are some areas in the Niger Delta where nine out of every ten women have been violated through this means. It was for this reason that the Association for the Niger Delta Women for Justice was formed in 1999 to give protection to women (Manby 1999).

⁹ Report of Choba women to the Human Right Violations Investigation Commission, the Oputa Panel, revealed cases of rape and other sexual assaults by the security agents.

The conflict in the Niger Delta has further claimed the lives of a good number of women, leaving others physically and psychologically battered. About 801 women sustained injuries from police attempts to disperse the Itsekiri and Ilaje women protesting against Shell Petroleum Development Company in Warri in 2002. The crisis in Isoko South over the sale of the community rights to Agip Oil by its leaders claimed the lives of some women. Also, twelve passengers, including a pregnant woman, were killed in the Joint Task Force's (JTF) raid of a Transport speed boat in Bayelsa in 2008. Furthermore, women were victims of hostage-taking in the region. Among those affected were Folake Coker who was abducted on 3rd July 2006 with a 50 million Naira demand for ransom, and Augustina Ekeowei abducted in June 2008 for 2 million Naira ransom. Although it cannot be claimed that these attacks were specifically directed against women, as Akubor (2011) argues, they have, willingly and unwillingly, become targets because they are either used as 'shields in time of crisis or as ransom-seeking implements'.

Evidence of women's participation in militant agitations against injustice and impoverishment abound. In this context, women served as spiritualists, spies, emissaries, and fighters even to the extent of engaging security men in gun duels (Babatunde 2018). Where they were not actively engaged as militants, they provided various kinds of support to them. Women were also part of the illegal bunkering activities which have affected the nation's economy. According to Ekwe Ndanike, several women seen around Oguta Lake loading and offloading fuel in drums and jerry cans were agents of militants from the neighboring towns across the lake, especially Rivers State¹⁰. This affirms Umejesi's (2014) observation concerning women of unfamiliar faces seen around Oguta and Ohaji Egbema arranging and negotiating for the sale of oil. Interactions with the locals, according to him, linked them to militant leaders from the Niger Delta.

Women are prominently featured in the use of protests against environmental pollution and poor corporate social responsibility from the oil companies. Ukiwo (2007) has convincingly argued that mass community protests against oil companies in the Niger Delta began in 1984 with the Oghale women's protest against the US Pan Ocean. Since then, a series of other protests and demonstrations have been staged by the Niger Delta women with which they have persistently demanded improved environmental and social conditions of rural communities and the provision of social amenities. Between 1990 and 2007, about 67 protests were organized by women to fight environmental and human rights abuses (Ekine 2007). Indeed, their

10 Interview with Ekwe Ndanike, A fisherman at Oguta Lake, 12 January 2019.

support in this regard contributed significantly to the willingness of militant groups to embark on the canalization of oil installations. Militants, Ukiwo (2007) observes, often hijacked peaceful demonstrations organized by women to attack oil companies.

Several attempts have been made by governmental and non-governmental bodies in the direction of peace in the region. Women's efforts are not missing in this line. Such initiatives were mostly at the grassroots where they empower rural women and girls to defend their rights. The Niger Delta Women for Justice (NDWJ) and the Kebekache Women were among the women advocacy groups that have worked in several communities helping to build capacity for peace. For instance, the latter was involved in mobilizing women for peace matches in Emobua, Ogoni, Ogbakiri, and Terema communities (Osah and Odedina 2017). The NDWJ was at a point in time publishing abuses meted out on women.

Other channels of peace deployed by the women in pursuit of an end to the conflict include appeals to community leaders, multinational corporations (MNCs), husbands, and sons for dialogue. The women of Ugborodo, for example, used appeals and dialogue to draw the attention of Chevron to the devastating effect of oil exploration on their environment (WANEP 2020). With all these, one cannot but submit that women constituted a major channel of peacebuilding in the Niger Delta before the Amnesty Programme of 2009.

Having established from a tripod stand, the imperative for women's inclusion in post conflict reconstruction in Niger Delta, the remaining section of this work will examine the Amnesty Programme of 2009 using a gender lens. It will establish the extent of women's involvement in NDAP and the basis for their exclusion. The study relies on field-based primary sources — In-person In-depth oral interviews and Semi-structured interviews, electronic and print media, government documents, and extant literature for data collection in qualitative research. It adopts both descriptive and analytical methods in data presentation and interpretation. Data was analysed using appropriate coding methods to project emerging themes within the content analysis frame.

NDAP through a gender lens

The Niger Delta Amnesty Programme was announced by President Umaru Musa Yar Adua following a realization that military measures were

inadequate in dealing with insurgency in the Niger Delta. The programme was initiated as part of the recommendations of the Niger Delta Technical Committee inaugurated on the 8th of September 2008 to review government responses to the conflict right from 1958 (Technical Committee on the Niger Delta 2008).

Adopting part of the committee's report, the Federal Government established the Presidential Panel on Amnesty and Disarmament of Militants in the Niger Delta to carry out the task of overseeing the presidential pardon. Under section 175 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the presidential pardon granted amnesty to militants who were willing to surrender their weapons with a renunciation of arms struggle within 60 days (August 4th – October 4th, 2009). The government acknowledged in the amnesty document, the inadequacies of previous steps in addressing the issues underlying the conflict, and emphasized the need for integrated peacebuilding in the region (Amnesty Proclamation under Section 175 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 2009).

As in all DDR programs, NDAP was three-dimensional, encompassing: disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. By the end of its first phase, 20192 militants had surrendered their weapons which included: 2760 assorted kinds of arms, 287445 ammunition, 3155 magazines, 1090 dynamite caps, 763 dynamite sticks, 18 gunboats, and several other military accessories to Presidential Amnesty Committee (NTA News Broadcast 2009; Amnesty News 2013). Another 6166 later joined the programme raising the number of enlisted persons to 26358.

Under demobilization, disarmed militants were first quartered in camps in designated areas before they were eventually moved to two main camps at Obubra and Aluu in Rivers State. Ex-militants were placed on monthly pay of 65000 Naira per month¹¹. Although there was an initial delay in the implementation stage, by the end of 2010, rehabilitation had fully commenced. Reintegration was pursued through entrepreneurship, vocation, and formal training within and outside Nigeria.

The training program, which ranged from six months to five years was meant to integrate ex-militants in their communities. Provisions were made for experts and consultants to assist in ensuring that the demobilized acquired needed skills opted for in the program. Among the countries where

¹¹ In addition to this, the arrangement was further made for a daily payment of 3000 during the reintegration process. The demobilization of militant leaders took a different dimension. Included in the program was a separate arrangement to pay these leaders huge sums of money to hand over their weapons.

some of the demobilized militants were sent for skill acquisition included: Ghana, the United Arab Emirates, Poland, Cyprus, India, Israel, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Philippines¹². The Nigerian Government devoted a substantial amount of its resources to the program. In 2009, the government estimate for the program was USD 360 million. Between 2011 and 2017, the yearly budget was USD 2,714 billion¹³.

The DDR program is generally preceded by a negotiation process involving major stakeholders or their representatives, during which, issues in the conflict are analysed to identify the interests and needs of the conflict parties. In the case of the NDAP, a series of such meetings with representatives from the region were arranged. Women were almost invisible in these meetings. The most crucial of such meetings was between the government representatives and sixteen major militant leaders, led by Chief Government Ekpemepolo (Tompolo). The engagement of militants for peace in the region with the exclusion or under-representation of other stakeholders especially women speaks volumes on the nature of peace that was negotiated and the potential of such peace to address or alter, positively, the basis of the conflict. Although women's presence is not a guarantee that gender issues will be addressed, or that decisions will be taken in favour of the female gender (Ariño 2020), it, however, helps to raise consciousness about the need for negotiation agenda and outcomes that integrate gender.

The outcome of the negotiation meeting informed the conceptualization of the amnesty program as the return of arms and disbanding of armed groups¹⁴. By implication, only militants who were able to present arms to the panel were recognized and integrated. Based on the concept, 20,192 militants that embraced the program in 2009 surrendered their weapons. Of these, only 133 (0.66 percent) were female. The break-down according to Timi Alaibe, the then Special Adviser to the President on Amnesty Programme, is as follows:

State	N° of Male	N° of Female	Registration
Akwa Ibom	155	8	163
Bayelsa	6900	61	6961
Cross River	159	1	160

¹²About 7,556 of these ex-militants were placed in 33 locations in Nigeria for skill acquisition.

¹³The program was said to be more extensive than most internationally-managed DDR (Giustozzi 2016).

¹⁴ Interview with Oviogbere, a women leader in Ogborodu Kingdom, 21 July 2018.

Delta	3361	-	3361
Edo	450	-	450
Imo	297	3	300
Ondo	1198	2	1200
Rivers	6958	39	6997
NDDC	571	19	600
Total	20049	133	20192

Source: Okonofua 2016, 10.

According to Eboigbe, the ex-combatants who submitted arms were 20,049 men. The need to create a little space to accommodate women in the program explains the inclusion of 133 women later¹⁵. Whatever criteria were used in involving women in the program constitute in the words of Chinwike¹⁶:

An under-representation of women militants in the struggle, the number of women militants in Rivers alone was much more than 0.66 percent, unless they want to tell us that militancy when it concerns women in a rehabilitation program, are those who are connected to politicians and friends of male militant leaders.

Conceptualized as a long-term solution capable of surviving any administration in Nigeria, one remains in doubt about the potency of NDAP as an instrument of conflict transformation and peacebuilding without a substantial number of women's involvement. With disarmament skewed in favor of the male gender, demobilization, and reintegration packages reflected similar gender blindness. Oghenetega observes that out of 645 ex-militants who were receiving training in foreign countries at a time, only 2 were female¹⁷. Provisions of facilities at the camps were indications that planners did not nurture the idea of rehabilitating women *ab initio*¹⁸.

Regarding reintegration, government conceptualization was rather ambiguous. The limit of reintegration was not clear. Given the socio-econo-

¹⁵ Interview with Eboigbe, a former worker at one of the demobilization centers, 7 July 7, 2018.

¹⁶ Interview with Chinwike, a woman activist from Ikwerre, 14 July 2018.

¹⁷ Interview with Oghenetega, a Niger Delta militant, 24 July 2018.

¹⁸ According to two informants who wished to remain anonymous, there was no indication in the two camps in Rivers State that women were expected to be rehabilitated. All the facilities include toilets and the sleeping apartments had no demarcation at the beginning.

mic background of the Niger Delta, a macro reintegration model that would have addressed, considerably, the region's challenges was needed. Unfortunately, the micro approach that ignored the wide context of the conflict was adopted. In this context, the government's post-conflict reconstruction plan further excluded women who were designated more to the blanket position of victims and non-combatants. The point is that even if women were not qualified at the level of disarmament and demobilization, reintegration as a concept provides a wider space for them. This, however, was never the case with NDAP. Women were excluded from the financial compensation associated with disarmament and demobilization, and blocked from relief a proper reintegration process would have engendered. The payment of 65000 can be viewed as a government move to compensate ex-militants for losing their weapons to the amnesty programme, 99 percent of this monetary compensation went to the males leaving women out.

The Niger Delta conflict as discussed above is known to have unleashed gender violence on the women folk. Interestingly, militants who perhaps were involved in rapes, murder, and kidnapping of women were granted pardons and compensated while their victims were left without justice. Thus, even without the resurgence of militancy and violence in post amnesty Niger Delta, it will be difficult to think of a peaceful and truly healed society in that region. Supposing the reintegration of ex-militants was fully successful, the return of some of them, especially the notorious ones without addressing issues that border on victimhood, would have triggered tension and insecurity in those communities. Nilsson (2005) has shown how difficult it is for ex-combatants who unleashed terror in their communities to reconcile with such communities afterward.

Restricting amnesty to only those who could submit arms to the government is limiting. In addition to ammunition, intelligence gatherings, procurement of armoury, and other logistics needed for militancy are all categories of weapons of war. Moreover, other physical weapons such as stones, sticks, clubs, and so on abound. After all, the biblical Philistine warrior, Goliath, was mowed down neither by Saul's army nor his armoury but by a simple pebble on a string. The Aba women of 1929 fought their way out of the imposition of the Warrant Chief System not with European cannons and gunpowder but with sticks and pestles. The Niger Delta women demonstrated enough courage and strength in the Niger Delta struggle, hence their exclusion from the DDR Program makes a poor copy of the desired peace.

Explaining women exclusion

As in other African societies, women of the Niger Delta are tied to certain traditional functions, located mostly in the corridor of domestic affairs. Cultural repressions in the forms of invisibility of women's financial contributions in the family, private sphere for women, bride price, silence of women's voice, and so on, are dominant ways of life for women in the region (Folami 2016). All these portray women as partial members of society not qualified to play certain roles. This background informed the conceptualization of NDAP. In the first place, the definition of combatants as those in possession of arms was skewed against women who culturally were not associated with arms. Combatants in the program implied men who traditionally were assigned the role of warriors. Affirming this, Onyoma argues that the program was not introduced for women:

The amnesty program was meant for militants who paralyzed activities in this part of Nigeria before 2009...Men such as Tom Ateke, Asari Dokubo, Tompolo. The Government was aware that when such men were caged through juicy offers, there would be peace in the region. It is surely not for women¹⁹.

Even the 133 women included are believed to be mainly friends of militants and politicians, rather than those who played a key role in the struggle before the amnesty program. Commenting on their inclusion, Odogu notes:

Anybody can get arms. The government does not care how you have acquired what you are presenting. Those who are connected obtained such weapons through their connections, others searched for what to present to be categorized as combatant militant.... A month's stipend from the program will be enough to offset the cost of such a weapon²⁰.

Reacting to her exclusion from the program, a female ex-militant states:

¹⁹ Interview (via Skype) with Onyoma, a member of the Amnesty Committee, 18 February 2019.

²⁰ Interview with Odogu, an Urhobo woman activist, 7 July 2018.

... I cannot tell the criteria that the so-called Amnesty Committee used. They must have picked their girlfriends and relatives to benefit from the program while those of us who have suffered from this conflict are left behind. God will judge them²¹.

Furthermore, some women who were actively involved in militancy were reluctant to take part in the program due to the social stigma attached to militancy in the traditional setting. A number of them who got involved in the struggle as militants did so without the knowledge and consent of their families. In an expression that revealed the nature of her involvement, Gladys states:

...my husband is late. To my children, parents, and neighbors, I was supplying fuel and spirits to our neighboring villages and towns. But I did more than that.... I could not come out openly as a militant when the amnesty program was announced. How would I have explained that to my children, my mother, and my husband's relatives?²²

Another cultural twist upon which women's exclusion in the program is anchored is the view that women's damages are subsumed in their husband's claims. By implication, compensation to a male militant is compensation to his entire family. The question is: how many active women in the struggle had their husbands on the list of disarmed combatants? Some women who qualified as combatants were widows who lost their husbands before their involvement in the struggle²³. Three out of five Odi Women interviewed in the course of this research linked their interest and eventual engagement in the struggle to the loss of their marital partners²⁴. Moreover, men's demands are, in most cases, different from those of women. The demands of the male gender in the post-conflict Niger Delta, according to Harsch (2005), centre around resource-sharing formula, self-determination, location of oil installations, delineation of local governments, and so on, which indeed are not primary needs of the women from the region. The exclusion of women implies the exclusion of their families — a development known to have hindered successful reintegration programs in other climes (Rubio-Marin 2012). In a post-conflict environment of monetized settlement

21 Interview with a female ex-militant who wished to remain anonymous, 26 July 2018.

22 Interview with Lady G, a female ex-militant, 6 July 2018.

23 Some women claimed they joined the struggle in their quest for justice for their slain husbands, sons, and relatives, and for the destruction of their houses.

24 Assorted interview, 16 August 2018.

in which the construction of losses was materially based on the loss of arms and ammunition that women are culturally forbidden to bear, the female gender, arguably, is not part of the agenda for peace.

The second explanation for women's exclusion in the amnesty program stems from the fact that NDAP was meant to focus on immediate peace and security. Although the integration aspect was envisioned as both short and long-term processes, the focus at the implementation stage was on its short-term achievement. NDAP was geared towards achieving a peace settlement needed to keep a society racked by insurgency from relapsing. By paying attention to a short-term goal rather than the wider context of the conflict — indiscriminate oil exploration, pollution, land degradation, and poor corporate responsibility which in the first place bred militancy in the region, it excluded the larger population of the region, especially women mostly affected by these anomalies. One implication of this development is that amnesty in the region did little or nothing to preclude the resurgence of militancy. From 2016, attacks on oil facilities and general insecurity resurged, paralysing the normal flow of activities in the oil sector and beyond. For instance, the Niger Delta Avengers, a group of militants that emerged after the Amnesty Proclamation, attacked offshore pipelines of deep waters off the Nigerian coast in 2016. Similarly, the Niger Delta, Greenland Movement, equally formed amidst the Amnesty Programme, has continued to vandalize oil pipelines and other facilities since 2016²⁵.

Women's exclusion can also be explained by the need to reduce or manage the number of participants in the program. Women combatants may not pose the same level of threat as their male counterparts. Without the activities of men such as Dokubo, Ateke, and Tompolo, perhaps insurgency in the Niger Delta may not have posed the kind of threat that shook the national economy on the eve of the program. Therefore, settling those men was paramount in the government's plan package²⁶. Moreover, a loose blanket of combatant militants would have expanded the number beyond the capacity of the government's budget. A popular view among some respondents is that some female names included in the program were later removed²⁷. This is not peculiar to NDAP. Exclusion of women from disarmament due to an

25 These recently created militant groups demanded inclusion in the Amnesty Program, especially in the payment of stipends. Attacks from these groups intensified following government moves to end the program. To date, the Amnesty program is yet to be terminated for fear that it will destabilize completely the region.

26 A huge amount of money was paid to former militant leaders to protect pipelines they previously vandalized.

27 Assorted Interviews.

unexpected hike in the number of participants has been the norm. In Rwanda for instance, the number was reduced from 58,000 to about 26 000 to meet the donor's capacity, and those dropped were mostly women. A similar development was recorded in Sierra Leone where a DDR program, as found in the Niger Delta, was carried out without support from external donors.

In addition, women were not visible when the criteria for political processes leading to the NDAP were created. As noted earlier, the meetings were between government representatives and leaders of major militant groups who were all men. It was in these meetings that the narrow definition of combatants and the modalities for participating in NDAP were adopted. In the words of Rukewe:

... nobody consulted us when they were planning to negotiate peace with Niger Delta. We only heard that the government was about granting amnesty to the region and we were filled with the hope of what it held in store for us.... Then later, we heard that government amnesty was for men who were ready to submit their weapons. If women were involved in the negotiation, they must be those of "Abuja connection" and for political reasons²⁸.

Her view was equally echoed by a group of women of Ahoda who referred to the program as a 'government arrangement with top militant gangs'²⁹. By restricting the pre-amnesty negotiations to the male gender, the amnesty package which was anchored on the outcome of this negotiation was, without doubt, gender-blind. This affirms Ekine's (2007) earlier observation that men have been the main beneficiaries of memorialization, amnesty, and reintegration in the Niger Delta³⁰.

Furthermore, the DDR program, like all liberal peace models, is top-down in approach, and as a result, often carried out without inputs from the local population. This explains why its success, in most cases, is limited to the short term. Although NDAP was carried out without the participation of international actors, its conceptualization and implementation are not different from the general guidelines and principles of DDR. Like the post-civil war peace package which was imposed on Nigerians in 1970, NDAP was more or less a calculated and selective peace package that was imposed by the Nigerian government from above with the construction of a success narrative within a few months. As a top-down model, it failed to link up with

28 Interview with Rukewe, a women leader and an activist, 12 July 2018.

29 Interview with a group of Ahoda women, 17 August 2018.

30 Assorted Interviews.

women who operate mostly at the grassroots. The promise of expanding it to the level where its impact will be felt through reintegration was not actualized due to its selectivity and ambiguity surrounding its conceptualization.

Finally, corruption played a unique role in women's exclusion from the program. Nigeria is a country where a culture of corruption thrives. The amnesty program was not insulated from this national malady. Part of the huge sum of money budgeted for the program found its way into private accounts. Fictitious names and programs, uncompleted projects, and fake contracts were all avenues of siphoning the resources meant for the program. For example, private companies and consultants were often given contracts by the reintegration department to organize training or source suitable institutions for ex-militants. These contractors were paid according to the number of participants trained or placed at training centres. Through this medium, contractors, both real and fake, seemed to have inflated the number of trainees on their lists. In some cases, payments were made for training without any proof of such training³¹. For example, a youth development consultancy firm — The Foundation for Youth Development, established by one of the Nigerian politicians was, according to Daniel (2016), paid the sum of 5.6 billion Naira for a training program in Malaysia that never took effect. About the nature of the training and required commitment, the expression of one of the trainees is revealing.

Our trainers were not committed at all. Sometimes we do not see them for one week. They will tell you they will be holding a training session tomorrow, but you won't see anybody. Even when they come, they do not spend up to 30 minutes. Most of them did not care whether you understood what they were saying. I can say they were simply after the amount of money the government allocated to them through the program, no more, no less³².

The point being emphasized is that the resources that would have been used to expand the programme to the point its impact would be felt by the larger population were channelled to personal accounts. Paul Boro, the coordinator of the programme in 2016, remarked that the main challenge NDAP faced since its inception was inadequate funding which placed

³¹ This was revealed to us in the course of the fieldwork by one of those who worked at the Obubra rehabilitation center in 2011; see also Punch 2019.

³² Interview (via phone) with one of the beneficiaries of the Amnesty program who wished to remain anonymous, 25 September, 2020.

a serious limitation on its capacity to expand and empower its beneficiaries³³. Such financial constraints, according to him, explained the termination of 1,770 participants from vocational training before the completion of their training.

Conclusion

Post-conflict peacebuilding packages in Africa in the last three decades are generally associated with two distinct features — international dominance and under-representation of the female gender. Interestingly, the Niger Delta variant was conceptualized, adopted, sponsored, and implemented as a locally-owned program devoid of international influence. Sequel to this, NDAP generated lively hopes and expectations about its potential to transcend some of the hitches associated with internationally managed and sponsored DDR especially as it concerns women. Though in a complicated manner, NDAP was conceptualized as a program that will encompass both short and long-term activities for a peaceful Niger Delta. Its implementation, however, derailed from the initial conceptualization focusing narrowly on combatants with weapons to hand over to the Nigerian state (short-term).

In the sociocultural milieu where women are traditionally banned from carrying such arms, this stood as a barricade to the female gender from benefiting from this post-conflict reconstruction package. Coupled with the above problem were the issues of corruption, ambiguity, poor funding, drive for quick success story, and the top-down approach of DDR which hindered the full implementation of the program and inclusivity. Given that most of these challenges associated with women's exclusion in the Niger Delta program were common in places like Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and others with high dose of international influence, the Niger Delta Amnesty Program supports the position that the underlying currents in women's exclusion in locally-managed DDR in Africa may not differ considerably from those of internationally-sponsored programs.

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ABSTRACT

Unlike most Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Disintegration (DDR) programs, the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme (NDAP) was locally planned, sponsored, and implemented. This raised hopes about its potential to address, considerably, the

problem in the region, especially at the grassroots. Irrespective of the enormous literature that appeared a few years after its adoption applauding the success of the program in restoring peace to the region, the crisis is too far from being over. Among the explanations for the limitations of the program is its lack of inclusiveness, especially about the female gender. This paper using historical and analytic methods examines the basis of women's exclusion in the programme. It supports the position that the underlying currents in women's exclusion in locally planned DDR programs in Africa may not differ considerably from what is obtainable in internationally-owned programs.

KEYWORDS

DDR. Women. Niger Delta. Nigeria.

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REVIEW OF “25 ANOS DE COOPERAÇÃO EM DEFESA NA CPLP”, BY KAMILLA RAQUEL RIZZI AND LUÍS MANUEL BRÁS BERNARDINO¹

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The relationship between Portuguese-speaking countries is a frequent object of analysis in research and works in the field of Political Science and International Relations in the Brazilian academia. Rizzi and Bernardino innovate, however, by taking a more specific look at the field of defense. Reflecting a long history of studies on defense and cooperation in the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), the work presented here is the result of joint work between the authors and was supported by the Center for Strategic Analysis of the CPLP, in recognition of the reference and importance of this research.

The Community of Portuguese Language Countries is a cooperation space where nine states are united by a common attribute: the use of the same language by their nationals. It can be evaluated as an atypical organization because the factor that unites and gives rise to it is uncommon in the consolidation of organizations of this nature: the language and the Lusophone identity.

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Notoriously, the first emergence of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries was not the defense aspect and this can be clearly seen when we look at the founding documents of the CPLP. As already stated in the preface to this vast work, the initial cooperation prioritized the economic, social, cultural, legal and technical-scientific spheres. However, twenty-five years have passed since the beginning of Defense Cooperation within the Community of Portuguese Language Countries. With this in mind, Rizzi and Bernardino take a detailed look at this quarter of a century of defense cooperation. This book is structured in three theoretical chapters in which defense cooperation is discussed within the CPLP with excellence — a topic that is little explored in academic research involving this organization.

The core of the emergence of defense cooperation within the CPLP revolves around the interest of its member countries in starting an agenda that emerges from the need for joint, strategic thinking, cooperation and mutual assistance. In this way, they can establish a consolidated presence in the region's strategic surroundings and space — especially maritime space — in order to position themselves in the face of the region's new circumstances.

In the first chapter, the authors go through the basic aspects of its foundation and the foundations for achieving the Defense Cooperation within the organization. They begin by identifying the birth of the CPLP in 1996 and tracing its origins. They go through historical aspects such as the end of bipolarity, the process of globalization and the interest of states in joining international and regional organizations as events that served as basis for the genesis of this organization. This chapter also analyzes the paths that have been taken to achieve defense cooperation within the Community, starting with the “founding” Lisbon Summit of 1996 and evaluates throughout the chapter how the defense variable has advanced in these twenty-five years, going through four phases: i) the creation phase; ii) the construction phase; iii) the consolidation phase and iv) the expansion phase.

In the second chapter, the authors focus on analyzing how each of the member countries contributed to Defense Cooperation within the Community. This chapter proves to be very valuable because, by focusing on a country-by-country analysis, the authors present the contributions in a vehemently considered and precise manner.

In the third chapter, Rizzi and Bernardino analyze the future paths of Defense Cooperation within the CPLP, analyzing and predicting the possibilities, potentials and challenges intrinsic to this cooperation.

In addition to the unique theoretical debate woven by the authors in the three chapters, it should be noted that the construction and organization of the book contains an abundance of visual resources since it is fully illus-

trated. This care is also evident on pages 226-253, which contain a section of photographs of the personalities who have contributed to the construction of the Defense component in the CPLP.

Perhaps one of the most praiseworthy aspects of this work (apart from the in-depth and pertinent theoretical analysis proposed by the authors) are the external collaborations that the book contains within its scope. These are visible i) in the opening note written by Zacarias da Costa, Executive Secretary of the CPLP; ii) in the evocative note by José Maria Pereira Neves, President of the Republic of Cape Verde; iii) in the foreword by Armindo Alcides Garcia Sá Nogueira Miranda, Colonel of the Armed Forces of Cape Verde and Director of the Center for Strategic Analysis of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CAE/CPLP) and Francisco Evandro Rodrigues Camelo, Captain of the Brazilian Naval War College and Director of CAE/CPLP (2019-2022). This demonstrates the authors' concern to incorporate actors from different spaces into the dialogue on this noble subject: heads of state and heads of the very organization that is the subject of this study. It is essential that there is this dialogue between sectors that go beyond the academic sphere so that a rich construction can be woven with the contribution of political actors and civil society itself.

The work is undoubtedly of immeasurable value to the Community of Portuguese Language Countries and to the Academy of African Studies and International Relations. Demanding is the bibliography that compiles in its scope such a complete and comprehensive Defense Cooperation within the CPLP, from its genesis to 2023. Furthermore, with regard to this last aspect, it should be noted that the authors have joined forces to compile in the text's annexes an extensive and in-depth list of thirty-five documents that can be read as key pieces for evaluating the twenty-five years of defense cooperation within the CPLP, thus compiling the main basic documents for the reader to delve into them in more depth.

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