Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies

Africa Research
Institute

Dear Readers, // Dear Fellow Scholars,

I am delighted to write the foreword of the latest issue of the Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies (JCEEAS) as its editor. As JCEEAS continues to garner considerable interest on local, regional, and international levels, it has become more difficult to curate contemporary, high-quality submissions from distinguished scholars dedicated to Africa. Despite the challenges, this current issue of JCEEAS features a wide range of compelling topics and disciplines related to the African continent. In addition to the predominant full-length articles, a selection of book reviews has also been included in the Journal.

The author of the first study, Chukwuemeka Emmanuel-Dio, provides a critical analysis of the significant role played by APSA in West Africa. While existing literature predominantly focuses on the impact of historical Colonial relationships on African matters, this article argues that the evolving geopolitics of the region is equally important. It highlights a gradual transition from Colonial ties to the formation of new partnerships with Russia and China. Following that, Kristóf Stölczer, Tamás Szádeczky and János Besenyő examine the energy dynamics across the continent, highlighting variations among regions, advancements in infrastructure, and geopolitical influences. The paper concludes that while Africa's energy transition is revolutionary, it necessitates coordinated and inclusive initiatives in governance, financing, and technology to achieve a sustainable and equitable energy future for the continent. In his paper, Attila Dér looks at the cybersecurity policies of various African nations and evaluates them according to essential professional metrics. Additionally, the author provides an overview of the present landscape and offers insights into potential future challenges. Shreya Goyal aims to explore the application of modern technology in enhancing maritime safety and security within African waters, facilitating the efficient and economical exploration of marine resources. The author reasons that while the adoption of scientific and technological advancements necessitates significant financial investment, it represents the most effective strategy for mitigating security threats at sea and promoting maritime exploration initiatives. Faroukou Mintoiba explores the primary causes and contributing factors of coups, including poor governance, socio-political instability, and recent security-related uprisings. By referencing theories of democracy and regional security, the article examines the degree to which coups serve as a viable solution to the governance crisis in Africa and their impact on regional peace and democratic stability. Employing a comparative case study approach to examine the similarities and differences between the United States and the European Union, the analysis of Christopher Amrobo Enemuwe indicated that, although there is a significant alignment in the dual strategies pursued by both entities—aiming to balance democratic values with geostrategic issues like security, socio-economic growth, and migration, alongside inadequate funding for democracy-related projects—this situation hinders meaningful progress in democratic development in Nigeria.

In the next article, Abubakar Abdulkadir Alkali and Dries Putter contends that armed banditry has significantly hindered educational progress in the northwest Nigeria and has disrupted economic activities, leading to severe implications for the country's national security. The research identified several key challenges that impede the government's efforts to combat armed banditry, including ineffective local government administration, the existence of porous borders, obstacles within the

criminal justice system, and competition among agencies. The paper also suggested various strategies to mitigate the rise of armed banditry in the northwest region. Following that, utilizing a qualitative case study methodology, Nwaonuma Okoro collected data via comprehensive interviews with officials from the Labour Party, political analysts, and voters, in addition to focus group discussions and analysis of social media content. Thematic analysis revealed that while digital branding energized urban voters, its impact in rural areas was constrained due to cultural ties and ethnic considerations, which hindered broader electoral results. The results emphasize the significance of political branding in shaping voter behavior within emerging democracies. The study recommends a holistic approach that combines both digital and grassroots strategies. The topic of Stephen Ubong Andrew, Jacob Eneji Ashibi and Emmanuel Atu's research article is intra-gender victimization, which contends that certain types of both passive and active intra-sexual victimization contribute to the reinforcement of the limiting factors that have been recognized by the majority of scholars. Moses Joseph Yakubu aims to demonstrate that slave uprisings and the accompanying widespread devastation of lives and property serve as a credible historical context for the Acts of Emancipation. The findings indicate that African slaves were not passive; rather, they actively resisted and revolted against their oppression. The study concludes that the eventual liberation of slaves was deeply influenced by the Haitian insurgency. Lastly, Linda Adjaoud investigates climate change in Ethiopia, reasoning that can be said that Ethiopia is fighting climate change and receiving support, but the problem is so extreme and fast-paced that it is very difficult to compete with it.

Following the studies, there are four book reviews. Gábor Sinkó wrote a review on the Routledge Handbook of the Horn of Africa, while János Besenyő discussed African peacekeeping. At the end of the current issue, Gábor Búr shares his opinion on "Conflict and Peace in Western Sahara. The Role of the UN's Peacekeeping Mission (MINURSO), edited by János Besenyő, R. Joseph Huddleston and Yahia H. Zoubir (Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Politics, Routledge, London, New York, 2023)" and Szilvia Veress Juhászné writes about "Food security for African smallholder farmers".

We sincerely wish for our readers to enjoy a rewarding experience as they explore the subjects presented in this issue.

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Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies

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Twenty-Two Years After: The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in the face of shifting geopolitics and regional security dynamics[1]

Chukwuemeka Emmanuel-Dio[2]

Abstract:

The principle of non-indifference arguably is the most invaluable dividend of African multilateralism in the 21st century. While on a conceptual level it steers the wheel of Agenda 2063, effective implementation of this initiative remains elusive. This paper attempts a performance critique of the overarching role of APSA in West Africa. Although the influence of former Colonial relations in African affairs still dominates extant literature, this article posits that of equal relevance is the emerging geopolitics of the region; a gradual shift from Colonial affiliations, to new alliances with Russia and China. Using data from secondary sources, the paper was able to establish that the recent coups in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger reinforce fears of a Continent that is not only entangled in collective security dilemmas, but still reliant on external support to attain global relevance. The situation raises questions on the feasibility of an Afrocentric peace and development. There are also strategic concerns on the loss of confidence in the AU peace and security agenda by member States. The paper concludes with the recommendation that the APSA, beyond reviewing its operations, urgently needs to adapt to the new security demands and geopolitics of the region.

Introduction

Africa in the new millennium has been involved in activities reflective of its ambition to join the league of global powerhouses. Actualizing this vision requires collective, systemic actions that can enhance the security and socio-economic wellbeing of Africans (Bah et al., 2014). The bulk of these regional strategic initiatives get implemented concurrently being that they often share similar objectives, with some presenting indicators for measuring the others' performance as in the case of this paper. This article accesses the performance of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) using the socio-economic indices stipulated in Agenda 2063. Being the product of the Constitutive Act and statutorily implemented by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), the APSA provides the institutional framework for administering the peace and security affairs of Member States in the various Regional Economic Communities (RECs) (Peace and Security Department, 2010). Hence, its efficacy is determined by the support and cooperation it receives from the RECs, and how the internal affairs of AU member countries are successfully administered using its progressive tenets.

Studies critiquing APSA emphasize majorly poor funding, inadequate logistical support and a weak cohesive synergy between the PSC, its supporting organs and the RECs, as major challenges constituting its operational set-backs (African Union, 2004; Williams, 2009; Debial, 2009; African Union, 2012). The upsurge in regional insecurity evidenced by transnational jihadi terrorism, banditry and the proliferation of arms equally feature as recurrent lapses that have become associated with the APSA (Okoli and Ogayi, 2018; Brenner, 2021; INTERPOL, 2018; Mbaezue, 2020; Chekol, 2019). Although these perspectives to the discourse stir relevant concerns that necessitate operational reviews and adjustments, there remains an intellectual gap that weakly explores the commitment of the PSC to issues of democracy and good governance within member states, as statutorily and normatively required by its Establishing Protocol. (PCRD, 2006; African Union, 2008). Since good governance is quintessential for peace and security, conversely it is the absence thereof that has become the root cause of the conflicts impeding socio-economic development in Africa. This aspect of the discourse is obscure in intellectual engagements and so demands further interrogation.

Africa's politico-economic problems, attendant security challenges, and possible links to the external influence of its erstwhile Colonial Administrators remain fiercely debated in literature (Umezuruike, 1979; Loxley, 1987; Gleditsch, 2003; Kingston et al., 2011). While there is sufficient empirical evidence supporting the various divides of this polemic (Havnevik, 1987; Osaghae, 1992; Adedeji, 1999), the common view is that foreign actors have benefited most from the insecurity in the region, even after the end of Colonialism (Dembele, 2005; Alabi, 2006; Maunganidze & Makoni, 2024). These informed notions was the basis for the establishment of the African Union and APSA in 2002, both driven by Pan-African reformative ideals that sought to consolidate on the gains of the anti-colonial struggles.

Two decades later, the Continent is again experiencing a shift in its geopolitical landscape, probably nurtured by the psychological vestiges of its Colonial history. Diplomatic relations with foreign powers are no longer influenced or inherited by Africans, as is the distinct feature of colonialism. They are now willingly forged. The coups in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger and their attendant implications for bi-lateral relations with France and Russia respectively, suggests a form of geopolitical revivalism. African countries, motivated by mutually beneficial military and socio-economic interests, are beginning to go into partnerships with the developed Economies of the East, untainted by Colonialism. This move is likely reactionary considering that the military juntas have cited poor governance, corruption, and the threat of transnational jihadi terrorism to their sovereign borders as justifications for their unconstitutional take-over of governments they consider Western puppets (Bojang Jnr, 2024).

According to Collin Powell in The African Report, "the growing unpopularity of the French, amplified by their excessive regional influence and inability to stem the spread of jihadist insurgents, also provide a scape goat for coup-makers" (Bojang Jnr, 2024, p.2). Introducing a pro-Western counter-narrative to the undercurrents of the coup, Powell further asserts that it was the glimmering opportunity presented by widespread frustrations over the failings of the military in the affected countries, and apprehension over the professional future of many career soldiers that led to the coups. In securitizing the French, the military junta presented the West as the problem, and they, the solution. As the West encounters growing resentment, rejection and hostility in its erstwhile colonies, Russia continues to take-over areas traditional considered "western strongholds" (Yarga, 2024); even as it gradually losses the socio-political, as well as moral high grounds in parts of Europe and the Middle East on account of its on-going military campaign in Ukraine.

While renewed ties between Africa and Russia seem progressive, the power imbalance between African countries and their new Superpower Counterpart(s) of the Eastern bloc is of key interest to the on-going discourse. Notwithstanding the change in foreign relations by the military junta in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, they are still largely dependent on Russia for military and economic support, including global relevance. It is no surprise therefore that the exploits of Russia's Wagner Group in the Sahel region has been emboldened by the invitations and welcome they have received from both State and non-State actors in Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and recently, Nigeria (during the End Bad Governance protest) to intervene in their domestic affairs. As with Russia on political and military affairs, so is it with China on the economic front. This is evidenced by the Asian giant's growing expansion of its economic interests and investments on African soil. According to the Central Bank of Egypt (2020), China's ambiguous loan agreements, compounded by her resource-for-infrastructure economic strategy in Africa have left some African countries in huge financial debts. For affected Countries like Mozambique, Angola and Zambia, the only hope of reducing their debt burden is to partially or totally cede their mineral resources to China. With by Her underdog status in bilateral engagements with the Super Power economies, Africa's

bargaining position remains arguably weak and significantly dependent. Dependency as a means to economic, military and political ends is a status symbol that runs antithetical to Agenda 2063 that envisions an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, built and driven by Africans.

Agenda 2063 and the roadmap for regional emergence

Agenda 2063 is a 50-year strategic policy framework for Africa's development (African Governance Report, 2019). Enacted in May 2013, it embodies the vision of transforming Africa to a formidable political and economic entity in the global arena. Articulated with Africa's peculiar's challenges in perspective after an 18-month consultation period, Agenda 2063 advances three goals for the region; integration, prosperity and peace (African Union, 2024). These new action points were not just mission replacements for the erstwhile apartheid and anti-colonial agenda of the AU Pan-Africanist Movement(s), they also represent policy shifts to initiatives that now prioritize the socio-economic growth of the Continent. A total of seven goals, termed aspirations were drawn from the three cardinal objectives of Agenda 2063. Each aspiration has accompanying indicators defining its purpose.

Aspiration 1: Inclusive growth and sustainable development

- Poverty eradication;
- Socio-economic transformation through a manufacturing culture;
- Value addition driven by science and technology;
- Utilizing the benefits of the blue and ocean economy to achieve Continental transformation;
- Mechanized agriculture

Aspiration 2: Continental Integration driven by the ideals of Pan-Africanism and African renaissance

- Enhancing mutually-beneficially links with Africans in the diaspora;
- Management of cross-border resources though dialogue;
- Building a world-class integrative infrastructure;
- Building seamless borders

Aspiration 3: Good governance, democracy, rule of law, justice

- Transformative leadership;
- Respect for the rule of law;
- Anti-corruption campaigns;
- Gender equality

Aspiration 4: A peaceful and secure Africa

- Defence of the region's collective security interests;
- An Africa free from armed conflict, terrorism, extremism and Gender Based Violence;
- Gender equality, inclusion and peace;
- Enshrined democratic principles

Aspiration 5: An Africa with a shared heritage and cultural identity

- Inclusion of African ideals and value systems in school curricula;
- Promotion of Africa's cultural assets (folklore, music, theater, literature, festivals, language);
- Use of African languages for the purposes of administration and integration;
- Campaigns for the safeguarding and repatriation of cultural artifacts and heritage

Aspiration 6: Development driven by Africans and their potentials

- Inclusivity for children, men and women regardless of gender, religion, ethnic and political affiliation, age and locality;
- Active participation in all aspects of decision making regarding developmental affairs;
- Empowerment of women and youths equipping them to face social challenges.

Aspiration 7: An Africa resilient, strong and influential on the global scene

- Equal participation in global affairs;
- A strong campaigner for a peaceful, tolerant, and just World;
- Reacquisition of the Continent's rightful share of the global commons (land, ocean and space);
- A capability to self-finance regional projects and programs.

The implementation of this policy is spread across five ten-year periods, with the first being from 2014-2023. While the objective of this paper is to critique the performance of the APSA on a continental level, it is also relevant that a brief nationalistic component to the discourse (using Nigeria) be introduced. This provides a balanced and in-depth overview of the implementation pitfalls of Agenda 2063, which in this context substitutes the APSA whose establishment though predates Agenda 2063, still shares identical goals. More so, the APSA peace and security agenda, steered by the AU principles of democracy and good governance are distilled in Agenda 2063.

Nigeria remains at the fore-front of regional endeavors to promote Africa. The challenges associated with its corrupt leadership however continue to stagnate her numerous potentials, eclipsing her positive influence as a regional Power. Consequent on the paucity of visionary and patriotic leadership, Aremu (2010) posits that the Country now contends with various forms of protracted structural and violent conflicts. The past nine years under the administrations of Presidents Muhammadu Buhari and Ahmed Bola Tinubu has seen Nigeria succumb to unprecedented economic travails with links to flailing security architecture. As a signatory to the Constitutive Act, APSA, and Agenda 2063, the performance of these administrations do not portray them as worthy envoys and the right assets for actualizing the Pan-African dream of Agenda 2063. If anything, the precedents they have set threaten the fragile peace in the Country, opening her up to exploitation by external foreign actors.

Under ex-President Buhari, Nigeria's macro-economic indices was at an all-time low. The country's inflation rate rose from 8.7% in 2015, to 22.22%; its GDP shrank from $594 billion, to $460 billion, and there was a burgeoning debt burden of N77 trillion by the end of his tenure in 2023 (Adonri, 2023). The exchange rate was also not spared this downward trajectory as it went from N197/USD and N220/USD in the black market, to N465/USD and N740/USD. These were the economic outcomes of the growing preference of foreign-made goods to the locally-manufactured ones, and Nigeria's strong import–dependent culture from mostly outside the Continent. Without prejudice to the doctrine of free trade, it is subject to debate that Nigeria's economic practices run contrary to the spirit of Aspirations 1 & 2 of Agenda 2063 that promote sustainable development, inclusive growth and resource trading in Africa. It is no surprise therefore that courtesy of these flawed economic policies, Nigeria in 2022 was named the "poverty capital of the World". The current administration of President Bola Tinubu has performed no better than his predecessor. His knee-jerk economic policies and their attendant social implications remain unpopular as they have further scourged an already bleeding economy. Among his most fiercely criticized politico-economic policies are; the abrupt removal of fuel subsidy without due economic consultations, floating of the Naira, his persistent fraternization with France, and the administration's serial loans from International monetary agencies that currently leaves the Country with a debt burden of N134.3 trillion ($91.3 billion).

The ripple effects of Nigeria's worsening economic situation also permeate the migration discourse. With youth unemployment at 42.5%, insecurity, lack of government support and the prevalent deplorable working conditions in many sectors (Ogbenika, 2019; Osigbesan, 2021; Inegbedion, 2022), Nigeria experienced its highest surge in brain drain between 2015 and 2023. Worst hit was the health sector that lost over 5000 medical doctors to the United Kingdom (Adebowale-Tambe, 2023). The "japa syndrome" as the brain drain phenomenon is popularly called in Nigeria, is not restricted to the health sector. Academics in tertiary institutions, financial experts, IT consultants and skilled artisans have also not been immune to the flurry of adverts and vacancies by foreign countries demanding their services abroad (Enibe, Umeh & Eze,

2021; Emeghara, 2013). Equally worrisome are not just the sectors that have been affected by the "japa" syndrome, but the bulk of the people leaving – youths. A report by Philips Consulting in Akingbolu (2022) revealed that 88% of the individuals who have left their jobs, with more still planning to do so, are the Gen Zs and millennials. Another study in 2018 shows that of the 35, 364 international students in the United States, 11, 000 were from Nigeria (Ogundare, 2018). The situation creates an ominous feeling considering that these are the same groups who in the vision of Agenda 2063 (Aspiration 6), represent Africa's prosperous future.

Perhaps the most colossal challenge resides with government-driven insecurity. This form of insecurity caused by bad government policies has manifested in different forms and with regional underpinnings. They include; political (electoral) violence, secessionist agitations, banditry, jihadist insurgency, highway abductions and community invasions.

Nigeria's political history is one replete with electoral malpractices orchestrated by not just its so-called independent electoral body - INEC, but also by gangs or political thugs. Political thuggery has been a distinct feature of elections in Nigeria and other African countries. Apropos, it has become the political conduit for perpetuating electoral vices like ballot-snatching, intimidation and vote-buying - the newest modus vivendi of Nigerian politics. In recognition of the potent threats political thugs constitute, the United Nations designated them non-State armed groups with political agenda (Carter Center, 2011; Dudouet, 2015). Like the military and State-sponsored militia, these armed non-State actors have the capabilities to bring any government down on its knees. They are the muscle and enforcers of corrupt politicians; and Nigeria's bulging (mostly unemployed) youth population keeps providing an endless supply of such vulnerable groups. It is plausible that the biggest threat political thugs constitute to good governance is not their use of organized violence to unleash mayhem, but rather, their role as tools or mechanisms for bringing un-deserving persons to power. In so doing they desecrate political offices and perpetuate the circle of bad governance. Political thugs are empowered by politicians, and they in turn empower politicians and their interests. This suggests that they are the biggest threat to good governance, democracy and the rule of law as encapsulated in Agenda 2063: Aspiration 3.

The other forms of insecurity do not embody the same strategic threat but they are no less dangerous. Their distinction lies in their threat to Nigeria's sovereignty. Regardless of regional peculiarities, the secessionist agitation in South-East Nigeria and the jihadist insurgency in North-East Nigeria bear similar features: - 1) they are both militant outcries against a Nigerian government that continues to enact anti-people policies. These agitations are along ethnic and religious lines respectively; 2) Boko Haram, the Islamic State, and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) all see secession or the creation of an independent State as the solution to Nigeria's governance issues that so far has been very corrupt and continues to enact policies that are not people-driven and inclusive; 3) the leaders of these proscribed groups – Nnamdi Kanu and late Mohammed Yusuf both suffered human rights abuses by the Nigerian justice system. Muhammed Yusuf was extra-judicially killed while in Police custody, and Nnamdi Kanu remains in

DSS detention contrary to the ruling of a High Court that granted him bail, and the provisions of Agenda 2063 on the rule of law and human rights being sacrosanct. The rights abuses on Kanu and Yusuf appear to have further escalated the activities of IPOB and ISWAP who are not only stepping up their operations, but are also forming transnational alliances with foreign terror groups – Al Qaeda, Islamic State (ISIS), and the Ambazonia Defence Forces (ADF) (Boudombo, 2021). Insights from Igwe (2023) also reveal that in 2019, the Global Terrorism Index ranked Nigeria 3rd in the World after Afghanistan and Iraq.

Lessons-learned from past Colonial struggles, and civil wars orchestrated by the shortfalls of African governments necessitated a new governance and security strategy. It was in the APSA and Agenda 2063 that the AU found normative and institutional modalities to meet this need. Nigeria is both a signatory to the APSA and Agenda 2063 Accords. Regrettably, the findings on Nigeria's political and socio-economic realities have shown a rather poor implementation of the goals of agenda 2063. With these evident implementation struggles of Agenda 2063 at the National level (with Nigeria as a case study), and given its inter-related and inter-dependent nature on the APSA, can the APSA succeed where Agenda 2063 is failing? What are the implications of this failure on the Continent?

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA): National Impact and Regional Implications

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) was inaugurated in 2002 in Durban, South Africa. This was following an AU reformative agenda that looked to consolidate on the gains of the anti-colonial struggles by charting the course for new socio-economic development built on enhanced security measures (Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, 2002). As an institutional mechanism against insecurity, the vision of the APSA is to enhance the lives of Africans by addressing violent conflicts and its effects on the socio-economic well-being of the Continent's citizenry. In terms of its normative embodiments, the APSA is portrayed as an elaborate doctrine that in detail specifies an agenda for peace and security through conflict prevention; early warning and preventive diplomacy; peacemaking and peacebuilding; encouragement and promotion of democratic practices; intervention; humanitarian action and disaster management (Bah et al., 2014). For effective operationalization of its mandate, the APSA has five supporting components, each of them saddled with specific responsibilities that reflect the goals of the APSA. They include; Panel of the Wise (PoW), Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), AU Commission, African Standby Force (ASF), and the Peace Fund.

In attempting to engage the question on the feasibility of the APSA succeeding where Agenda 2063 is failing, it is safe to argue that the structural/organisational and normative underpinnings of the APSA, significantly favor its chances. Unlike Agenda 2063 that exists mostly in principle, the APSA, though an AU policy framework as well, has a body statutorily mandated to implement and enforce its principles in member

states – The Peace and Security Council (PSC). The protocol establishing the PSC is what equally gives APSA the mandate to operate. The PSC which is Africa's equivalent of the UN Security Council (UNSC) comprises 15 AU member States - 10 members who are elected for a period of 2 years, and 5 members for 3 years. The protocol establishing the PSC requires that it maintains a presence and links with the various Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs). From the foregoing, it is logical to assume that like Agenda 2063, the performance of APSA at the Continental level is dependent on the successful enforcement of its tenets within AU member States. This suggests that the Continent can only thrive when the various AU member States begin to experience the stability that comes with economic development in secured environments. The extent to which the APSA has utilized it strategic advantage over Agenda 2063, and in the implementation its vision, remains of policy interest. To this end, a baseline study was conducted in 2010 to assess the operations of the APSA since inception. How the results of that assessment have been utilized are evident going by the current security and socio-economic situation of the region.

Perspectives on the performance of the APSA since inception appear evenly divided. From a normative standpoint, the framework has been lauded for successfully setting-up the AU Border Program, AU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption, New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. In terms of security and peace enforcement, the APSA has also recorded significant progress with the deployment of troops in 2007 for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). This is perceived as a demonstration of the strong synergy between the PSC and the ASF component of the APSA whose success so far has been attributed to a good blueprint that enables them operate with great coordination (Peace and Security Department, 2010).

Further, in living up to their early warning responsibilities, the APSA's Panel of the Wise (PoW) has been involved in election monitoring in countries like Chad, Central African Republic and Sudan, including mediating in election disputes. The PSC for its part is known to have convened various security meetings, reflecting its growing awareness of Africa's fast changing political and security landscape. Although Countries like Sudan, Central African Republic, Somalia and Mali are currently experiencing armed conflicts, the general security situation as projected in African Union (2016) is one of relative peace and a significant reduction in inter and intra state conflicts in Africa. This has equally been counted as the gains by the APSA.

The milestones achieved by the APSA through the PSC are not without significant drawbacks that typically characterize the operations of a regional entity. From a conceptual standpoint, the normative framework establishing the APSA has been described as elitist, neo-liberal and fundamentally deficient in encapsulating the reality of Africans (Obi 2014), hence its weakness in solving African problems. This postulation somehow lays credence to the rationale given by the military juntas in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger for intending to cease their membership of ECOWAS. Like the AU, they perceive ECOWAS to be under external influence as they have clearly stated:

we are going to create an AES of the people, instead of an ECOWAS whose
directives and instructions are dictated to it by powers that are foreign to Africa…it
is up to us make the confederation alliance of Sahelian States an alternative to all
bogus regional groupings (Rédaction Africanews, 2022).

Embedded in this statement is not just disenchantment with the institutional status quo, but also an innate aspiration to have an accentuated outlook and relevance on Continental affairs. This ambition shared by most African Countries, is however not without enormous organisational complications to African multilateralism where cohesive synergy at different levels, from the AU to the RECs, yet remains a struggle. Cohesion and cooperation between the PSC, CEWs, and the PoW are vague due to insufficient institutional support from the AU occasioned by the growing demand for intervention at the various RECs (Peace and Security Department, 2010). Emerging security challenges keep stretching the limited resources of the APSA and its implementing components. The challenge with inadequate personnel may not be distanced from the problems with staff recruitment at the AU. The modalities on recruitment procedures as contained in the Maputo Structure limits staff membership to strictly what the budget can accommodate, leaving no wiggle room for contingencies during emergencies.

Still on synergy, poor coordination between the PSC, CEW and Civil Society Organisations within member countries of the RECs was equally identified as a major impediment to the PSC accessing vital security information and analysis that would have enhanced the operations of the PSC in conflict prevention. On a horizontal level, similar problem with cohesive synergy has been recorded among the RECs, a feature that makes quick responses to regional security threats bureaucratic and difficult.

The APSA's biggest challenge may yet be domiciled in governance-related issues and their attendant security challenges. It is a domain that bares the operational flaws of the PoW with respect to matters requiring the enforcement of AU principles on democracy, governance and the rule of law. The coups in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger expose one of such weakness as it shows the failure of the PoW and its corresponding organs in the AU and ECOWAS to enforce the July 2000 Declaration prohibiting the unconstitutional take-over of government (PSC Report, 2023). Further, while the coup in Niger was jointly condemned by the PSC and AU Chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat, the political chaos in Chad has been handled differently. This act is considered biased and inconsistent, policy wise; with the tendency to bred despondency and a lack of confidence in the operations of the PSC. In addition to the failings of the PoW with regards to governance, the effective implementation of political transition processes in Sudan and Central African Republic has also been criticized. Scenarios like this could easily degenerate to anarchy and state collapse, courtesy of State and non-state actors who might capitalize on the instability or vacuum in government to seize power.

Africa's most recent military coups are pointers to the preference of the military approach in conflict resolution, to dialogue by AU member States. Beyond the

periphery, a closer look at this choice reveals an AU membership whose dispute resolution choices harbor reservations and a lack of confidence in APSA as an embodiment of a comprehensive dispute resolution mechanism. Worse, the dismantling of the early warning mechanisms of the APSA and their merging with corresponding partners in the RECs by the AU has further weakened the preventive and proactive capacity of the APSA to crisis, and by implication, the ability of the PoW to be preemptive. Such has the tendency to make the emergence of violent conflicts almost inevitable, while the PSC's role in conflict prevention becomes further weakened.

Although the security meetings convened by the PSC reflects high situation awareness of the security situation in the region, it is the operational capacity to be proactive in the face of impending crisis that truly reinforces the position of the PSC as the vanguard of African security. In validating this position further, concerns have been raised regarding the sufficiency of the provisions establishing APSA in dealing with emerging security challenges in the region, key among them, politically-induced insecurity and violence (African Union, 2002). Election monitoring and observation are quintessential to democratic norms. However if the sanctions that apply to errant political actors (if any) are not well enforced, the activities of the PSC and PoW with regards to election monitoring that safeguards democratic norms and values amounts to nothing but sabre rattling.

Conclusion

In the face of emerging geopolitics and security dynamics of the region, the APSA needs to maintain a high degree of validity and operational relevance that addresses the new regional security challenges and their political underpinnings. To this end, this paper which attempts to critique the operations of the APSA two decades after its inception recommends the following, that;

- The AU as a matter of priority should strictly enforce policies systemically requiring that the PSC, relevant organs of the AU, APSA, and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from the different RECs work together. Such cooperation at the agency, departmental, and regional levels guarantee the formation of a strong cohesive synergy among the APSA and its implementing partners. Formidable relationships like this will provide the PSC access to the goings-on in African countries. With this arrangement, CSOs can act as extensions of the PoW and PSC in their respective countries, monitoring and reporting on issues of electoral violence, human rights abuses, and unpopular government policies that could generate structural and violent conflicts at the national and regional levels;

- China's policies on bilateral defence, investments and trade agreements with most African countries has been enticing and largely considered favourable. Regardless, there are still valid concerns with respect to the implications of such bilateral engagements in terms of commensurate repayment plans in the area of loan servicing. Instances abound where the terms of agreement in cases of default

in repayments allows China to either acquire the mineral resources of the defaulting country, or to confiscate assets belonging to that country, anywhere in the world, as in the case of China and Nigeria in 2024. Avoiding such trade imbalances and their corresponding dire consequences demands that acquired loans should be channeled towards investments that will yield proceeds for not only servicing loans, but also developing the country. This is opposed to spending loans on recurrent expenditure and on the maintenance of the ostentatious life-style of some African politicians which contradicts the vision of Agenda 2063 and the APSA.

- There should be policies discouraging the AU and its member states from obtaining loans outside the shores of Africa to run African Affairs. The AU should work towards setting up dependable loan facilities and credit schemes that member states and RECs can access within Africa. The current practice of accessing loans or depending on external donor support from the EU and UN portrays the vision of an Afrocentric development and peace championed by the APSA and Agenda 2063 as nothing more than conceptual endeavors with no teeth and very minimal impact on security and the economy at the regional level. Also, the policies of ACFTA (African Continental Free Trade Agreement) should be reviewed to encourage and enforce more of intra-regional or continental trade habits or relations, than with foreign trade partners.

- Following the exponential rise in human rights abuses and election-related insecurity and malpractices in the region, the PSC through the PoW should devise statutorily-backed means of deterring such practices once confirmed to be true. They should influence and strictly enforce stiff penalties on errant member-countries with such records. Such punitive measures beyond deterrence also have the potential of shoring up the confidence of the citizenry with regards the enforcement capabilities of the APSA on matters of regional security, and its commitment to the principles of democracy and good governance.

- There is need to review the AU border program to reflect the current border security realities of the continent, mostly transnational in orientation. Efforts should be concentrated on the formation of civilian border security task forces, drawn from the border communities. Their existence and effective operations can significantly complement the role of the conventional border security outfits, particularly in the area of covering the large expanse of lands typically charactering African boundaries and borderlands.

- Policy formulation and enforcement by the AU should begin tilting towards being more value than interest-driven. It is the only way that the Pan-African spirit in which the APSA and Agenda 2063 were drawn up can be immortalised.

Notes on Contributor

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Conflict of Interest

The authors hereby declare that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

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Africa's Energy Transition: Challenges, Opportunities, and Geopolitical Dimensions[1]

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Abstract:

Africa stands at a crossroads in its journey toward an energy transition framed by climate impacts, increased energy demands, and the drive for sustainable development. This article looks at the energy landscape of the continent, emphasizing regional differences, infrastructure development, and geopolitical factors. North Africa is making progress in integrating renewable and nuclear energy. The necessary investment in sustainable energy forms, especially solar, wind and green hydrogen, and the question of nuclear energy, as part of the energy supply chain, are in the focus. The potential of mining critical minerals is explored, because these are crucial for renewable energy technology, as well as the social, economic and environmental issues. Infrastructure development becomes a linchpin of energy access and economic prosperity, public-private partnerships and regulatory reforms become facilitators. The report concludes that Africa's energy transition is transformative, but it will require well - coordinated and inclusive efforts in the field of governance, financing and technology to deliver a sustainable and equitable energy future for the continent.

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Introduction

For decades to come , the economic and political landscape of Africa is predicted to be defined by the next phase of economic recovery and post COVID-19 prosperity, climate related challenges and continent-wide geopolitical tensions . From the energy perspective, significant transformation processes are expected the be taken place provided that both financial and technological investment opportunities are available in Africa's energy value chain. To promote contribution, the world's leading powers agreed at COP 28 in Dubai to finance renewable and sustainable energy projects in Africa with billions in financial commitments and to expand the nuclear fleet in the name of sustainability.

It is necessary to evaluate the African continent, region by region for the purpose of objective assessment:

- North Africa is a region of countries with relatively high-profile resources and investors, individually, with Egypt, Morocco and Algeria moving toward a European-style economic and political environment by enacting liberalising policies more progressive than those typical of the political and economic establishment across the continent. Although these countries have big reserves of fossil fuels and have been able to build up large reserves of oil and gas. but there is a decided political will in North Africa to boost the share of clean energy electricity — renewable and nuclear generation technologies — by the next 10 years.

- Western Africa – Senegal and Ghana are incorporating both fossil and renewable technologies into their national energy mix as a result of the LNG projects pushed along by Nigeria and increasing funding.

- Countries in Eastern Africa, in particular Ethiopia and Tanzania have been left underdeveloped. An increasing interest can be seen towards the expansion of renewable energy sources at national level and more access for their citizens to energy security, . Kenya in particular has made significant progress with more than two-thirds of its population now having access to electricity.

- Central and Southern African countries also have vast natural reservoirs giving them opportunity for utilizing both renewable and fossil resources to develop their economic. Important influencing factors can be the large hydrocarbon reserves that have been discovered in Namibia recently as well as the large renewable capacity announced in South Africa.

Infrastructure deficiency is a major challenge in Africa. Its energy grids are outdated and unable to cope with the increased demand. At the same time, the high costs of upgrading and expanding infrastructure are unattainable for many nations and contribute to energy poverty. There are several causes of energy poverty in Africa:

- Weak governance and corruption are the main obstacles to development, where punitive regulatory regimes, low levels of investment and political instability hold development.

- Gender inequalities exacerbate energy poverty. Women are also particularly dependent on traditional energy sources, such as inefficient firewood that is harmful to human health.
- Additionally, social factors such as high energy prices prevent poorer communities from accessing modern energy services.

To tackle energy poverty, solutions need to be comprehensive and coordinated. Supporting large-scale renewable energy projects will require international cooperation to mobilise the necessary financial and technical resources. Investing in renewable energy, such as solar and wind energy, is one of the cheapest and cleanest ways to improve access to energy while creating jobs and reducing environmental costs. Improving living standarts through energy projects can make a big difference in creating the well-being of Africans, their communities and societies. . In this article, an overwiev of the energy transition on the African continent is provided and its possible evolvement is discussed along with the challenges and opportunities.

Directions for energy sector development in Africa

To understand the economical situation of the African continent, the issue of providing services necessary to meet basic human needs are addressed. In African countries, nearly half of the population lacks of access to electricity, more than a third lacks of access to crucial water utilities, and roughly a fifth is underfed. The energy demand is projected to be increased by 80% and water demand by 55% by 2050, while production of food have to be increased by at least 50% compared to 2017 levels. As a response to these challenges the Water-Energy-Food Ecosystem (WEFE), a holistic concept has been developed a (Apeh O., 2024). In this theory, the exploitation of the synergies between resources and the minimisation of trade-offs are underlined.

Water supply: The issue of water supply and usage is examined first. The water scarcity is a significant challenge since two-thirds of the continent is dry land and droughts are even on the rise. Over half of the population remains without access to basic sanitation services. Irrigation systems are absent furthermore the agricultural and climate change pressures from population dynamics are putting more strain on available water supplies as well.

Energy security: To increase energy security is also particulary urgent for the whole continent. Energy supply is critical in Sub-Saharan Africa, because 40% of the population live without access to reliable electricity. There are countries such as Morocco and Tunisia that depend on energy imports, exposing their economies to risks. For other countries such as Egypt, Algeria and Libya, the significant challenge is the exhaustion of fossil energy resources, therefore old-type energy systems are to be replaced by new energy sources. Electricity demand in the region is rising at 4–8% per year that is above the global average, underlining the need for additional energy supplies.

Urbanisation: Africa is undergoing rapid urbanization that is radically transforming the continent's infrastructure needs (El-Bouayady R., 2024). The growth of urbanization is positively related to the energy supply and information technology infrastructure of cities, and negatively related to water infrastructure. Urbanization and economic growth in African countries is spelt out in the policies and strategies that speak to infrastructure development. African governments require coordinated strategies to offset infrastructure deficits and mitigate urbanisation. Although urbanisation can have a high impact on global sustainability through economic development, but across Africa, the oil and gas production as well as the agricultural and mining industries remain fragile. Consequently, the backwardness of the basic infrastructure results in the lack of sufficient nutrition of around half of the population. The deficit of the critical infrastructures is crippling economic growth and depriving the population of a better quality of life. The energy shortages represent an annual loss of 2–4% of GDP for African countries (Ansah M. N., 2021).

In general, these problems are caused by asymmetrical political relations for geopolitical reason. High level of dictatorship and civil wars result in exploitative labour market, unemployment and poverty. In the political arena, absent are the locally-managed regimes to govern the regional energy networks that have both the substantial production and the transportation systems already. In this way, difficulty can be emerged by harmonizing the strict and diverse regulatory and economic framework with the local energy-management practices.

The regulatory framework has some investment obstacles, but Egypt has been able to overcome, creating an attractive environment for foreign venture and equity capital investment in the country. As a result, the energy market has been liberalised and Egypt can scale up its energy production by 1 GW annually due to the succesfull implementation of the competitive regulatory environment (Cardinale R., 2023).

In addition to the integration of infrastructure planning into the future urban growth strategy, modernization of existing systems and the design of new projects are also required that directly support sustainable development. In the present situation, the energy transition from fossil to renewable energy sources could be sustainable and more preferable than maintaining, or modernizing the existing energy-production systems. Furthermore, the renewable energy potential is significant in terms of solar, wind, hydropower or even geothermal energy. Nevertheless, utilizing these sources presents high infrastructure, environmental, and social barriers. More than 7 % of the annual economic growth is required for the clean energy production that would largely or partially exceed the fossil-based energy production. At the same time, the economic measurements highlight that although the north and south African countries have advanced economy and industrial performance to support the energy-transition, sub-Saharan Africa is still restricted by low economic capacities and a volatile political regime. International partnerships are poised to be key in Africa's clean energy

transition, with the European Union and global financial institutions like the World Bank and African Development Bank pouring substantial resources into African energy projects. The iteration and analysis of the transition has been picking up pace since the Paris Agreement in 2015 (Cardinale R., 2023).

Africa's energy sources are both fossil fuels (oil and coal) and renewable energy sources (solar and wind power). Africa has 60% of the best solar energy potential in the world, and with a 1% utilization rate. The Sahel and Sahara, for instance, are the perfect places for solar power plants to fulfil the energy needs of Europe entirely. At the same time, Africa's coastal and mountainous areas, like Morocco and South Africa have significant potential for wind energy. The potential for geothermal energy development lies mainly in East Africa's Great Rift Valley, where major thermal resources are available. their adoption is limited by low utilization of renewable energy, poor infrastructure deployment, and financing shortages (Ali A. O., 2024). Investing in alternative energy sources not only can help to solve energy shortages but can also lead to energy independence. Sustainable development is mostly based on all energy policies that compromise both energy efficiency and renewable energy development.

The broader potential for renewables across the African continent not only complements the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the curtailment of harmful pollutants, but it also opens up the large-scale prospect of producing clean, inexpensive green hydrogen. Based on the climate and geographical diversity, there are distinct options of the broad palette of renewable energy-production techniques that are predicted to be optimal for different countries for their energy-transition:

- The energy from waste and biomass burning, leads the way in the sub-Saharan region, falling under climate-neutral technology of between 2-3%.
- Given their considerable solar and wind energy potential, Algeria and Egypt play an active role in the implementation of the EU's green hydrogen strategy connecting to the EU both in production and export of green hydrogen.
- According to the expectations, the participation in the EU's green-hydrogen supply chain can be highly cost-effective for the north African region. Ideally, hydrogen can be transported via a method similar to that currently deployed for natural gas, and used as a fuel or feedstock in power plants in Europe and Africa.

Futhermore, the transportation of coupling (hydrogen carrier substances) such as ammonia or methanol is also possible, therefore it can be used in an environment where the cost is to be optimized. Already ambitious projects (Bandiri S., 2024) are under construction in Egypt, Morocco and Namibia where solar energy is used for green hydrogen production — building high-capacity hydrogen plants.But, there are still challenges of underdeveloped infrastructures making the up-front costs and regulations prohibitive for projects in the start-up stage.

Africa requires $35.6 billion to accomplish the target outlined in their climate change policy, which aims to have 19 GW of renewable energy capacity (Tinta A.A., 2023). That large money flow should be promoted by the regulatory systemand spent on struggling against corruption, as well as improving education and taking advantage of

human potential to directly develop innovation and efficient energy-transition of the continent. North African countries such as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt have seen a rapidly growing energy demand in the last few decades. This growth created multiple energy and political challenges related to energy supply diversification and sustainable resource integration. Regional leaders are assessing the importance of nuclear energy in the outworks of energy security and import-export structure. (Jewell J, 2011).

Infrastructure financing and key players

The funding of infrastructural development projects - including roads, water systems and energy grids. ect. - is a growing necessity for the economic development of African countries and the attainment of social prosperity. The advancement of infrastructure is not only the groundwork for economic growth, but a starting point for the achievement of social welfare and climate protection challenges. To cope with these circumstances, recieving support from the international community as well as the strengthening of local capacities are inevitable. At this point, there are few governments in Africa that have the resources and international finance to meet these needs adequately. These initiatives are vital for boosting economic performance and decreasing social disparities. African infrastructure development can be properedif collaboration between the public and private sectors can be forged, through institutional reforms and innovative financing instruments.The partnership between governments and private equity funds is preferred for infrastructural projects to succeed. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) model would be one of the most important financial instruments for infrastructure financing (Lu Q., 2024). According to this concept the private capital can be involved through enabling the public sector to deliver regulatory and social objectives. However, PPP in Africa are susceptible to agency problems due to misaligned incentives among contracting parties. While private investors are profit maximizing, the public sector is welfare maximizing. Addressing such differences effectively will demand mechanisms that align the interests of the various parties, including performance-linked remuneration systems, and a transparent contracting environment. Although the infrastructure funding is heavily credit-dependent, it is particularly hard to access credit-based financing African countries with underdeveloped infrastructure institution. The reason lies in the risk aversion of private lenders. In such situations, it is crucial that equity investments are made on a level playing field. Equity financing attracts the private sector since investors are directly involved in the long-term success of the projects. Countrieswith a high level of development are in direct contrast to this practice, because they are endowed with better credit ratings based on their higher level of development. In a more stable political environment they are more attractive for debt and development.

Chinese funded projects

The past twenty years have witnessed the rapid growth and proliferation of Chinese-financed and implemented infrastructure projects in Africa (Wang Y., 2022). In this way, the reduction of the continent's infrastructure deficit is supported, while shaping political

stability and economic growth. African heads of state play a central role in this cooperation, and sometimes even mega-infrastructure projects become part of the political survival game. As a consequence, especially less-skilled workers are reinforced to inflow to cities that leads to short-term growth in local employment (An J., 2024). Furthermore, China is making a significant contribution to the development of Africa's employment sector through aid projects that have tremendous political and economic implications. The aid is employed not just to promote economic growth, but also to build political ties. Completed infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, created permanent jobs that offered more stable, formal work environments. Such a structural change results in a reduction of low-skilled jobs and an increase in the number of skilled jobsThe positive employment effects were also clear at the sectoral level. Similarly, lasting employment benefits were offered by energy and water supply sector that underpin sustainable development.

The positive employment impacts of such aid overall, the location and design of the psycho-social projects often serve political ends The important political leaders, especially presidents, often utilize foreign-funded projects to achieve political legitimacy and reinforce their power networks. Presidents use these projects on two dimensions (Wang Y., 2022):

- *Those at the international level*: African leaders are riding the fine line of the various sources of financing available to them in order to get the best terms for their countries. Chinese loans come with less stringency and flexibility than the political and economic reforms that often accompany Western donor conditions.
- *Domestic Level:* Infrastructure initiatives have a symbolic as well as practical context: they show that the leaders can get things done. For instance, in the case of Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta, the project was an integral part of his election campaign, even underpinning the basis upon which he was elected, hence the name "Standard Gauge Railway (SGR)" remained as a central nationally acclaimed project.

Africa's mining industry

The energy transition depends on the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources and low-carbon technologies. There are critical minerals that are crucial in achieving the energy-transition. The demand for mining mineral tresure of Africa has been increased exponentially in recent years, propelled by the production of batteries, solar panels, and wind energy equipment worldwide. Among the most sought-after minerals are the cobalt, the uranium, the gold, and the phosphate. Africa is also one of the top producers of those globally key strategic metals as copper, bauxite, and manganese that are essential for battery production, construction and electronics manufacturing.

For example: the Democratic Republic of Congo is responsible for 70% of the world's cobalt supplyand North Africa produces 79% of global phosphate.

Social effect of accelerating the mining industry:

- Through the exploitation of mineral resources not only economic opportunities are prepared, but also social benefits can be achieved through job creation.
- Local economic activity is accelerated by an average of 53% through mining of critical minerals, an effect that is particularly strong in remote and underdeveloped areas.
- Mining activities promote the development of the colonization road network, as well as the energy supply system and other necessary infrastructure (Lapeyronie H., 2025).

Environmental effects of the mininng industry:

- Mining, however, often creates major environmental problems in terms of soil and water contamination.
- The even redistribution of revenues is prevented by poor institutional frameworks and corruption.
- This is why there is a pressing need for sustainable mining initiatives to realize the long-term economic gains.

Nuclear industry, the flagship of the clean energy production

Nuclear energy's main benefit is a continuous, low-carbon source of energy that reduces dependence on fossil fuels. Nuclear reactors in operation produce no greenhouse gases that means they can be a key tool in the fight against climate change.

Nonetheless, the implementation of nuclear power is costly in terms of initial investment, waste management and critically safety regulations, placing a burden on the national budget of a country with a debt-to-GDP ratio above 60%. But from a sustainability perspective, it is still almost no or at least less carbon emissions and significantly less damage produced to the environment by nuclear energy compared to fossil fuels. Nuclear energy can also be a game-changer in meeting Africa's increasing energy demands, powered by rapid urbanization and population growth. In fact, rising energy demand on the continent is expected to grow by 60% by 2040. Moreover, nuclear energy is useful for sectors other than electricity generation like agriculture, industry, medicine, etc. Nuclear power is also suited to technologies like seawater desalination and industrial heat production. Additional economic opportunities through nuclear energy could arise from regional collaborations and technology exports. The energy shortages could be reduced by stable, reliable energy sources such as nuclear power. Moreover, Africa possess a rich endowment of uranium resources, notably in Niger, Namibia and South Africa. Giving it a local source to develop nuclear energy, the overreliance on foreign controls in fuelling the nuclear stream could be diminished.

The introduction of nuclear energy to Africa is significantly challenged from both technical and cost perspectives:

1. One single nuclear power plant of 1000 MW can cost between $1.5 billion and $8 billion which have difficult time for African countries that don't have adequate money.

2. Another problem is the absence of an adequate trained workforce (nuclear engineers, technicians, researchers, etc.) and the technical capacity to adhere to the potential establishment of the nuclear technology.

3. And the new challenge is compounded by a lack of infrastructure — overloaded electrical grids and poorly developed transportation systems.

4. An other key hurdle is public skepticism of nuclear energy. The Chernobyl and Fukushima accidents, coupled with nuclear waste disposal concerns, diminish public acceptance of nuclear technology.(Orikpete O. F., 2023) It is important to win public appreciation for the benefits of nuclear energy through engaging communities impacted by the construction of nuclear power plants and awareness programs.

5. African countries must put in place sound laws and regulatory regimes, including safety and waste management standards, based on the IAEA's milestone approach.

Education: Specialized education and training programs are required to develop human resources and technical capacity. Funding challenges are best addressed through models from public-private partnerships and buy-in from international financial institutions. Regular educational campaigns that focus on the benefits and safety of nuclear technology can also instill confidence in the public.

Geopolitics: Nuclear power's geopolitical implications are especially relevant in North Africa (Supersberger N., 2011), where political instability and nondemocracy exacerbate nuclear energy deployment risks. In contrast, the European Union and the United States believe that democracy and transparency should come with a nuclear energy package. The introduction of nuclear energy in rich states such as Algeria, Libya and Egypt could therefore be seen as a means of cementing political power.. As a good example for the solution of the fossil fuel crisis considering the environmental impacts, addressing Ghanaian energy demand in an increasingly sustainable way has come into focus. The technological and economic feasibility of nuclear and solar energy is analised in Ghana as an efficient long term energy security approach. Financial consideration: Solar energy's generation cost is between 5–12 EUR/kWh, in contrast to an estimate for nuclear energy of 125 EUR/kWh. Solar energy systems provide more flexibility and can be deployed much faster than traditional energy sources of a smaller magnitude. For example, Ghana (Agyekum E. B., 2020) is blessed with an average sunshine of 3,000 hours of sunlight per year. A 20 MW solar power plant costs just $8 million and can be finished in few months. Solar energy's relatively low upfront investment costs and brief implementation timeline render it an attractive option for short- and medium-term energy security. On the contrary, once the country's economic situation is settled, nuclear energy presents a long-term alternative.

Security/safety risks:The use of nuclear energy involves higher political and security risks that raise the stakes for its application. At the same time, managing radioactive waste and preventing nuclear accidents require effective regulatory and technical capacities that are not fully developed in North Africa. Public resistance f results in accepting the nuclear energy even more complicated while, past incidents — Chernobyl and Fukushima, for instance — have also profoundly contributed todelaying acceptance of nuclear projects.

Advancing nuclear energy globally will require broad political and regulatory reforms. With the right international cooperation — which can entail technology transfer, financial assistance, etc. — Africa will be able to overcome the barriers that stand in its way.

Russian Dominance in Nuclear Technology Development

Since 2007, Russia has been achieving ambitious goals in this sector under the framework of Rosatom that is an innovation-driven, high-tech nuclear energy giant. Russia has become a key player in the global nuclear export market thanks to the new AES-2006 reactor design and strong political support. (Thomas S., 2018). Originally, their main-stream models were manufactured for the European, and later Chinese and Indian markets. The reactors included core catchers that significantly improved safety levels. During the modernization, the AES-2006 was equipped with more active and passive safety systems and increased power. Domestically, the Russian nuclear sector is hindered by a narrow domestic market and lack of funds. China and India have become Rosatom's most remarcable customers, but technical issues have led to delays and cost overruns that have called into question the reliability of the technology. However, these experiences have provided lessons that have benefited subsequent export efforts. Rosatom's success appears to be strategic primarily because low prices and financing are enabled (Hickey S. M., 2021). The greater part of the financing is ensured by the Russian government therefore many countries are encouraged to turn to nuclear technology even if the political risk is significant. Patronizing the Russian nuclear export program is one way for the nuclear industry to become prefered in the world. The fortune of Russia's nuclear export strategy depends on whether it can successfully meet the technological and financial challenges and continue to expand its influence in global nuclear markets.

Pros and Cons of Nuclear Energy in Africa

Contrary: The development of nuclear energy in North Africa is hindered by a number of factors: technological dependence, financial burdens, security concerns and public resistance.

Technology dependence: The technical dependence on the use of nuclear technology is significant. At present, the countries of the Middle East and North Africa lack the knowledge or capacity to develop nuclear energy on their own. Thus, all aspects of the construction, maintenance and fuel supply of nuclear power plants are entirely

dependent on imported technologies and foreign specialists. This increases costs and reduces energy independence.

<u>Financial burden</u>: The construction of related nuclear infrastructure is a very costly prospect, especially in terms of dependence on imported know-how and low energy costs in the region. A single reactor can cost billions of dollars, far beyond the budgetary capacity of most North African countries. The relatively small size of the region's energy systems also does not allow for the effective integration of the emissions of large nuclear power plants, so such investments are rather uneconomical.

<u>Social acceptance</u>: Social acceptance will be critical to success, with clear communication strategies and greater public participation that are required to demonstrate how nuclear energy can be beneficial.

<u>Profits</u>: At the same time, the impetus to strengthen energy security, meet sustainability goals and exploit domestic uranium deposits provides a convincing motivation for the spread of nuclear energy. Nuclear energy is a long-term solution to the region's energy challenges if countries are able to implement comprehensive political and regulatory reforms and provide the necessary technological and financial support through international cooperation, as well as meet safety expectations.

The impact of the BRICS countries on the geopolitical dimensions of Africa's energy development

According to the vision of the BRICS countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – the vision of Africa's energy development is centred around three main pillars: energy independence, job creation and environmental protection.

- Energy independence: the ultimate goal, which will not only reduce Africa's dependence on imported energy sources, but also make use of local resources such as solar, wind and hydro energy. This model not only guarantees better energy security, but also allows African countries to maintain greater autonomy over their energy systems.
- Investing in renewable energy also has the advantage of creating new jobs, thus offering significant opportunities for regions with high unemployment rates, as studies show that the renewable energy sector creates 25% more jobs than fossil fuels and up to 90% more than nuclear energy for every unit of energy produced.
- Environmental protection is also at the heart of BRICS-led projects, including renewable energy programmes that reduce carbon emissions while preserving Africa's rich ecosystems, local environmental needs that can contribute to global climate change.

<u>China</u>: China has been particularly active in Africa's energy development among BRICS members. Between 2010 and 2015, China invested about $13 billion in energy projects

in Africa, with a focus on renewable energy technologies such as microgrids and wind farms. These investments increased access to clean energy in areas where there is no infrastructure, while promoting China's wider geopolitical influence in Africa.

India: Support was expanded by India to the India-Africa Forum, where $10 billion was offered in development loans that includes $7 billion for solar projects. These efforts are in line with India's objectives of enhancing sustainable development and building closer ties with African states.

South Africa: As a member of the BRICS and its host, as well as part of Africa, South Africa has a dual duty. On the one hand, South Africa is actively involved in the development of energy infrastructure through the BRICS framework and the Regional Centre for Africa, and on the other hand, South Africa is positioning itself as a regional leader in the transition to renewable energy.

Reforms to governance and infrastructure are also crucial to ensure that energy systems are efficient, inclusive, and able to respond to future demand. Closing the energy gap would allow Africa to realize its significant potential for economic and social development. Industrial development can be stimulated by continuous access to an up-to-date energy supply and innovation as well as better health outcomes, more education, and an increased overall quality of life for millions of individuals can be achieved (Gu, 2018).

Conclusion

Africa's energy transition is a massive challenge but also a transformative opportunity. The continent has abundant renewable energy resources, important critical minerals and unexplored potential for green hydrogen and nuclear energy. But the way towards sustainable energy future is plagued with infrastructural deficits, financing constraints, governance challenges and socio-economic inequalities. Regional variations only add to the challenge, with North Africa moving toward cleaner energy sources while sub-Saharan Africa struggles with economic and political instability. Therefore, international cooperation, especially with regional development organizations such as the African Development Bank and boilerplate organizations such as BRICS and the European Union, is of paramount importance to close the gap. Public-private partnerships, regulatory reforms and capacity building can unleash badly needed investment in infrastructure and technology. Moreover, promoting transparency, education, and community engagement is necessary for building public trust required for successful adoption of and emerging technologies such as nuclear energy. If Africa will address these systemic challenges and leverage its abundant resources, it can have and redefine its energy landscape. Systematic, inclusive and coordinated action can deliver not only the energy transition but also deeper socio-economic development, alleviating poverty, creating jobs, and improving the living conditions for millions. The success of Africa's

energy journey is a global imperative as it is a shared responsibility of the international community that complements global sustainability discourse.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors hereby declare that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.
The author is a member of the Editorial Board. The manuscript was handled independently to avoid any conflict of interest.

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Aspects of Cyber Defence in Africa[1]

Attila Dér[2]

Abstract:

When we think of Africa, cybersecurity is not the first word that comes to mind. But over the last 20 years, Africa's technological development has accelerated dynamically. In an increasing number of African countries, increasingly sophisticated and complex Information and Communications Technology systems are being built. The spread and use of the Internet is an indispensable prerequisite for access to global trade. The rapid growth of smartphones and mobile internet use has enabled many people to connect to the online world for the first time, opening up many new opportunities in trade, education and health services. Unfortunately, however, this development trend also has its drawbacks, such as the growing number of cyber-attacks, which, incidentally, underline the need for and relevance of my research. According to global surveys, the countries most at risk of cyber-attacks are in Africa. The importance of cyber security is therefore being recognised in an increasing number of African countries. In this article, I will discuss the cybersecurity policies of several African states and compare them on the basis of key professional indicators. I will also sketch a general picture of the current situation and some thoughts on future challenges.

1.Introduction

The continent of Africa is culturally, socially and economically very diverse in terms of its size and scope. In addition, there are 54 African states on this vast continent, each with its own unique political system. It is therefore very difficult to compare and unify African countries on any subject. Nothing is more proof of this than the period since the African Union was formed, where there have been fewer successes in unifying African countries on various issues. It will not be any easier to take a unified position in this article, but I will measure an average that is roughly representative of cyber defence on the African continent. I will also highlight a few cases or countries as best or worst practices.

The number of internet users in Africa is growing exponentially, but the continent is lagging behind in cybersecurity, which is a major concern. These concerns have been voiced at several international cybersecurity conferences and various strategies have been developed to address them over the past year or two. Positive practices such as digitisation of government services, biometric identification and facilitating online bank payments have been implemented in several African countries with the support of the African Union. However, these positive developments, while offering a wealth of opportunities, have also brought new challenges in the area of cybersecurity. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), cybercrime is one of the main risks that could threaten Africa's economy. African countries need to take this fact seriously and build their own institutionalised defences against cyber-attackers as soon as possible. Policy consultations should not only be held with some of the more developed African states, but also with the less developed states. It would also be an important task to bring African regions on the margins of technology up to a minimum level of protection. In the remainder of this paper I will explore these issues and propose solutions at the end of the article (Arendse & Van Den Berg, 2024).

2. Current cyber policy in Africa

According to the recently released Cybersecurity Index (CEI), some countries in Africa - Ethiopia - are among the most cybersecurity vulnerable nations in the world. This official survey looked at 108 states, with Afghanistan, Myanmar and Ethiopia among the top three most vulnerable states in terms of cyberattacks.

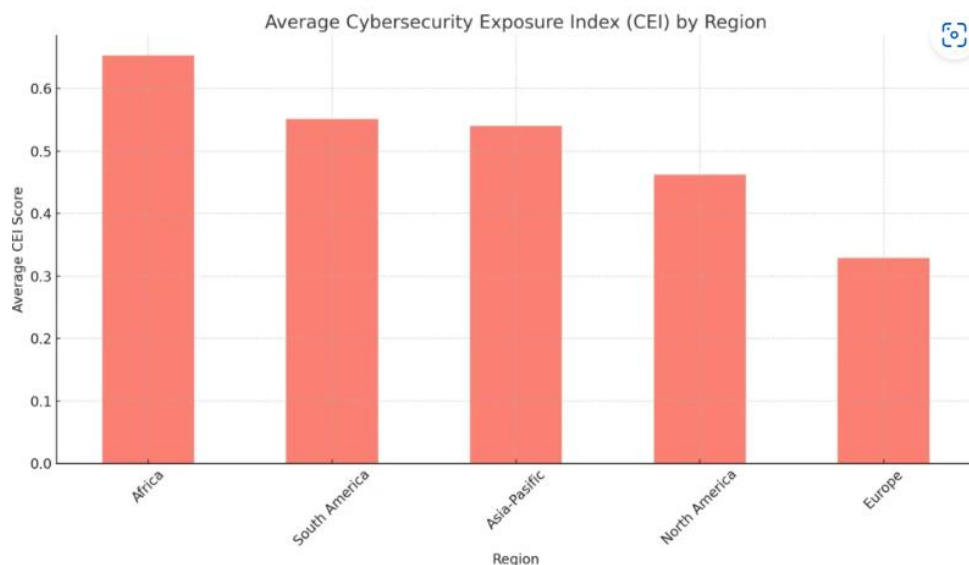Average Cybersecurity Exposure Index (CEI) by Region

Figure 1: Also shows the extent of the average Cybersecurity Exposure Index (CEI) for Africa. Africa is followed by South America and the best performing region is Europe. As a result, the countries least exposed to attacks are in Europe, such as Finland, Denmark and Luxembourg. Source: Geographical-Insights-Cyber-Security-across-Continents, n.d.

China has become the African continent's number one trading partner. Africa is a major supplier of raw materials to China. There is a large amount of Chinese investment in the African Union, increasing the economic and political weight of the eastern country. In contrast, the European Union and America, given its cultural and historical influence, want to include Africa in their cyber policy holdings. There has already been an attempt by the EU in 2022, but most African states, learning from the past, have been afraid to commit to a platform in the digital space with the West. The current reality, however, is that the growing cyber policy influence of Russia and China in Africa is becoming more powerful through technology investment projects and support for digital sovereignty (Izycki et al., 2023).

In South Africa, there is a growing recognition of the need to respond to cyber-attacks, which are increasing year on year, with a more robust response to their own situation and to that of other African countries. Experts based in South Africa have repeatedly indicated to African Union cyber defence leaders that cyber threat detection should be a core part of the cyber security agenda across Africa. Research shows that these cyber threat detection tools are often neglected or not even used professionally. Yet identifying cyber threats can make a major contribution to stronger cyber security for an organisation or a country. A lot of data can be collected that can later be put to great use by blue teams to prevent or counter attacks. It would be important for organisations to develop a unified cyber threat intelligence model. (Khan et al., 2023)

In the last decade, most countries on the African continent have experienced rapid development in the area of digital culture. African leaders have recognised that their countries cannot remain isolated oases in the ocean of the global world. As a result, the

latest information and communication technologies are being developed in an increasing number of sectors with substantial political and financial support from the state. Internet access is being provided to small and medium-sized enterprises to enable them to compete in international markets with companies of a similar size from other continents. These technologies enable the free flow of information, a key factor for economic development and productivity. The spread of the Internet facilitates communication, innovation and research between companies and educational institutions. However, the advantages of the ever-evolving information and communication technology are accompanied by exponentially growing disadvantages. As a consequence, Africa is also facing an increase in the number and frequency of cyber-attacks. The current situation needs to be assessed through GAP analysis or risk analysis along defined guidelines. Attention must be paid to the continuous improvement of the protection of these systems to maintain their reliability.(African Union, 2024)

3. The rise of computer crime

Terrorist organisations will place increasing importance on developing the technical skills to be able to use these emerging technologies in social media and beyond. Some terrorist groups in East Africa have recognised the potential of television and the internet as a great tool to achieve their goals. It is no coincidence that these organisations are now focusing on the development of information and communication technologies. Unfortunately, the constant online propaganda often has the effect of attracting many new followers to their organisations. It would be hard to imagine to an outsider how purposeful and sophisticated these criminal organisations are in their activities. In order to reach a large part of the African population with this manipulative content, relatively high quality online videos, blogs and topics need to be produced and distributed (Sinkó,G, 2024).

The availability of cheap and reliable internet services in Somalia means that the terrorist group's online content can be accessed by almost anyone, anywhere, at any time. The internet also allows terrorist organisations to exploit the desperation and vulnerability of the African population to their own ends, in order to create a form of chaos (Sinkó,G, 2024).

More than a thousand cybercriminals across Africa have been arrested by Interpol and Afripol as part of Operation Serengeti, which runs from 2 September to 31 October. The operation targeted online fraud and abuse of ransomware and other tools. More than 35,000 victims were identified, and the cases detected caused $193 million (HUF 75 billion) in damages worldwide.(Interpol) Interpol's Secretary General said that cybercrime, which is on the rise on the African continent, should be taken increasingly seriously. He stressed in his speech that unfortunately, law enforcement agencies have not only become aware of the volume of crimes, but also of the sophistication of the fraud, such as bank card fraud affecting the banking sector. Breaking these frauds down by African countries illustrates the trend mentioned above. For example, in Kenya, credit card fraud has increased; in Senegal, an online pyramid scheme involving foreign

fraudsters has taken victims; and huge investment fraud in Nigeria and Cameroon. And in Angola, illegal internet casinos have been shut down (HVG, 2024).

Recently, cyber incidents against African financial institutions have increased rapidly. Attackers have realised that most African countries do not spend enough money on security. Many African countries have outdated Information and Communications Technology on which it is almost impossible to build a modern banking protection system. In many cases, there is a lack of technical background and expertise of IT specialists in applying risk management models to analyse the cyber threats collected (Mbelli & Dwolatzky, 2016).

4. Status of digital regulation

Recently, 37 African countries have adopted national data protection laws. Of these, Nigeria's legislation stands out as being sufficiently robust and widely accepted by society.

Indeed, Nigerian legislation on the protection of personal data has made significant progress in recent years. They have provided a pan-African response to the growing challenges, the protection of fundamental rights and the management of data generated and stored in the context of technological developments. This is the Nigerian Data Protection Act (NDPA), promulgated on 12 June 2023. The NDPA bears some similarities to the emblematic General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) at European level in terms of specific rights and principles.

Although the 2014 African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention) is still not in force ten years after its adoption, it is becoming increasingly important for member states of the sub-regional organisation to establish a proper harmonised legal framework, modelled on the European GDPR, to create a safe and attractive digital environment. Firstly, it would facilitate cross-border data exchange, which is essential in sectors such as commerce and finance, as startups such as Wave and Djamo now enable millions of users to transfer money from one country to another using their phones, with the aim of facilitating, securing and protecting the flow of data across borders. Second, with the growth of start-ups and companies in the field of data and cybersecurity, the challenge is to have a clear and coherent legal framework to attract foreign investors and encourage the creation of technology companies. The lack of harmonised legislation is a major violation of the rights and freedoms of citizens in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) countries and an obstacle to achieving the organisation's objectives. Although such harmonisation seems easy to achieve in theory, it requires strong political will on the part of governments. It would therefore be essential to establish infrastructures and institutions capable of guaranteeing the effective application of the law, following the example of the NDPC and the Federal Competition and Consumer Commission of Nigeria (Olivia ANAGONOU & Sadikou OGOULYI, 2024).

To bring the African Union up to a sufficient level of cyber maturity, the first step is to upgrade the skills and capabilities of the poorest parts of the continent, such as sub-

Saharan Africa. These could be upgrading training, research in security, developing market specific cyber technologies, encouraging women to enter the cyber professions, sharing information on incident management, etc. Without a real alternative, political will and adequate financial backing, the above mentioned ideas will be a failed attempt.

The increased cyber threats on the African continent pose a new challenge to policy makers. Due to their different levels of development, African states can implement and apply the latest technologies in a variety of ways. More specifically, new technologies are being introduced without the country's experts being familiar with the technology or the problems associated with it. This anomaly is also present in cyber defence worldwide, but is a particularly serious problem on the African continent (Abdul-Hakeem, A, 2024).

Strengthening the cyber-security of the African financial system, ensuring the rapid development of digital financial systems and, ultimately, increasing financial inclusion on the continent, would also be a key challenge (Abdul-Hakeem, A, 2024).

Fortunately, more and more regional solutions are now being proposed by stakeholders. A striking example of this is the creation of a joint cyber security and cyber crime strategy for West African countries in the framework of the cooperation between the European Union and ECOWAS. Law enforcement agencies have also established their strategies for the whole of Africa under the leadership of the central body AFRIPOL. Of course, the African Union is also developing its cybersecurity strategy for the whole African continent as part of its defence strategy, with the help of the African Cyber Cyber Expert Community and the Global Forum of Cyber Experts (GFCE).

5. Cybersecurity strategy in Africa

African Union policymakers have realised that there can be no self-made cybersecurity without cross-border international cooperation. A good example is the Malabo Convention, where no effective progress was made on the protection of personal data because the international framework was not in place. Unfortunately, a prerequisite for these African Union pacts would be for each African Member State to have an adequate level of cybersecurity strategy and policy. According to the latest statistics from the UN's International Telecommunication Union, only 20 of Africa's 54 states have a cybersecurity strategy in place, and in most cases, this could be improved. This is problematic because policymakers have nothing to benchmark against and cannot adequately manage economic and public organisations in terms of information technology protection. In Africa, there is no other way to build longer-term cybersecurity than to put in place key legal regulations and strategies, which countries have not yet done.

Some African nations, such as Kenya, South Africa and Senegal, are leading the way with their strategies in place. These countries have already developed their own threat levels, action plans to address them and a system of accountability. I would highlight Nigeria, where a broad social consensus has led to the creation of the Nigerian Cybersecurity Policy and Strategy (NCPS), which is already a good guideline by

international standards. It is through the involvement of a wide range of civil society organisations that the cyber resilience of a country can be truly mapped against foreign intrusions. In this area, African national security institutions are culturally rather closed, almost completely excluding experts from the private sector and other international organisations from shaping their own cyber security strategy. The result is a distorted policy that is not able to effectively coordinate and support the overall IT security of an African state. It is therefore no coincidence that in Kenya, all possible professional organisations with professional competence have been involved in this work. After all, the private sector has much greater and broader expertise, experience and infrastructure than the public institutions themselves. In particular, financial institutions or companies specifically involved in cyber defence, where international cyber security norms, regulations and standards are already in practice. As a consequence, the cybersecurity strategy to be implemented in Nigeria has been integrated relatively smoothly into the public consciousness, as all stakeholders have been consulted on their views and opinions before the drafting process. This fact illustrates what many African countries still need to develop and where their policies need to be positioned within society in order to make the right choices for the future of their state.

The intended outcome of the strategy is that its implementation is in the best interests of all stakeholders. Thus, it is advisable to formulate its style and content in a way that is understandable, so that as wide a section of society as possible can understand and embrace it in their everyday lives. It is also important to mention the rapid development of information technology every year, which poses additional challenges for decision-makers. It is useless to have state-of-the-art target-setting documents (see NCPS) if they are never or only updated every 10 or 20 years. Ideally, the literature suggests that cybersecurity strategies in place should be updated every 5 years to ensure that they do not become obsolete in this rapidly changing dynamic environment. In order to keep their systems secure, they need to continuously respond to the challenges of emerging trends, such as the use of artificial intelligence. A major step forward is the establishment of the Africa Computer Emergency Response Team (AfricaCERT), which will provide strong support and coordination in incident response and investigation in the African Union states. So, the decisions taken now will have a major impact on future cyber security, and will need to be prepared and developed with this in mind and then translated into real life (jeuneafrique, n.d.).

6. Potential cyber attacks in Africa

Failure to regularly investigate cyber risks exposes African small and medium-sized enterprises to potential attacks. The following is a non-exhaustive list of some of the potential cyber-attacks in Africa:Malware: This includes viruses, Trojans and spyware that spread through infected software or websites and cause damage to affected systems.

Denail of Service DoS or Distributed Denial of Service DDoS attacks on critical infrastructures, where control systems can be blocked by inducing large amounts of network traffic. An example of such a typical DoS attack is in power systems, where

intruders disable high-power transformers at substations. The cooling or protection systems of the transformers are shut down and then generated with a fake service request until the transformer heats up to the point where it is completely out of service (Moller et al., 2024).

The Man-in-the-Middle attack exploits the resource-limited computing technology of developing countries. Man-in-the-Middle intrusion techniques allow hackers to manipulate, intercept and steal data from compromised systems by gaining user privileges. Furthermore, the decentralised nature of perimeter networks can also facilitate these forms of attack (Moila & Velempini, 2024).

Exploiting software flaws and vulnerabilities: perpetrators exploit vulnerabilities found in software or operating systems to gain access to the system.

Attacks against supply chains: Trojans or malware planted at suppliers, which can cause serious damage to the customer's infrastructure, or infected updates from suppliers can also pose a high risk!

7. Critical infrastructure situation

The explosion of internet deployment in Africa over the past decade, as discussed in the introduction to this article, has significantly changed the vulnerability and protection of critical infrastructure. It can be observed that the African continent has not developed decades of practical experience in cyber defence, as most African states have not yet started to modernise their information communication technology. In addition, African critical infrastructure has often been outside the attackers' horizon. Clearly, the objective is to gather and implement international best practice lessons learned from the "lagging" experience in Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP), taking into account local specificities. New models for the protection of mainly state-owned infrastructure should be developed and it is proposed to involve private sector participants. The integrity and interdependence of African systems, both within and across borders, must be taken into account, particularly in view of the current state of affairs. An example is the complex interconnected system of electricity supply, which is an essential element for the economies and populations of the countries' industries to sustain their functioning.

There are analysts who use CIP Assessment Framework (CAF) assessments for risk management of some of Africa's priority facilities. This assessment mechanism must take into account the organisational human resources, educational policies, technology and the regulatory environment of the country. The differences arising from the very different economic and social set-ups of African countries are also well addressed by this CAF framework, which aims to quantify and measure the growth of CIPs. To be more effective, these measures need to be flexible and easy to understand (Musarurwa & Jazri, 2015).

8. Cybersecurity risk analysis

In cyberspace, as in other areas, a rigorous risk assessment must be carried out beforehand to identify threats and define effective security measures to be implemented. There are African countries that use the Expression of Requirements and Identification of Security Objectives (EBIOS) methodology for risk assessment of their critical infrastructures.

The EBIOS risk analysis model consists of five pillars: in pillar one, a complete assessment of the critical system under consideration in terms of risk sources; in pillar two, the objectives to be set are defined; in step three, threat scenarios (strategic and operational) are studied; in step four, operational scenarios are developed to detail the operation of cyber attacks; and finally, in step five, strategic risks and their implementation are summarised.

In most African countries, the following regulatory structure is observed in relation to critical infrastructure information systems security:

- The Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act
- The Law on the Protection of Personal Data and Children Online
- The Electronic Transactions Act
- Existence of a national internet security strategy or policy
    - A law to establish CERTs (Computer Emergency Response Teams) or a national cybersecurity agency.

So they use risk analysis to identify specific attack paths that malicious red hat hackers can follow depending on the context and environment. Typical practices in African states include higher than average levels of corruption among government employees, where social engineering (attack pathways) can be successfully exploited by intruders. Ultimately, once the analysis has been completed, from the framing and baseline security posture, through the identification of risk sources and targets, to the listing of strategic scenarios and the identification of the most appropriate measures, the process of developing the system's procedures can begin (Cunningham et al., 2018).

9. The importance of education and training

It is important that employees understand the need for cybersecurity and their role in this system.

In Tanzania's study, the government would encourage local IT professionals to develop the country's key information communication technologies rather than foreign specialists. However, the study's survey clearly shows that recent graduates are far from having the skills to properly develop and maintain security-critical software. Unfortunately, IT security skills are not taught in universities, or if they are, they are incomplete and outdated. IT itself, in any field, is a very dynamic and changing environment, so it is essential that it is constantly updated in education and in all aspects of practical life.

The study highlights gaps in university education and suggests further professional training for students or graduates. Lifelong learning and the development of internal

capacities for self-training are also important. Developing an appropriate corporate culture to integrate recent graduates into the world of practice. Many African countries should harmonise the standards and guidelines already laid down by the African Union (Binamungu et al., 2024).

Empowering women to strengthen IT security. Study highlights that attracting women would bring in new talent to organisations running critical industrial systems that have been facing a skills shortage for years. It recommends making education and training as widely available as possible. Girls and boys interested in science should be encouraged and helped from a young age. Employers should help young people who have just graduated with further training and mentoring schemes. Different gender perspectives and mindsets can help a company succeed and innovate effectively in research (Ramonyai et al., 2024).

When training employees, it is worth considering the impact of their behaviour on the security of WiFi and other network systems. Because employees' security behaviours are closely related to subjective norms and levels of cybersecurity awareness. Moreover, training can have the effect of spreading the lessons learned among employees within the organisation (Nguu & Musuva, 2024).

10. Building cyber defences

Government departments, ministries and agencies form a highly sensitive critical infrastructure in a ring of common information communication techniques. The source of the threat is illustrated by the fact that if only one of your institutions is successfully hacked, the others could fall victim. Care must be taken to develop a model that supports not only theoretical training but also simulation training based on interactive real-life situations.

Two-factor authentication and use of biometric identifiers should be made mandatory if possible. This obviously includes the complexity of passwords, where the difficulty of cracking the system depends on the length and combination of the password, apart from the algorithm used to encrypt the password (system dependent) (Tshiamo MOTSHEGWA & Colin WRIGHT, 2018) (Mwangala et al., 2023).

One effective mitigation against DoS and DDoS attacks is GraphQL, a dynamic API data query and management language that can reduce traffic on critical networks by batching queries (Moller et al., 2024).

Firewalls and Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) do not fully filter out Man-in-the-Middle attacks, so reassuring protection must be complemented by the Cuckoo Search Algorithm (CSA) combined with fine-tuned xDecision Tree technology (Moila & Velempini, 2024).

Access control via intrusion monitoring devices Intrusion detection and prevention systems aim to detect unauthorized access to devices in a protected network. IDPS: Intrusion Detection and Prevention System; IPS: Intrusion Prevention System; IDS: Intrusion Detection System.

Incident response planning is the development of technical procedures, such as a disaster recovery plan, to restore critical IT assets to an appropriate level of service in the event of an emergency.

Blockchain, due to its immutable nature, uses cryptography and consensus algorithms to ensure data integrity, which means that stored data cannot be modified retrospectively. As a consequence, it is worth further developing and more widely deployed in public administrations, banking and other business sectors in African countries, etc (Shozi et al., 2023).

Conclusion

The social, economic and cultural diversity that characterises African states is also reflected to a significant extent in the area of cybersecurity. Some African continents have frontrunners and others have slowly developing societies. The founders of the African Union set out to bridge this gap. They are constantly striving to achieve a single African regulatory framework, where, unfortunately, stakeholders are not always present. Policy consultations should not only be held with some of the more developed African states, but also with the less developed states. It is also important to bring African regions on the margins of technology up to a minimum level of protection.

Even with the most advanced cyber defence solutions, the human factor should not be forgotten. Human intelligence can be the best or the worst defence mechanism, depending on the education and training policy of the organisation. I recommend that staff should be trained as much as possible on the latest cybersecurity theory and practice. And security trainers should run simulations to measure the change in behaviour (Mwangala et al., 2023).

The more underdeveloped sub-Saharan regions lack the basic infrastructures needed to build information communication systems, which are an obstacle to the implementation of innovative alternatives. To this end, it would be an important task to develop a sector-specific action plan for the African continent, taking into account international practices. Furthermore, it would be advisable to introduce blockchain-based guidelines to protect financial services in these countries as soon as possible.

Finally, it would be useful to develop a set of procedures for each continent and country where there are large gaps in these areas. A cybersecurity risk management programme could be developed with the involvement of external, independent experts, including continuous digital monitoring of suppliers (vendors, subcontractors), identification of risks, minimisation of their impact and prevention of their occurrence.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors hereby declare that they have no financial interest in this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

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Technology and Maritime Security of African Coasts[1]

Shreya Goyal[2]

Abstract:

This paper seeks to discuss the use of new-age technology for maritime safety and security in the African waters for ensuring economical and effective exploration of sea resources. The paper deals with two main variables - technology and maritime security in African waters. Technology enhances surveillance, communication, information sharing, access control etc. which also decreases marine insecurities. Terrorist activities start on the terrestrial land but eventually make their way to the waters, making the sea a hotspot for illegal activities. This paper seeks to investigate how piracy, illicit oil bunkering, unreported and unregulated fishing, attacks on unmanned submersibles, etc. in the coastal zone of the African continent are major maritime menaces. This impedes the optimum exploration of the sea resources. Innovations in Africa's maritime security have led to greater regional coordination and cooperation. Moreover, the 5+5 dialogue between North Africa and Southern Europe, the Yaoundé Code of Conduct (2013) and the Djibouti Code (2009) are some of the main pillars to this issue. The paper undertakes qualitative and quantitative methodologies to study the problem of terrorism with a special focus on the Gulf of Guinea. The paper contends that though the implementation of science and technology requires massive investment, it is the most favourable path to address security threats at sea and boost sea exploration efforts. Since the technology for effective implementation of maritime security and optimum utilization of sea resources are at a nascent stage of development, much would depend on international cooperation and the development of an international regime.

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Introduction

The African coastline is about 48,000kilometers, shared by 38 coastal states. Africa accounts for 2.7% of global trade by value (unctad.org, n.d.). African coastal states borders major sea lanes and the approaches to the Suez Canal making sea a strategic domain for the country. The Territorial sea and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of African maritime domain cover an area of almost 13 square kilometers while the Continental Shelf covers an area of approximately 6.5 square kilometers. The failure to keep up with the changing maritime technology has made researchers question whether the maritime strategies by Africa have been adequately able to deal with the threats and opportunities arising from maritime domain. In fact 90% of African commerce is facing the issue of legal trafficking. Ensuring a sound and secured environment in and around the sea is extremely important to address issues like poverty, food insufficiency, employment, trade etc., which continue to plague African economy. 'Maritime insecurity makes it easier for criminals to traffic weapons, drugs and human beings' (www.interpol.int, n.d.). However, the international community and the coastal states are making immense effort in coming together to combat the issues of maritime insecurities.

The issue of piracy and other maritime related crimes like trafficking, armed robbery, illegal and unreported fishing became most prevalent in the African waters since 2000s. It is also when pirate attacks received international attention in Africa. Maritime piracy peaked to almost 293 attacks in 2011 (Pichon, 2019). However, in Nigeria and West Africa, maritime crimes have dated back since the 1980's with Nigeria's oil rich Niger Delta being one of most exclusive region for pirate attacks. These crimes are a reflection of deficiency in the full proof security institutions of Africa. Unstable economic conditions have also acted as a catalyst in multiplying piracy attacks at the sea. Authority crisis is also a major problem for ship industries in Africa. However, the United Nations Conventions on the Laws of Seas (UNCLOS), provides a detailed provision under Article 101 on illegal activities like piracy, vessel management, exploitation of resources etc. 47 African States are parties to the Laws of Seas and have a shared responsibility in keep the sea safe and secured from armed interference and safe transit into international waterways (Vreÿ & Blaine, 2024). Along with this the European union is also building a code of conduct to bring the Indian Ocean island states and East African coastal states together to provide a full spectrum solution for criminal activities in the sea (Africa Maritime Security and Law Enforcement Primer, 2019). Maritime insecurities put immense pressure on the livelihood of coastal nations and their safety and security making it extremely fragile.

Piracy, armed robbery, illegal and unreported fishing, human trafficking across maritime zones, weapon smuggling etc. are some of the crimes that severely hamper international trade and commerce and national security. The main reasons behind the prosperity of crimes at sea in Africa are corruption, poverty, existence of marginalized

communities, lack of updated technology, unemployment etc. In fact as per T. Besley, piracy in Somalia has increased the shipping cost by 12% as ships are advised to take longer but safer routes to avoid hijacking and ransom payments (Besley, Fetzer & Mueller, 2015). The UN started to focus on threats to international shipping in Somalian waters since 2005. Lack of economic development often force marginalized communities to purchase stolen goods from the market thereby incentivizing criminal activities.

Earlier Africa lacked the expertise to direct technical knowhow, managerial and supervisory techniques to make advanced level technology at favorable levels. However, poor economic conditions and pressure from international partners have forced Africa to use new age science and technology. Interestingly, the total investment on technology to defend land borders were far greater in number compared to maritime security. But growing importance of African waters at a global level show that use of technology is a powerful tool to foster maritime security in Africa. Recently, as per United Nations Economic Commission on Africa, the technological capacity of African states has doubled from 25% to 41% (Wad, 1984). Technology has fostered Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) in Africa. Installation of Automated Identification System (AIS), Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), and Electro Optical Imaging (EO), powerful sensors, radars, surveillance system can help in collecting database of hijacking activities, data mining, and pattern recognition of criminal attacks etc. (Balci & Pegg, 2006). It will help in the search and rescue of ship vessels, law enforcement, artificial intelligence etc. The major challenge to the use of advanced mechanisms to ensure maritime security apart from heavy investment, is that intelligence agents must work harmoniously on both revealed and unmarked data to figure out the anomalies of suspicious behaviors at the sea. Pirate attacks have become more sophisticated. They hijack cargo vessels, vessels containing oil, container ships etc. Moreover, pirates take advantage of the porous maritime borders and cross waters to reach another country. Capacity building, information sharing and training of security agency personnel should be two main focus. The use of technology can also provide environmental and meteorological benefits to African continent. The deployment of meteorological sensing network was completed in 2011 in West and Central Africa (Vogel, 2022).

Most affected regions

The Gulf of Guinea region includes two major oil and natural gas producer – Nigeria and Angola. Of recent, piracy attacks have increased in the southern region of the Angola's coast. Piracy attacks in Nigeria account for the maximum number of attacks in West Africa. After Nigeria, Angola is the second largest oil producer in sub - Saharan Africa. The fleeting upsurge of maritime crimes off East Africa has brought into light the inadequacy of African governance to create effective mechanism and responses to violent crimes at the sea. In comparison to East Africa, incidents in littorals off West Africa, have received greater regional attention from private companies, multi-national corporations, and regional organizations. As per the Crisis Group Report, the whole of

Gulf of Guinea region is reported to face rapid rise in maritime insecurities, after others like Somalia, Cameroon, Togo, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome etc. (Weldemichael, 2019).

The Gulf of Aden is also a high trafficked maritime bottleneck region. The hijacking of the Maersk Alabama in 2009 in the Horn of Africa led to serious international interventions and deployment of naval task forces to combat piracy in the area. Since 2023, Somali pirates have been involved in more than 30 incidents (Weldemichael, 2019). Off recently, the Houthi attacks on the Red Sea have also exposed the loopholes in the African maritime security. 25 percent of global shipping traffic flows from Red Sea through Gulf of Adens to the Western Indian Ocean (Vreÿ & Blaine, 2024). 133 reported incidents, including 14 vessels struck by missiles or drones and 18 vessels hijacked by Somali pirates have been reported since 2023 (Vreÿ & Blaine, 2024). The Houthi attack is major marker of subsea technological disruption of the African coastal states.

However, Maritime Security Centres (MSCs) in the Gulf of Guinea region is a major step towards decreasing robbery and piracy in the sea. Many other initiatives and international collaborations that have bridged the technological gap required to secure maritime borders in Africa have resulted in collaborative research efforts, information exchange, joint training exercises, early detection of maritime crimes.

2.1 Gulf of Guinea (GoG)

As per the reports by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), the Gulf of Guinea region saw 130 maritime kidnappings in 22 separate incidents out of a total of 135 attacks in the year 2020 (ICC, International Chamber of Commerce, 2024). Since 2022, the UN and the African Union came together to address the issue of piracy in the GoG. Attacks by pirates, became most serious in 2000s. The region is extremely rich in oil, diamonds, gold, minerals and other natural resources (Denton & Harris, 2019).

Off West Africa in the Gulf of Guinea, regional cooperation efforts with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and specialized groupings like Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have proved to be beneficial in tackling piracy. The heads of the above mentioned regional organizations met in Yaoundé in June 2013. The meeting at Yaoundé designed a Code of Conduct concerning the Prevention and Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery against Ships, and illegal Maritime Activities in west and central Africa (Côrte-Real, 2022). The Code highlights that regional cooperation and coordination in supporting coastal states in fighting piracy and armed robbery at the sea is pivotal for the GoG region. In case of Nigeria, the Nigerian Maritime Administrative and Safety Agency (NMIMASA), has also been instrumental in reducing threats in the GoG territorial waters. Apart from important international organizations like International Maritime Organization (IMO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the contribution of European

Union (EU) in creation of EU Maritime Security Strategy and the EU Gulf of Guinea Strategy play a special role (Côrte-Real, 2022).

The use of technology has been able to enhance maritime domain awareness in the Gulf of Guinea. The region has limited human and financial resources. Technology installed in the region can lead to greater communication, use of military equipment in conjunction and harmonization of legal and regulatory frameworks related to criminal activities at sea (Ralby, Soud & Ralby, 2019).

Regional cooperation and coordination

Piracy has become an extremely threatening issue in Africa. Regional cooperation and coordination is the only way to contain criminal activities at sea that has now become more violent and sophisticated in their execution.

3.1 Yaounde code of coduct

The Yaoundé code of conduct was a collective action by 25 West African and Central African countries along with ECOWAS and ECCAS to fight against the impact of piracy, robbery, and other illicit maritime activities against ships sailing the Gulf of Guinea like unregulated and unreported fishing, transnational crimes like human and illicit weapon trafficking. It's been a decade since the maritime agreement was adopted. And since then, the code of conduct has been successful in bringing together different stakeholders for communication and information sharing to regulate the affairs of the African sea. The Obangame express exercise 2024 is one of the key steps undertaken under this regional cooperation to ensure the maritime safety in Africa. Regional Center for Operational Cooperation and a Regional Information Fusion Center in Madagascar coordinates among Zones and individual states. The Inter – Regional Coordination Centre (CIC) in Yaoundé looks after the operational, strategically and political aspects of maritime safety in the Gulf of Guinea region (Ralby, Soud & Ralby, 2019). The YARIS network, an information-sharing tool, connects all layers of the security framework, enabling consistent cooperation, surveillance, expeditious information exchange, and uniformity of operation within the framework (Gachie, 2023). The agreement has been successfully able to provide zonal security through technological cooperation and collaborative patrolling in the African waters.

3.2 Djibouti Code of Conduct

The Djibouti Code of Conduct adopted on 2009 is a soft law approach on repressing the maritime issues of piracy and armed robbery against ships sailing in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Adens. Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Yemen Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Seychelles, the United Republic of Tanzania. Comoros, Egypt, Eritrea, Jordan, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates have since signed the code, bringing the total to 20 countries from the 21 eligible to sign (www.imo.org., n.d). The code became immediately effective after the signatories agreed to cooperate in various aspects under the

International Law like arrest and investigation of suspects involved in piracy and armed robber, either fomented or self-intentionally, prohibiting and seizing suspicious ships and other properties in the African waters, rescue of harmed and attacked ships, provide help and assistance to victims on the ships and conduction shared operations and patrolling with the help of navies of the signatory countries, etc. Recently, the Djibouti Code of Conduct has collaborated with various international organizations like the IMO, NATO, EU, and the Turkish Maritime Programme on capacity building and enhancement of maritime security by training African navies to combat maritime threats more efficiently. n 2022, the Council espoused conclusions on the launch of the Coordinated Maritime aspects conception in the North- Western Indian Ocean, a frame for a strengthened EU part as a maritime security provider in the region and for cooperation with littoral countries and indigenous maritime security associations (Council of EU, 2024). Such Maritime presence became even more important as 80% of the world trade moves through the Indian Ocean, which makes it an important strategic center for maritime conduct and security. The code has been successful in creating a solid information sharing network to counter such threats in the region. Projects to increase the use of terrestrial automatic identification systems (AIS), long-range identification and tracking of ships (LRIT), coastal radar and other sensors and systems have been undertaken and continue to be implemented (The Djibouti Code of Conduct. n.d).

3.3 Lome Charter

The Lome Charter also called as the Africa Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa adopted in 2016, believes that cooperation among African states and coastal areas are the only way of preventing, managing and eradicating maritime threats faced by Africa in the Mediterranean Sea, Gulf of Aden, red sea, the Atlantic sea and the Indian Ocean (Lomé Charter, n.d.). The Charter refers to the "2050 AIM Strategy" which is the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy adopted by the African Assembly on 27 January 2014. The Charter has proved to be immensely significant in bringing regional cooperation among 31 countries and regional economic countries (RECs). The Charter recognizes the importance of international partnerships by allowing for collaboration with the Indian Ocean Commission and the Gulf of Guinea Commission, in addition to the Commission of the African Union. This reflects a commitment to working together for a stable and secure maritime environment (Blédé & Walker, 2016). The Charter promotes blue economy in Africa which is a major step towards self-sufficiency and growth. The elaborate agreement is a legally binding framework that has successfully promoted social welfare and chalked out means and methods for African countries to combat both domestic and international threats to its maritime security.

However, despite such success, the Lome Charter continues to face some challenges like lack of structure, ambiguity in its articles, lack of strong individual state capacity to contain threats, resource limitation of the African countries, loose framework that may

lead the signatories to promote their self-interest and cause competition, absence of details in the articles of the Charter, etc. that may hinder the ambitions and goals of the Charter. By ensuring clarity and specificity in the terms laid and adopting stronger binding frameworks, the Charter can prove to be very efficient and significant to provide maritime security to Africa.

3.4 2050 African Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIM)

The African Union 2050 African Integrated Maritime Strategy which was adopted in 2014. It believes in linking the ends, means and the ways to achieve comprehensive maritime security conditions in Africa. The strategy uses a coherent, coordinated and comprehensive approach to understand existing and potential maritime threats in Africa and paves way towards environmental and socioeconomic development as well as the capacity to generate wealth from sustainable governance of Africa's seas and oceans. The African Union along with its Regional Economic Communities and other member states lay down a guided maritime review, budgetary planning and effective allocation of resources, in order to enhance maritime operability for a cohesive and economically prosperous Africa (2050 AIM Strategy, n.d.). The strategy functions on the SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity and threat) analysis approach for development. The strategy is aimed towards improving the quality of life of the African citizens by ensuring security and growth in the African maritime domain. It directly hits the issues of toxic dumping, oil spilling, drainage of hazardous chemicals in the African waters, etc. that have detrimental effect on the biology of the oceans and human and illicit arms trafficking, loss of fishing, etc. One of the major goals of the 2050 AIM Maritime Strategy also includes human capital increment by involving ore social groups and hence, wealth creation. The 2050 AIM Strategy aims to release the pressure on African waters due to issues newer issues like aquaculture, intensive fishing, energy extraction drills, etc. The strategy has been successful in bringing together African nations that face common maritime challenges in the multi-polar world. However, the strategy implementation faces major setbacks like lack of institutional framework, inaccurate crime track records and inefficient regional coordination, etc. The maritime strategy ought to deal with its administrative issues to blossom completely and fulfil its aims. The success of the strategy depends on efficient leadership, increased cooperation among African nations, and greater participation from all levels of society.

3.5 5+5 Dialogue

This cooperation signed between 5 western Mediterranean countries and 5 Maghreb countries in 1990 is a bilateral political agreement that promotes regional development, interdependence and cooperation among the countries. The dialogue covers various topic like defence, security, tourism, education, finance, environment, etc. and is a great initiative towards progress and self-efficiency in Africa. Overtime, it has proved to be a forward looking agenda and joint management arrangement to combat issues illegal human trafficking, transnational migration, public awareness, data sharing, labour

sharing, etc. (International Organization for Migration, 2021. In 2024, Spain is appointed as the chair of the dialogue committee and 12 activities have been scheduled for this year which includes maritime rescue operations, disaster management, mutual tactical operations, etc. (Friedrich Naumann Foundation, 2024). The heterogeneity is the strongest factor behind the dialogue to achieve long term collaboration and capacity building to respond effectively towards maritime crimes. It is majorly operationalized within the ECOWAS to cater and address immediate security concerns like piracy, illegal fishing, sea robbery, etc. around West Africa. Under the 5+5 initiative, the revival of the dialogue after 10 years, marks it unfathomable importance in regional cooperation and development.

Conclusion

Technology enhances maritime security. Technology offers immense support in monitoring, surveillance and response capabilities to criminal activities in and around the sea. Use of comprehensive technology can help in detecting potential threat to ships, container, vessels and cargo more briskly. Regular communication and information sharing enabled through development of radar satellites, identification of vessels, sonar systems etc., help human assets deal critically with anomalies and maritime crimes in the sea. Innovation of technology to strengthen maritime security has also led to synergism and collaboration among various regional and international agencies and maritime security agencies that specialises in maritime technology, electronic information security and surveillances. The role of technology in maritime security is expanding as the criminal activities like piracy, hijacking, armed robbery etc. are becoming more sophisticated in their way of execution. The success of Yaoundé Code of Conduct, Djibouti Code of Conduct, 2050 AIMS etc. have reiterated how the use of advanced autonomous vessels, drones, trackers have reduced the frequency of attacks in the Gulf of Guinea Region. The attacks have reduced significantly from 45 in 2021 that is 16 attacks in the first quarter to 5 attacks in the first quarter of 2023. The Yaoundé Architecture has yielded a massive outcomes resulting in optimum use of naval assets. The recognisable decrease in maritime crimes since 2021 has also encouraged the International Maritime Organisation to extend support towards West Africa too. Therefore, it is visible that technology is a long term solution to major problems of African coastal states including maritime security and crimes against seafarers.

Conflict of Interest

The authors hereby declare that they have no financial interest in this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

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The Ecosystem of Coups in West Africa: Implications for Democracy and Regional Peace[1]

Faroukou Mintoiba[2]

Abstract:

The Sahel region of Africa, characterized by political and security fragility has been the theatre of coups that significantly challenged democracy and peace consolidation. Most of the coups operated in recent years have been led by military juntas, who often claim their facts as motivated by governance crises, corruption, and social injustice. This phenomenon, recurrent since the post-independence period, constitutes a significant challenge to political stability and governance in the region, raising questions on the real ability of coups to be positioned as real governance alternatives likely to propose sustainable solutions. Departing from a historical analysis of coups and cases studies of the most recent episodes (Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso), this article delves into the main causes and factors of coups namely bad governance, socio-political instability, and the recent uprising security concerns. Taking reference to the democracy theories and that of regional security, the article studies the extent to which coups represent an effective alternative to the governance crisis in Africa and how they affect regional peace and democratic stability. The analysis concludes by arguing that far from being a valid solution to governance challenges, coups only contribute to exacerbating in most cases already existing structural challenges while undermining democracy.

Introduction

The Sahel region of Africa, characterized by political and security fragility, has witnessed considerable pushes since the early 2000s that say much about democracy's state in this part of the continent, as democratization processes and peace consolidation are being influenced. Countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger as recently undergone periods where their governments were overthrown par military juntas, leading thus their respective countries into a circle of institutional crises. Such a resurgence of coups appears to be contextualized by a complex dynamic where internal (weakness of democratic institutions, endemic corruption) and external factors (foreign interventions, rise of extremist movement) correlate. Consequently, political stability in the Sahel is being progressively compromised, with peace consolidation becoming harder.

In sub-Saharan Africa and specifically the Sahel region, local factors such as ethnic conflicts and rural population marginalization play an integral role in the outbreak of pushes. As supported by Powell and Thyne 2011, coups in this part of Africa, far from only being the results of internal dynamics, are also resulting from complex dynamics beyond legitimate discourses, like geopolitical pressure that worsen instability, namely military interventions of foreign powers like France, the USA, and recently Russia. According to Marinov & Goemans (2014, p. 9) as it is the case in most parts of the world, pushes in the Sahel far from being isolated events, are generally perceived as answers to governance crises through which the democratic cycle is being seen as vulnerable to the military takeover.

As a matter of fact, the situation resulting from the military interventions is generally motivated by rationale like "national rescue", pretending to remediate the civilian government shortfalls, characterized by corruption, economic chaos, and power abuse. Such dynamics, although illegal according to the constitutional order, find some kind of support within a fragment of the population, tired and desperate from never-fulfilled promises by civilian regimes and therefore motivated by the desire to seek an immediate change in their daily life.

In the analysis of dynamics, it is fundamental to sense the diverse motives upon which military actors justify their actions while confronting them with the observed facts: If some coups seem to be justified by the need to restore order and peace, they sometimes lead to grave repression on freedom, delay democratic transitions and causes a long-term instability weakening states institutions. As previously mentioned, the cases of Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, and recently Niger portray how regime changes, far from leading to crisis resolution, contribute to human rights erosion and the worsening of insecurity.

These situations necessitate a profound reflection on the essential conditions necessary to pave the way to building sustainable peace in the sub-Saharan region. Are pushes in Africa representing an effective response to governance problems or are they a threat to long-term stability? The recurrence of military interventions sheds light on the structural weaknesses of most states' institutions and questions the international community's role in preventing crisis as well as in the support for democratic transitions.

Perceived as major challenges to peacebuilding in the region, such context highlights the urgent need to reinforce institutional capacities and promote inclusive political reforms likely to restore citizens' trust in their leaders and their democratic institutions.

Therefore, by examining the instances of recent coups witnessed in Sub-Saharan Africa with a highlight on their respective implications for regional security and the efforts to consolidate peace, this paper seeks to study the extent to which coups represent an effective alternative to governance crisis in Africa and how they affect regional peace and democratic stability. Ultimately, the paper will try to understand if pushes are symptomatic of an institutional fragility in the larger region of West Africa, and to which extent they compromise efforts to democratization and pacification in the long run.

Answers to these questions are crucial to the extent that regional actors such as ECOWAS and the African Union constantly find themselves in the incapacity to effectively react in front of situations that lead to democratic erosion and by extension to some sort of violence and political unrest.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

To address the impact of pushes on democracy and peace in West Africa, it is necessary to take reference to the numerous theories and concepts related to political science and peace studies. But before moving on, it ought to be precise that the term ecosystem here refers to its political aspect and depicts how various actors (military elites, civil societies, regional and international institutions) interact in a complex and interdependent environment. The concept will allow us to understand how the political, economic, and security aspects of a country mutually influence each other and create an environment suitable for coups.

The work of Samuel Huntington, namely his theory of the third wave: democratization in the late 21st century (Huntington, 1991), is particularly important to understand the transition toward democracy consolidation in West Africa. According to him, developing countries, including that of Africa undergo some form of periodic cycles to democratic transitions followed by authoritarian backlash as observed in recent coups. Likewise, scholars such as Linz & Stepan (1996) developed theories on democracy consolidation. Through those theories, the fragility of African democracy vis a vis structural challenges like military influence, weakness of civil institutions, and economic crisis has been tested. Cheeseman (2015) has also highlighted how political elites in Sub-Saharan Africa usually make use of crises to remain in power.

When it comes to peace and security, the work of Galtung (1969) is sine qua non. His distinction between negative peace (absence of direct conflict) and positive peace (social justice, human rights, and inclusive governance) allows an effective analysis of the way coups in West Africa disturb not only immediate stability but also long-term efforts to sustainable peacebuilding.

Theories of regional security, developed by Buzan et al. (1998) in its work regional security, serves as a framework to explain how internal crises in a country are likely to destabilize neighbour countries. In the West African context, pushes give way to the

creation of instability zones that affect the entirety of the region, particularly when it comes to efforts for collective security deployed by organizations like ECOWAS.

Historical Analysis of Pushes in West Africa

The movement of coups in West Africa, although constant since post-independence, has been the theatre of an eye-catching resurgence in the last decades. This part of the continent seems to have become a field of political tension and instability given that in most of its countries, attempts at democratic transitions are regularly impeded by military takeovers. A thorough understanding of these events necessitates an examination of structural factors, a look back at recent coups, and the role of regional and international institutions. The first evet coup that occurred in Africa was at the beginning of independence years, as Sylvanus Olympio, the then President of Togo was assassinated by a group of French legionaries that fought in Indochine and Algeria. The assassinated president, replaced by a civilian Nicolas Grunitzky was him to, overturned on 13 January 1967 by a military Kleber Dadjo. This latter, having been in power for 3 months, was himself overthrown by Gnassingbé Eyadema who would then rule the country from 1967 until he died in 2005.

The same patterns have been observed in the neighboured country Benin, where due to ethnic conflicts between north and West populations and particularly because of the then economic hardship, Colonel Christophe Soglo constrains Hubert Maga, the country's first President to resign in 1963. And so, within 6 years, has been recorded 4 coups et military regimes intercepted by short-term civilian regimes. Until 2011, over 200 coups and coups attempts were recorded in the whole African continent with more than half of them having succeeded, according to J. M. Powell & Thyne (2011). Although a lack of data on the exact number of coups in the ECOWAS geography, an approximate number of 30 coups is estimated to have occurred since the independence. Include the August 2020 and Mai 2021 episodes in Mali, the September 2021's episode in Guinea, the Burkina Faso cases in January and September 2022, and that of Niger in July 2023, the most recent cases of coup d'états in the region are a testimony of how the phenomenon regurgitated in the ECOWAS space.

Those events although sharing common characteristics, do also bear the traits of local specificities in their respective context. After a decade of struggle with armed groups in the north of the country, the government of Mali ended up being overthrown in 2020 by militaries who claimed as motives, the endemic corruption and the inability of the government to stabilize security. A few months later, the coup of 2021 operated by the same militaries has been seen as a milestone in consolidating power by militaries as the political transition failed. In the case of Burkina Faso, two coups were successively operated in 2022, shedding light on the desperation of militaries in front of their fight with armed groups destabilizing the Sahel region, part of which the country is. The armed forces of the country, feeling some sort of abandonment by the then civil government, justified their action as necessary to bring back security. In Guinea, after having modified the constitution to run for a 3rd term, President Alpha Condé was

overthrown. These coups raised questions concerning the role of an aging president wanting to remain in power. In the case of Niger, military forces dismissed President Mohamed Bazoum for the inability of its government to effectively fight insecurity and address internal conflicts in the country. Notwithstanding with motives evoked, a suspension of media outlets judged to be criticizing the military regimes were suspended. The same patterns in the case of Mali were also observed when journalists were expelled from the country upon the arrival of the military regime. The episode in Niger particularly had a considerable impact on regional and international relations, namely with countries like France who had strong military ties with Niger in the context of the fight against terrorism.

Common Factors to Coups in West Africa

The analysis of these cases provides us with some insights into the causes of these pushes in that particular region of the Continent. A considerable number of structural factors seem to contribute to pushes and among the most important, can be noted the following. The mismanagement of public resources, endemic corruption, the marginalization of populations, and bad government overall appear as the most important factors creating social tensions in most countries (Bhanye & Ngwenya, 2023). Such issues weaken the legitimacy of governments and offer in extenso, incentives to militaries' interventions, as supported by Collier & Sambanis (2005) according to which bad governance is generally seen as the most important factor in conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa. On the other hand, the level of inequalities and poverty, exacerbated by the lack of access to basic needs, give way to a situation of desperation and frustration among citizens particularly young people, as they form most of the population. Political instability as highlighted by Rodrik, (2011) is in more than one case linked to political instabilities in fragile democracies. Then, it is a well-known fact that in most African countries, the army holds a significant place in the political structure.

As supported by Amoateng (2022), contexts in which the lack of civil control of the armed forces observed, coupled with weak democratic institutions (Cebotari et al., 2024; Malik, 2013; Nwala, 2024) easily leads to chronic military interventions. Last but not least, foreign interference is a factor to not overlook. Superpowers, both old colonial, and new economic power, sometimes play a non-negligible role in push dynamics. Be it through direct interventions or financial and/or military support to some regimes as extensively discussed referring to France, the US, or Russia's role (ISYAKU, 2024; J. Powell et al., 2016), such interference sometimes contributes to exacerbating international tensions (Nwala, 2024). The analysis of Bayart (2006) on neocolonial external politics highlights this link between foreign interest and political crises in African states. With the recent rise of violent extremism and jihadism in the region, the security concerns have joined the list of coups' causes in West Africa and the case of Mali and Burkina is on point in this regard. According to a UN analysis, violent extremism in sub-Saharan Africa is to a great extent fuelled by the lack of economic opportunities and youths' social exclusion. The feeling of marginalization, coupled with unemployment

triggers young people's engagement with extremist groups as this later promises them not only a sense of their life but also financial compensation. Such a dynamic creates a circle of insecurity within which the state, already fragilized, struggles to deal with insurrection, and this opens the way to military interventions and coups.

Furthermore, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2024), highlighted the lack of perspectives for youth as an ideal factor of youth recruitment by jihadist groups. In the face of an uncertain future, many young people feel abandoned by their government. This leads them to seek a kind of protection. Such movements contribute to the fragilization of the state authority and in some cases, the army intervenes to restore order in the face of civilian authorities' incapacities to manage the crisis. Leading to coups. In clear, the interaction between youth unemployment, violent extremism, and institutions' weakness is a key dynamic in political instability in the region.

Role of External Actors (Regional, International Institutions Superpowers)

In front of such episodes of pushes, regional institutions like ECOWAS, who are expected to play a significant role in the management of those crises and in restoring constitutional order, have in most cases barely taken effective actions in this regard or in the best-case scenario, remained passive. Initially created to promote economic and political integration, it has progressively found itself in the role of political crisis management, by sanctioning, mediating and in other cases sending militaries to bring back order. However, the quality of its actions has sometimes been questioned specifically in the recent coups in Mali and Guinea where sanctions have had limited effects.

Since the beginning of 1990, ECOWAS has reinforced its peacekeeping mandate by adopting protocols such as the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security, through which sanctions against regimes from coups d'états is being applied, the protocol on democracy and good governance (2001) that engage member states to respect democratic principles and the rule of law while prohibiting anti-constitutional changes of governments. For instance, in the case of Mali (2020, 2021), Guinea (2021), and Niger (2023), ECOWAS in the hope of assisting to restore constitutional order, instantly react par suspending concerned countries' membership alongside the economic and diplomatic sanctions it implies. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of its interventions has always been subject to a lot of criticism. Scholars point out the incapacity of ECOWAs to effectively cope with coups as the result of internal divisions and divergent interests of its member states. Despite these challenges, ECOWAS remains one of the most active (Onapajo & Babalola, 2024) regional organizations in the political crisis management in Africa, adopting both a coercive and diplomatic approach to restore stability and promote democratic governance.

As far as the African Union is concerned, the recent cases of [attempted] push in the continent provide some insights on the challenges faced by the organization in the context of the African Union's Unconstitutional Change of Government's framework. Though, compared to its predecessor (Organisation of African Unity), one can say that

its role in managing coups d'états has significantly evolved since its creation. Contrarily to the OUA which had an approach of non-intervention based on the sovereignty principle, the African Union has been operating through a more proactive approach through which it attempts to condemn and respond to unconstitutional changes of government. According to Williams (2011), the AU has implemented a normative framework for responding to pushes, taking into account measures like concerned member suspension, the practices of targeted sanctions, and the utilization of diplomatic means to restore constitutional order. This Framework comes after an initial attempt by the AU to discourage pushes through a moral and political approach (De Wet, 2021) through which actions contrary to constitutional order were simply condemned without practical actions. Since then, the new strategy has been supported by key instruments such as the African Charter on Democracy, elections, and Governance adopted in 2007, which explicitly prohibits coups d'état and rather encourages collective actions in the events of violence.

However, although the organization's adoption of a zero-tolerance policy toward unconstitutional changes of government, its interventions have always been perceived as insufficient and ineffective, principally due to the lack of coordination with other regional organizations and the limited support of the international community. Many scholars among which De Wet (2021) and Singh (2024) support that the effectiveness of the AU remains limited due to internal challenges like the lack of coherence in the application of its sanctions, the politicization of its interventions, and the divergences of interests between member states. Furthermore, the AU's response to the recent coups in the Sahel (Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso) has been criticized for its incapacity to prevent crisis although the existence of a wide range of conflict prevention mechanisms.

To superpowers, coups are considered a means to reinforce their regional ambitions in most parts of Africa. The United Emirates Arabs, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt have actively contributed to maintaining the Sudan army in power. Likewise, Russia has intensified its presence in Africa sometimes making use of illegal means like the use of the mercenary group Wagner, misinformation campaigns, and weapon versus natural resources exchange agreements. This approach aims to create a political influence on the continent by supporting authoritarian regimes and overlooking democratic governance. Regardless of who they are, such interventions are usually perceived as a way to build an alternative international order in line with their specific strategies, to the detriment of popular democratic aspirations. In the case of Russia for example, the misinformation campaign that has been qualified pro-Russia, denigrated the democratically elected president Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, a year before the coups of August 2020.

The coup that resulted in Keita's fall is to some extent the result of the protests resulting from the manipulations. Parallelly, others if not the main actors particularly from the West, are known for their military intervention history directly or indirectly in Africa, particularly in their old colonies under the umbrella of protecting regional stability. However, such interventions are being more and more perceived as attempts to maintain their colonial influence, bringing some contestation and mistrust of local

populations. France and the USA have de jure always been limited to supporting the fight against terrorism in the Sahel. Nevertheless, with the deterioration of their relations with the new juntas particularly Niger and Mali, the limit of their influence has been challenged. Such external influences usually contribute to fragilizing democratic processes and the extended instability on the continent. By supporting military regimes or authoritarian governments, they reinforce non-democratic systems, therefore delaying the development of a governance system based on the rule of law and human rights principles.

As far as the United Nations is concerned, it has always played an important role in coups d'état in Africa, particularly through the Security Council. However, the UN implication depends in most cases on if the concerned country is either or not, on its agenda. In the instance of Mali, an active implication of the security council in the context of repetitive coups occurred in the countries was witnessed, together with statements supporting ECOWAS initiatives and resolutions to extend sanctions. Such steps aim to discourage military takeover of power and encourage a return to constitutional order by facilitating political transition toward democratic elections. Nevertheless, the UN interventions have always been limited by the principle of non-interference in States' internal affairs. It was observed in the case of Guinea, where the Security Council did not immediately react, although a request was explicitly formulated by the African Union Peace and Security Council and from ECOWAS. The coordination between regional organizations like ECOWAS is essential in such contexts as they usually strive to restore democracy, unlike the United Nations which brings diplomatic and logistic support, reinforcing regional efforts of crisis resolutions.

When it comes to sanctions, the UN sometimes adopts target precautions against actors concerned in coups as was the case in Guinea in 2012. Including travel restrictions, and accounts freezing, those sanctions contributed to a progressive restoration of the constitutional order and had dissuasive effects on potential attempts to military coups. Notwithstanding the previously said, the capacity of the UN to effectively sanction sometimes depends on the position of its members and their political will to coordinate actions with regional actors so that the international responses to unconstitutional change of government are reinforced.

Ecosystem of Pushes in West Africa
Interdependence of actors and factors

The ecosystem of coups in West Africa lies in a complex interaction between internal and external actors. At the internal level, political and military leaders play a considerable role. As put by (Bayart, 2006) in "La Politique du ventre" (2006), African leaders sometimes motivated by their personal interest and a desire to remain in power, make use of clientelism networks to make up or justify coups. Militaries, traditionally seen as warrants of the nation's stability, become in most cases key actors of power seizing. According to Decalo (1990), militaries take advantage of institutional weakness

and political crisis to legitimize their interventions. In West Africa, as witnessed in the case of Mali, the loss of trust toward civilians in power is always used as a rationale for military interventions presented as "correctors of political trajectory" Cheeseman (2015) On the external, regional organizations like ECOWAS, the African Union, and to some extent international organizations like the United Nations and the European Union have proven to always adopt unclear positions. Although the latter seems to have always stood for sanctions against military regimes, their ability to restore a stable constitutional order remains considerably limited. According to Bekoe & Mengistu, (2002), the effectiveness for instance of ECOWAS interventions in preventing coups is compromised by internal ambiguities, like the lack of consensus among member states on the way putschist governments shall be treated. As far as external powers are concerned, their role in most cases is observed to be double. While some powers unofficially support coups in the context of the war against terrorism, others' support of the issue is usually situated in the context of their geopolitical and economic interests (Reno, 1998). For instance, the French's intervention in the Sahel through Operation Barkhane has according to some analysts, contributed to reinforcing its military powers in the region (Charbonneau, 2017). This is proof of how factors typically economic such as access to resources, and security motivations like the fight against terrorism influence coups environment.

Regional dynamics, Role of armed conflicts and terrorism

The contaminating effects of coups in neighbourhood countries are a fact that has been observed. In their work on coups d'états, scholars like Li & Thompson, (1975) and J. Powell et al. (2016) theorized the idea of contagion politics where pushes in a country increase the probability of a similar event happening in the neighbouring country. Although refuted by N. Singh, (2022) according to whom coups are the results of coincidence, the western part of Africa illustrates the contagion dynamic with the series of pushes recently experienced in countries like Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Neighbour states, while following with interest updates around, fear the idea of similar events occurring in their own territory, especially when socio-economic conditions appear to be similar.

Furthermore, proliferous borders in this region facilitate not only the diffusion of revolutionary ideas but also the movement of armed actors fuelling crises. For Example, mercenaries and armed groups roaming between Mali, Niger, and Libya worsen political tensions and contribute to the militarization of regional politics (Thurston, 2024). This leads to the discourse about coups in West Africa as in some other instances being linked to armed conflicts and the terrorism threat. For example, Jihadist groups operating in the Sahel region, namely the Jama'at Nasr al-Islam Wal Muslimin (JNIM) and the Etat Islamic of Grand Sahara (EIGS), take advantage of the state's weakness during crises to neutralize its influence and expand theirs while creating conditions suitable for social unrest. Marchal (2013) and Thurston demonstrated how military interventions against those groups, generally planned by fragile regimes, worsen the security situation

(Thurston, 2024) as the urgency to fight against terrorism gives way to some unexpected and intricate challenges. On the other hand, the fight against terrorism is becoming more like an excuse for the militarization of politics, giving way to a kind of legitimacy of military or semi-authoritarian regimes that arose from coups d'état.

Impact of coups d'état on democracy
Democratic regression

As true as it might appear coups d'état has been considered as one of the most important factors leading to the downfall of democratic governments (Marinov & Goemans, 2014). As a matter of fact, and in the West African context, it has led to a significant regression of democratic institutions, undermining decades of efforts of transition toward some more open political systems. According to reports of the Freedom House and the Economist Intelligence Unit, the democratic scores of countries that experienced coups have always been negatively impacted. Those indexes measure criteria like the freedom of opinion, electoral transparency, and the efficacy of public institutions, all drastically impacted throughout the restoration processes of military regimes. In the case of Mali for example, the successive coups in 2020 and 2021 have led to the deterioration of civil and political freedom, with the repression of independent media and the marginalization of opposition political parties. As highlighted by Cheeseman, (2015), these coups weaken democratic institutions by creating a climate of incertitude where citizens lose trust in the legitimacy of elections and political leaders.

One of the adverse effects of this regression is the decrease in political participation. In post-push societies, the fear of repression and the absence of citizen participation initiatives limit populations' abilities to make use of their political rights. Such a situation does not only jeopardize democracy, but as well give ways to social tensions likely to create conflicts like those observed in Guinea and Burkina Faso.

However, the quest to condemn coups and popular obsession with their impacts on democracy should not lead to overlooking the fact that although coups disturb democratic consolidation, a great deal of coups are not operated in what could be called democratic states. Thyne & Powell (2016) therefore suggest that rather than focusing on one aspect of coups (as a threat to democracy), more attention should be paid to how it could set a path to engage in the democratization process.

Consequences on governance

Coups in West Africa result from profound and complex factors that have multiple consequences on the governance of the concerned countries. One thing about these consequences is that they exacerbate the already existing problems in the region. First, it disrupts the democratic process, weakening civic institutions and negatively impacting the democratic culture. The takeover of power by militaries interrupts the electoral cycle and obliges authoritarian governance that limits citizen participation and power concentration on the military junta. The quest for centralized power contributes to

setting barriers to political competition, and together with the weakness of institutions, democratic values end up being eroded, and the rule of law challenged. The decrease of political dialogue spaces and transparency are the typical characteristics of this power concentration, which ultimately leads to unstable regimes that lead to new crises.

Unlike military coups, constitutional coups imply playing around with the Constitution or using an arsenal of legal tools to justify the necessity of remaining in power, most of the time under the umbrella of democratic processes. Such tendencies, observed in almost every corner of the African continent, from Uganda to Cameroon, passing through Togo to Côte d'Ivoire, have been instances where leaders adjusted their presidential term limits to remain in leadership. This has led in more than one case to creating internal troubles marked by socio-political instability (through protest and civil disobedience) and public confusion of the democratic system's essence (Mbaku, 2018).

Political instability resulting from pushes equally leads to the exacerbation of inter-ethical conflicts and insurrections. In countries like Niger and Mali where ethnic tensions already existed pushes have worsened the divisions by weakening the central state authority. Likewise, it also exacerbates power competitions between different ethnic groups and the army. Marchal (2013) showed that coups fragilize existing peace agreements and give way to an outbreak of armed conflicts.

The political instability issued by coups exacerbates as well as the humanitarian, in the sense that resulting conflicts trigger displacements as populations concerned about security, seek to migrate to neighbour countries. Such a tendency has been observed in Burkina Faso and Mali, where increasing security concerns have forced displacements and created additional pressures on social infrastructures. This situation is perceived as a challenge both to humanitarian response and to the governance capacities and therefore the need for effective mobilisation from international organizations.

The economic impacts of coups are also considerable. By troubling political stability, these events worsen the business climate and discourage foreign investments. The case of Niger and Burkina Faso prove that these countries need on average 2 to 3 years to expect some kind of economic stability upon the coups. In Mali, although the country has reached a certain level of resilience after the coup of 2012, the way toward growth has revealed challenges particularly due to constant security issues. The irregularity of political activities due to coups has led to economic instability marked by a decrease in investment (See Graphic 1) and the disturbance of supply channels.

Consequence on Mediation, Peace efforts, and Regional Security

Coups in West Africa have a destabilizing effect not only at the national level but also at the regional level and compromise efforts to peacebuilding. It fragilizes diplomatic processes and conflict resolution mechanisms established by ECOWAS. Forced transitions in the crisis period negatively impact regional cohesion and complicate the implementation of peace agreements. Efforts to peace consolidation in countries like Mali and Guinea have been seriously compromised by military transitions. Those regimes, much more preoccupied with the management of internal security and the

consolidation of their power, usually neglect the already fragile peace process. Moreover, in instances of non-democratic countries with coups are operated, the national priorities are usually redesigned to be orientated to the consolidation of military power, over questions of national interest like peace initiatives or regional cooperation.

This dynamic undermines collective efforts aimed at resolving cross-border conflicts and weakens states' capacities to effectively collaborate to fight terrorism and insecurity, both of which keep increasing from the lack of proper responses. The insecurity arose by pushes extends sometimes beyond national borders, creating an environment suitable to regional instability. For instance, Jihadist groups like those operating in the Sahel, take advantage of the security and institutional vacuum to reinforce their power in some regions. Such a dynamic has particularly been noticeable after coups in Mali where armed groups have extended their influence beyond neighbouring countries.

Burkina Faso and Mali are points in case as they showed that military insurrection disturbs strategies to fight against jihadists. This leads to the perpetuation of violent attacks and the extension of conflict zones. When countries suffer from abrupt leadership change, they are less capable of efficiently coordinating joint military operations and sustaining security agreements. This situation weakens the capacity of regional blocks to stabilize crisis-affected zones, contributing to constant security degradation in the region.

Likewise, pushes decrease the level of trust in peace processes and mechanisms of collective security. Citizens as well as civil society actors become more and more sceptical about regional interventions and in this case, that of ECOWAS or the African Union to resolve the crisis. In this case, citizens' scepticism becomes a factor complicating peacebuilding efforts as they are less and less willing to adhere to peace initiatives, and this gives way to a situation where violence circles and instability are reinforced.

In front of such challenges, diverse organizations, regional and international have always attempted to play the role of mediator. ECOWAS for instance has sometimes been on the frontline of organizations negotiating for political transitions after coups. Nevertheless, as pointed out by Eghosa in its work on regional intervention (2002), the effectiveness of these efforts is limited by the internal divisions among country members and by the incapacity to efficiently execute economics and diplomatic sanctions.

The African Union and the United Nations have equally undertaken initiatives to bring stability to countries in crisis. Here again, it's needless to say that they are also faced with institutional challenges and geopolitical rivalries. In most cases, efforts at mediation have been undermined by the lack of coordination between different international actors, as well as by the influence of external powers supporting sometimes military juntas likely to help them preserve their geostrategic interests.

Analyse and discussions

Pushes in West Africa seem to result from a complex interaction between the searches for political stability, the fragility of democratic instructions, and the challenges related

to regional peace. The above analysis proves that coups are always perceived as a temporary solution to internal and security crises. However, one thing that could be said is that military interventions also generally worsen the situation by compromising long-term peace efforts. Authoritarian emerging from the transitory regimes tends to reduce dialogue spaces and citizens' participation, further nurturing internal divisions and creating conditions suitable to new insurrections.

The phenomenon of political militarisation has furthermore contributed to the erosion of citizens' trust in Leaders. This is a situation that constrains sometimes people to seek other means of expression, sometimes violent. According to Collier and Hoeffler's (2004) theories on armed conflicts and economic development, the economic precarity and the weakness of institutions are some of the important factors of instability. When militaries come to power, they face the same challenges similar to those faced by civilians. The only difference here is that the latter has less legitimacy and limited resources to respond to socio-economic needs, although clarification needs to be made as far as legitimacy is concerned.

There are common factors that create conditions in which the military feels obliged to break democratic rules with relative impunity, and often with the support of large sections of the urban population, especially disillusioned young people. While in most cases this relatively significant support has been the foundation of their legitimacy, in other cases the issue of legitimacy has been out of context. But here again, the focus on coups' legitimacy shall not lead to distraction on what seems to be on point here: Does the population support of most coups in Africa neutralize the destructive effects they have on democracy? Considering the central question of this paper was not this, it will be fair to clearly respond no, the reason being that initial public support, is in more cases demonstrated as the promise of change rather than being an expression of any concerns regarding democracy.

In fact, the population, and particularly young people in much of West and Central Africa are deeply disillusioned with the traditional political class. This disillusionment stems from a range of issues, including the lack of employment and even informal economic opportunities for the educated and the less educated, the perception of high levels of corruption and privilege among elites, and resentment over the continuing influence of the former colonial power France in many countries. Else than that, there is also a deep resentment at the way many civilian leaders manipulate electoral processes or constitutional rules to extend their time in power.

All these factors create an environment in which the military is increasingly emboldened to seize power by claiming to offer a "new beginning," while each coup is also motivated by specific national or narrowly local reasons. The question is, however, how effective are those promising a new beginning?

Research shows that the decline in democracy and insecurity are some of the relevant actors undermining human development and economic growth in Africa (Akçetin et al., n.d.; Gründler, 2020). Drawing concerns about the increase in the number of coups operated in Africa between 2012 and 2021, the Ibrahim Index of African Governance

(2024) points out Mali and Burkina Faso, both ruled by military juntas as examples of countries whose security indicators worsened, some possible reasons being the presence of jihadists among other reasons. This might be understandable to the extent that the impacts of coups range from economic disruption (Fosu, 2002) to the decline in foreign investment (Idris et al., 2023) and collapse of business activities.

The impact of coups on economic growth, measured by the nominal GDP and FDI (% of GDP) is shown in Graphics 1 and 2. Graphic 1 portrays how the FDI drastically decrease in the 3 countries (Mali 2012, Burkina Faso 2014-2015, and Niger 2010), showing coups as representing a challenge to economic attractivity and foreign investors trust. While the GDP nominal

(Figure 1) growth at a relatively stable pace, the post-coups periods show a temporary break in economic development. With a structurally weak FDI, Niger shows a relative GDP stability tough with less remarkable growth. Such Tendencies support the point that coups directly disturb investment flows and affect economic dynamics, although local resilience softens their long-term impacts.
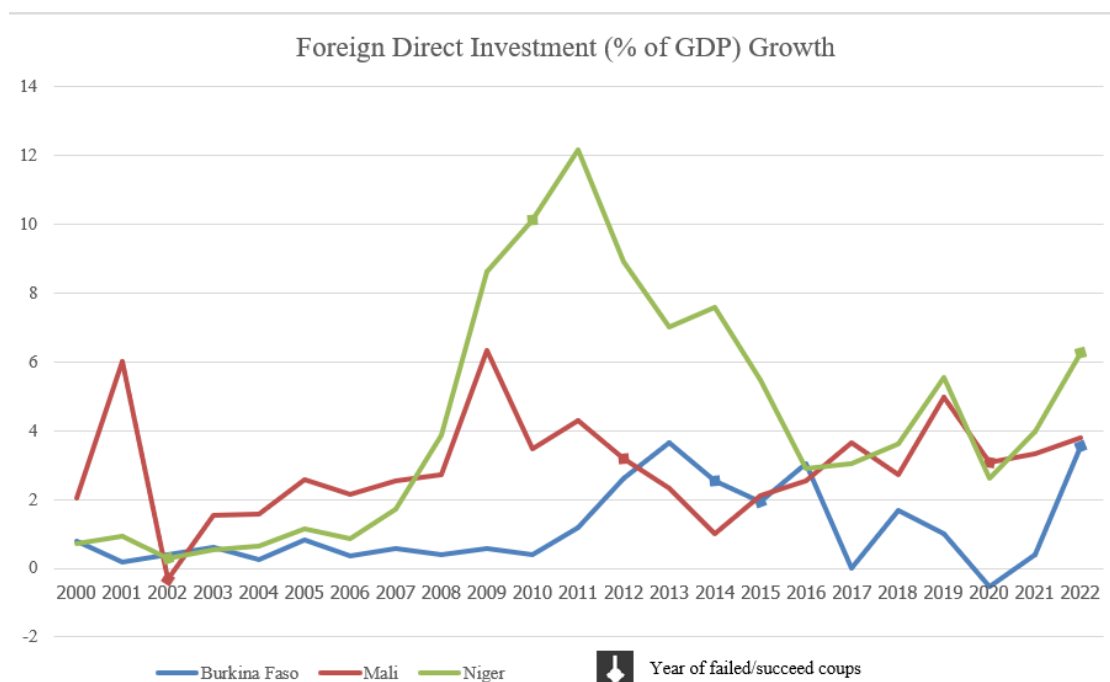

Figure 1: Selected Countries' Foreign Direct Investment (% of GDP) Growth. Source: World Bank, 2024.

In Mali, for example, the FDI flow although high in the early 2000s, has known a considerable decrease after the 2012 coups. Although the change in the flows afterward remained meaningless, the successive crises of 2020-2012 have not been an occasion to restore a significant level of foreign investments.

Here, precision seems necessary regarding the concerned coups as there are instances (in autocratic countries) where coups lead to economic development in contrast to cases

(in democracies) in which coups' impacts are detrimental to growth (Meyersson, 2016). Taking the example in the series of coups experienced in Cote d'Ivoire where the countries needed on average a period of 2 years to recover from instability, Bloomfield Intelligence experts raised concerns about similar patterns in Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso as the recent coups in those countries have proven to be detrimental to their economic growth (See Figure 2.).
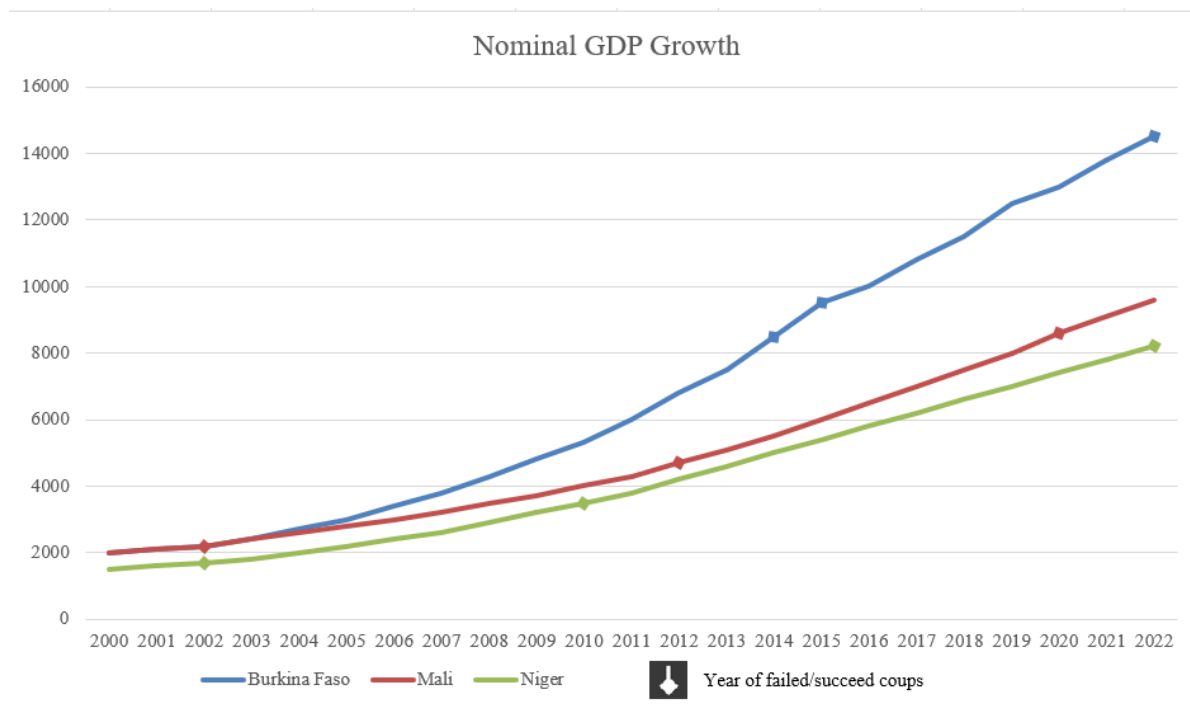

Figure 2: Selected Countries' Nominal GDP Growth. Source: World Bank, 2024

Regarding the political aspects of coups' impact, much has to be said about how the democratic process is undermined. Military or transitionary regimes that seize power after coups usually promise democratic and institutional reforms, which materialization proves difficult in the face of reality. In most cases, military governments in power fail to respect their commitment by undertaking effective reforms, and as I look for instance to the case of Gabon, it must be said that it is no exception to the rule.

During the last Presidential election that led to the fall of the Gabonese regime, Ali Bongo was elected with almost 65% of the votes and he was re-elected for another term. Were there any irregularities in this election? Undoubtedly. Yet, the strange thing is that the coup plotters complain that there were none. The question to know if they cared or not about it must lead to something else, but facts show their real motivations had nothing to do with how fair or transparent the election had been. Their communication on TV announcing that they seized the power referred to the outgoing government's mismanagement of the country's affairs as the rationale. In such a situation, while many people expected the military to take power over the opposition candidate or at least to hold new elections in the coming weeks, the exact opposite

happened. The Junta's leader, General Brice Oligui Nguema, was appointed as the president of a "transition" for which he did not specify the term and promised to establish "more democratic institutions" before "free elections". This is a sign that nothing good can be expected from this coup, so to speak, as an element that resembles the situations in Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad. In the example of Mali as well, the junta after having announced the organizing of democratic elections several times, kept delaying this promise evocating security concerns.

Such abuses undermine the moral authority of organizations such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), often referred to as the club of incumbent presidents, which aim to force coup plotters to restore an elected civilian regime. The Central African regional community, to which Gabon belongs, does not even seriously claim to establish or maintain governance standards in its member states.

When it comes to the impact at the regional level, marked by an effect of political contagion as theorized by Jonathan Powell, coups dynamics in a country are proven to encourage similar movement in neighbouring countries, therefore worsening instability in already fragile regions. Mediation initiatives undertaken by regional institutions such as ECOWAS and the African Union although their proven record of progress, seem to be limited in their capacity to restore peace due to insufficient resources, interest conflicts, and the lack of popular support sometimes.

Another thing that could be said about coups in West Africa is that they harm the ECOWAS space as they affect the normal course of trade exchange between countries. For instance, a crisis in Togo might have immediate consequences on Niger and Burkina Faso's supplying of products of first necessities. Sanctions applied to countries in the event of coups could as well lead to less desirable situations as observed in the case of the ECOWAS and the Alliance of Sahel States. The withdrawal of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso from ECOWAS has the potential to affect travel conditions and immigration of their citizens as they will have to undertake steps for visa obtention to travel in the zone. Although not already effective, this could be materialized in reference to Article 91 of the Revised ECOWAS treaty and such a situation raises concerns about concerned countries' citizens' rights to free movement.

Conclusion

Indeed, the resurgence of coups in West Africa could be seen as proof of the weaknesses in the prevention mechanisms and the need for a concerted approach to reinforce stability in the region. Ensuring coordination between stakeholders (the international community, national governments, civil society, and regional organizations) seems to be essential for restoring sustainable reforms. Without a collective intervention and a political will to strive for the reinforcement of democratic institutions, the region is exposed to the risk of staying trapped in a cycle of coups that continue undermining efforts to achieve sustainable development and effective governance.

Although multiple initiatives aiming to discourage coups have been undertaken, the persistence of chronic instability in some of the region's countries shows limits to the standard approach to mediation. The least that can be said is that coups d'état constitute a serious threat to peace and stability in West Africa, both at the national and regional levels. Although they are usually presented as an immediate response to an internal crisis, their long-term impact seems to display a tendency to worsen internal divisions, reduce individual freedom, and erode democratic institutions. Paul Collier (2009) shows that regimes issued from coups have the propensity to maintain temporary stability without addressing the profound causes of political crises.

Rather, they usually content themselves with dealing with short-term security issues instead of focusing on the consolidation of governance institutions necessary for sustainable democracy. Therefore, if coups have no immediate effects on human development, much can't be said about their impact on long-term economic growth. To the extent that coups compromise the stability and sustainable prosperity of nations, they do not constitute a valid solution to the challenges faced by African countries. As in every democracy, an African country must have a constitution strong enough to give its people the right to choose who will govern it people, to avoid the disasters of a coup through fair elections.

Therefore, peace consolidation in West Africa demands a re-evaluation of governance mechanisms that prefer citizen participation and the building of resilient democratic systems, and the reinforcement of governance institutions able to respond to the profound causes of socio-political conflicts. As highlighted by Cheeseman, (2015), democracy and sustainable peace are linked and dependent on the trust and participation of citizens in political processes.

Regional organizations, particularly ECOWAS and the African Union play an important role in crisis mediation. However, they could strengthen their approach to promoting peace more sustainably. In this perspective, a more effective approach could mean a long-term commitment to local communities as well as more consistent international assistance to support necessary institutional reforms.

As far as multilateral organizations are concerned, their interventions could focus on reinforcing institutional capacities and supporting the process of inclusive transitions that effectively consider local populations. Nevertheless, it remains true that African states must take responsibility for ensuring their own security while respecting citizens' rights and reinforcing trust in democratic institutions. Ultimately, if peace in West Africa is to be sustainable, it must be built on a process of transparent and inclusive governance respectful of fundamental human rights.

Conflict of Interest

The authors hereby declare that they have no financial interest in this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

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Comparative Analysis of the European Union and the United States of America Democracy Promotion Strategies in Nigeria[1]

Christopher Amrobo Enemuwe[2]

Abstract:

This research addresses the question of external efforts to promote democracy in Nigeria. Samuel Huntington observed that the 'Third Wave' of democracy catalysed a rise in global democracies following the 1970s, notably influencing sub-Saharan Africa by the century's close. It is essential to recognize that many African countries, including Nigeria, face considerable challenges arising from the dominance of authoritarian governments and the variety of ethno-religious divisions rooted in colonial history. In the wake of numerous elections since 1999, Nigeria continues to grapple with the complexities of democratic consolidation, contending challenges such as electoral malpractice and human rights violations. By utilizing a comparative case study methodology to explore the parallels and distinctions between the United States (US) and the European Union (EU), the analysis revealed that despite a notable convergence in the dual strategies adopted by both actors—striking a balance between democratic principles and geostrategic concerns such as security, socio-economic development and migration and insufficient funding for democracy-related initiatives—this impedes any substantial advancement in democratic development in Nigeria. Consequently, this research contributes to understanding the dynamics of external democracy promotion in Africa. This research contributes theoretically by examining the interplay between democratic principles and geostrategic priorities in external democracy promotion, and empirically by revealing how the dual strategies of the US and EU—marked by insufficient funding and competing interests—hinder democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

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1. Introduction

The 'Third Wave' of democracy, according to Samuel Huntington, which began in the 1970s, saw a worldwide increase in democracies following the collapse of Soviet communism and the conclusion of the Cold War, resulting in notable democratic transitions across areas including Latin America, Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe, and sub-Saharan Africa (Saka et al., 2015). Nonetheless, the democratization process in Africa has unfolded in diverse manners, leading to a confluence of distinct paths, trajectories, and results. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, countries across Africa, from Ghana in the West to Idi Amin's Uganda in the East, experienced the imposition of authoritarian regimes that stifled democratic governance, curtailed freedom of expression, restricted the right to associate, and undermined private property rights. The disintegration of communism, the reunification of Germany, and the progression of democratic principles in Eastern and Central Europe during the 1990s sparked a revitalized enthusiasm for global democratic ideals. Additionally, there was a significant transformation in the perception of security that arose following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which effectively undermined the previously prevailing hard-power framework focused on military confrontation throughout the 1990s (Amirah-Fernandez & Menendez, 2009). This transformation has cultivated a setting that promotes the enhancement of democratic principles in Africa, which has emerged as a central aim for Western governments, notably the United States (US) and the European Union (EU).

Over the past three decades, the advance of re-democratization in sub-Saharan Africa, which started in the 1990s, has been limited by new challenges in civilian administrations (Lindberg, 2009; Adejumobi, 2010). These include incumbents' threats to overturn constitutional rule on term limits, arrogate more executive powers, and even electoral malpractices and corruption. These can be identified by any ardent student of international democracy monitoring performed by international and nongovernmental institutions such as the Freedom House, Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem), the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), and the Electoral Integrity Project (EIP). For example, the EIU indicates that fewer than 8% of the global population resides in a full democracy. In contrast, nearly 40% are subjected to authoritarian governance—a proportion that has gradually increased in recent years, influenced by macroeconomic factors, escalating conflicts worldwide, and the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (EIU, 2023). However, it is important to note significant variations in governance performance among African countries owing to the different criteria of democratic and autocratic quality employed by different state-level, multistate levels, and international organizations that assess democracy in countries.

Several countries have demonstrated progress in several areas, including ritualistic endeavours to organize credible elections, the transfer of power between two administrations, the improvement of the multiparty system, the enlargement of political and civil space with improved adherence to human rights and the rule of law, the growth of vibrant media, and moderate economic advancement (Adejumobi, 2010).

Despite initial hope, Nigeria proved *sui generis* in its democratic experiment (Ajayi & Ojo, 2014), compounded ethno-religious chauvinism that culminated as an effect of the grim 1967-70 civil war. The development of democracy in the country is hindered by various factors, including its colonial history, deep-rooted ethnic division, ineffective leadership, military intervention in the democratic process, electoral fraud, widespread poverty, human rights violations, and literacy level differentials (Onukiowa & Agbiboa, 2014; Oni, 2014). Electoral fraud exacerbates ethnic conflict, institutional degradation, and political instability (Erameh et al., 2021). In contrast to Ghana, which boasts a total freedom score of 80—indicating a free society—Nigeria is classified as partly free, with a significantly lower score of 44.[1.] Despite conducting seven general elections since 1999, Nigeria still faces similar difficulties in consolidating democratic gains, particularly in the electoral aspect (Oladipo, 2016).

The situation in Nigeria, characterised by violence, corruption, human rights violations, and electoral irregularities during elections, suggests a heightened susceptibility to misconduct within its democratic framework (Obi, 2004; Uwazuruike, 2020). This underscores the critical need for external assistance to mitigate the abuse of state institutions and the suppression of democratic processes, mainly from Nigeria's development partners, such as the European Union (EU) and the United States of America (US). Despite the importance of the US and EU democracy promotion, which have arguably endeavoured to cultivate democratic governance in Nigeria through a multifaceted strategy, utilising various tools to advance democracy, existing literature has failed to comprehensively compile and compare the methods of Western actors such as the EU and the US often erroneously summing both actors' strategies within an assumed western hegemonic lens. This study aims to fill the literature gap by showing similarities and differences in promoting democracy by the US and EU, which offers readers from all backgrounds an understanding of how and why both actors promote democracy in Nigeria.

It is worth noting that the US and the EU regard Nigeria's democratisation as an essential geostrategic advantage, given its importance to their African foreign policy aims. Nevertheless, they face a dilemma between maintaining a value-based foreign policy approach and one driven by material geostrategic interests such as security, mineral exploration, trade, and migration. By examining the strategies of the US and EU democracy promotion in Nigeria, this study contributes to understanding democracy promotion in the Global South and demonstrates how foreign actors can facilitate democracy development. The study will be conducted in five separate phases. After this introductory section, section 2 will examine the literature on democracy promotion and global peace. This study does not include a section on the history of bilateral relations such as Nigeria-US or Nigeria-EU or even triangular relations (Nigeria-US-EU) because of the extensive coverage of these topics in the literature. Sections 3 and 4 provide an explanation of the methods utilised in this study and a comparative analysis of the EU and the US promoting democracy in Nigeria, respectively. Section 5 provides some concluding remarks on the study.

2.Theorizing democracy promotion and global peace

In his 2008 Claude Ake Memorial Lecture, Cyril Obi stated that democracy is "the only game in town" (Obi, 2008:7), a concept that, while appealing, is often complex and varies in interpretation. There is a broad literature on democracy, ranging from the debate on its definition and origin to its typologies.[2] Research indicates that democracy embodies self-governance in people's interest, reflecting a collective socio-political identity (Morlina, 2004; Fahner, 2017). In this study, democracy generally refers to a governance system where citizens can influence state affairs directly or through elected representatives, emphasizing constitutional rights and the public's role (Gillin, 1919). This notion asserts that the leaders of a polity must seek consent from the governed, a fundamental aspect of democratic practice.

Previous research has established that a belief in an extant global democratic peace phenomenon is increasingly gaining acceptance among Western leaders, not just in academia (Kahl, 1998; Gleditsch, 1997). The global promulgation of democracy emphasizes the need for 'international peace' by aligning with the reinforcement of economic interdependence and international institutions (Placek, 2012:1). Such an active propagation of the *gospel of democracy* using political and development aid tends to take a formidable place in global governance, which encompasses the aim and strategy of democratic foreign policies to promote and protect democratic regimes globally by examining how donors exercise their leverage over aid recipients and, more importantly, why they use a cost-benefit approach to understand the incentives of both donors and recipients (Tan, 2020). By democracy foreign policies, I refer to states that imbibe democracy promotion as an important aspect of external engagement abroad, such as the US and the EU.

The 1945 United Nations (UN) Charter, specifically in Article 2(3), states that "All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered." This provision underscores the enduring significance emphasized by democratic peace theorists, who argue that an increase in the number of democracies will facilitate the resolution of disputes through nonmilitary compromises, ultimately leading to peace (Reiter, 2001). This perspective highlights the belief that democracies are less likely to engage in armed conflict with one another, thereby promoting a more stable international order and peace (Huntington, 1997; Russett, 2019).

Over the past thirty years since 1991, there has been a growing emphasis on states deliberately creating a democratic foreign policy that supports democracy, as shown in the literature on the topic. The shift in behaviour of major powers such as the US and EU towards a democratic foreign policy can be attributed, in part, to the changing dynamics of the early twenty-first century, which include events such as the 9/11 attacks in the US (Gat, 2005), the rise of globalism (Hambleton et al., 2003), the advent of the internet (Thornton, 2001) and the new understanding of what security entails (Amirah-Fernandez & Menendez, 2009). However, some scholars have argued that the

foundation of democracy promotion and support may be traced back to the writings of the famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant rather than originating in the second half of the twentieth century, as most literature constantly uses recent data (Diamond, 1992) and states' foreign policies and aids support for their analysis. Kant's essay on perpetual peace provides a utilitarian explanation for the current democratic peace, suggesting that peace in democracies is due to the behaviour of individual people (Wolff & Wurm, 2011:79; Mello, 2014).

Democracy promotion has been the most essential element of the foreign policy of many developed Western countries (Saka et al., 2015; Youngs, 2001; Khakee, 2007; Goldgeier & McFaul, 2003). Most of the literature indicates that Western governments use their foreign policy and aid to promote and foster democracy in developing countries to ensure 'global peace.' Although this is a debatable realm, foreign policymakers have used the concept of global peace to divide the world into opposing blocs based on democratic and non-democratic characteristics as part of a hegemonic agenda to promote democracy and create a 'safer' global environment (Parmar, 2013:231). In alignment with the extensive literature on promoting democracy, the democratic peace thesis has evolved into a credible framework for addressing national security concerns, transcending its origins as merely an academic concept (Parmar, 2013; Kazmierski, 2011; Burnell, 2013).

Wolff & Wurm (2011) noted that a significant area that has not been thoroughly investigated is the need to understand 'democracy promotion' as a goal and tactic of democratic foreign policy. This involves integrating empirical studies on democracy promotion into theoretical frameworks of international relations rather than domestic political discourse. Thus, Hazel Anne Smith's argument regarding the lack of international democratic theory clarifies the link between democracy, democratization, and global governance (Smith, 2000). Before the twenty-first century, limited research was conducted to formulate theories regarding the support of democracy on an international scale. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, discussions focused on elucidating the concepts of 'democracy' and 'peace' as they pertain to the theoretical underpinnings of the democratic peace thesis, given that the promotion of democracy was perceived to have a significant relationship with the creation of a global democratic peace (Amirah-Fernandez & Menendez, 2009).

The nexus between peace, democracy, and security that surfaced in the 1990s reshaped the global push for democracy, intrinsically linked to the Western hegemonic order established after the Second World War. This relationship underscores how the promotion of democratic values has been influenced by the geopolitical dynamics of a unipolar world, particularly in the context of American *forwardness* in foreign policy and its implications for international stability. Any theoretical endeavour should be based on mechanisms such as the 'logic,' 'targets,' and 'pathways' of influence through which different democracy promotion policies of developed countries impact the domestic political change of developing or 'fledging' democracies (Wolff & Wurm, 2011).

Gisselquist, Nino-Zarazua, and Samarin (2021) highlight in their systematic review of the impact of aid on democratic development that Thomas Carothers, a prominent American scholar in international democracy support, identifies two existing approaches to democratization: political and developmental approaches. The political approach, particularly linked to US democracy assistance, is based on a limited understanding of democracy that emphasizes elections and political and civil rights. Democratization is conceptualized as a political struggle wherein democrats strive to surpass nondemocrats within society; in contrast, the developmental approach, which is linked primarily to European democracy assistance, adopts a more expansive definition of democracy (Gisselquist et al., 2021). This perspective includes considerations of equality and justice, viewing democratization as a gradual, iterative transformation process involving a complex interplay of political and socioeconomic developments (Young, 2003).

One challenge with external democracy promotion in the literature is the inability to draw broad conclusions on its exact effect on the receiving countries, even though one of the crucial effects of externalizing democracy is to socialize political elites to act through democratic norms (Mello, 2014) and to avoid conflict with one another (Layne, 2014) to achieve peace. Nonetheless, democracy promotion is a pivotal international political phenomenon that prompted Wolff and Wurm (2011) to argue that whether a state should prioritize promoting democracy depends on the level of demand for or lack thereof, echoing influential nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), interest groups, and public opinion.

In places where civil conflicts threaten state stability, one study suggested that countries experiencing tumultuous and violent conflicts, particularly those in Africa, should adopt a minimalist approach during their transition to peace. This approach involves implementing specific electoral procedures and constitutional designs, including a clear separation of powers and power-sharing arrangements to achieve lasting peace (Watts, 2016). Even though it is as old as the democracy peace thesis, this way of thinking about constructing a relevance of the activities of democratic promotion by actors such as the US or Europe dates to liberal internationalism within-state interactions since World War 2, as shown above (Moravcsik, 1997; Legro & Moravcsik, 2014; Layne, 2006). It is also consistent with recent thinking in the search for why to engage in democracy promotion in the first place, sometimes coercing state actors of other countries (preferably considered *'nondemocracies'*) into democratic acceptance at their own risk (Gisselquist et al., 2021).

Past research on foreign democracy promotion in the Middle East suggests that the negative impact of American democracy promotion has led to societal destruction. The terrible events in Libya and Iraq perplex residents in donor and recipient countries and global political analysts. Muhammad Ijaz Latif and Hussain Abbas's analysis indicated that the George Walker Bush administration's emphasis on the Middle East for democracy promotion was seen as a positive change "*…to free its people [Iraqis]…and restore control of that country to its own people*" until its catastrophic legacy in the region soon after.[3] The policy of regime change in Iraq to promote democracy, find

weapons of mass destruction, and provide peace became more contentious on the global stage (Latif & Abbas, 2011). The Iraq war and the accompanying portrayal of removing Saddam Hussein as a democratizing mission have hindered successful pro-democracy efforts in several Arab countries. As Latif & Abbas (2011) conclude, the simplified notion of connecting the 'war on terror' with democracy was partly responsible for such an outcome. However, the nature of the conduct, strategy, and approach of American democratic foreign policy might differ based on the current temporal and regime conditions (Aka, 2002).

3.Study methods

This study examines the comparative promotion of democracy in Nigeria by the US and the EU, utilizing a qualitative case design approach referred to as a case study. Researchers employ case study methods in political science and international relations to test and refine theoretical assumptions (Ruffa, 2020). The method often examines complex phenomena, including democracy, justice, and identity, within a social context to improve understanding of these issues (Heale & Twycross, 2018). In this study, by looking at the promotion of democracy in Nigeria as the object of analysis and the EU and US strategies as the cases, the broader democracy promotion in Africa serves as the larger phenomenon of interest to which this study is contributing. Thus, this comparative case study is appropriate for in-depth analysis (Gerring, 2009).

   A comparative analysis of the case study is appropriate to examine the similarities and differences in the EU and US strategies for promoting democracy in Nigeria. This method facilitates a systematic comparison of various institutional features across a limited number of cases within international politics of democracy promotion to determine associations between conditions and outcomes of interest (Peterson & Peters, 2020; Brummer, 2020). The selection of Nigeria as a case study arises from a notable lack in the existing literature, which has yet to thoroughly compile and compare these strategies in the context of a nation like Nigeria, recognised as a significant geostrategic partner for Western hegemonic aspirations in Africa. This study will employ qualitative data to analyse the externalisation and democracy promotion efforts of the US and EU in Nigeria. This study will examine the role of foreign actors in the internationalisation of democracy in Africa, with a specific focus on the case of Nigeria.

4.Similarities and differences between EU and US democracy promotion strategies

This section takes a comparative case study approach by examining the similarities and differences between US and EU democracy promotion in Nigeria. It is broadly divided into subsections that analyse the similarities and differences of each actor.

4.1.Similarities between EU and US democracy promotion strategies in Nigeria

This subsection examines the comparative aspects of various similarities, encompassing foreign policy and international agreements, economic and security interests, election observation and reforms, a strategic non-involvement approach, political dialogue, and a convergence approach to civil society organisation support.

4.1.2. The use of foreign policy and international agreements

The EU and the US are among the most important partners promoting the norm of democracy in Nigeria. They share comparable approaches to advancing democracy in Nigeria. This is especially true for a country such as Nigeria, where democratic governance is vulnerable or consistently endangered (Aka, 2002; Khakee, 2007). Nigeria, as one of the most densely populated and influential nations in Africa, has been the focus of substantial efforts by both the EU and the US to promote democracy. Although there are few variations in how they are perceived, it has been argued that the policies and strategies on democracy in Nigeria, the US, and the EU exhibit more parallels than differences.

One important aspect of similarity is that the EU and the US prioritized the promotion of democracy as a critical aspect of their foreign policy goals and international agreements with Nigeria. The 2022-2026 US Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) for Nigeria, which builds off the Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) for Africa, supports this idea through its strategic objectives of enhancing democracy, upholding universal values, and promoting human dignity. At least the document suggests that the strategies aim to establish robust, accountable, and democratic institutions in Nigeria, driven by a strong dedication to human rights, to foster peace and prosperity. In the same vein, in the 2007 Nigeria–EU Joint Way Forward and the 2000 Cotonou Agreement between the EU and the Organization for African Unity (now the African Union since 2002), the EU acknowledges, like the US, that Nigeria and the EU have shared values and beliefs in peace, security, equality, democracy, and tolerance to foster prosperous and benevolent societies (Nigeria–EU Joint Way Forward, 2008; Cotonou Agreement, 2000).

As the EU's primary institutional framework for managing relationships with sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific, the Cotonou Agreement aimed to create a comprehensive development agenda that combines bilateral cooperation with Nigeria and regional collaboration with the broader African continent (through the African Union). The agreement addresses regional challenges by focusing on socioeconomic development and political cooperation while emphasizing political conditionality through democratic principles, human rights, and the rule of law (Cotonou Agreement, 2000). Subsection 2 of Article 9 of the Cotonou Agreement asserts that the "Respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, which underpin the ACP-EU Partnership, shall underpin the domestic and international policies of the Parties and constitute the essential elements of this Agreement" (Cotonou Agreement, 2000:14).

Theoretically, the EU and US foreign policies highlight the alignment of democratic principles and values among prominent international actors such as the EU and the US, indicating a cohesive strategy for promoting democracy in emerging economies like Nigeria. A comparable perspective can be observed in the responses of US and EU officials to the unconstitutional changes of government in the Sahel, particularly in countries like Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali, where there was a call for the military junta to restore the previous civilian administration. This alignment suggests a widespread agreement regarding the significance of democratic governance, which serves as the foundation for international collaboration and policy development. Empirically, the practical implementation of these policy frameworks through specific programs often linked to conditionality (in the case of EU development assistance for the EU and US security and trade cooperation for the US) illustrates a barter system of political value promotion that relies on the agency of recipient countries to enable the acceptance of these values.

4.1.2 Amplifying economic and security interests over values

The relevance of democratic principles is reflected in the EU's willingness to apply sharp power measures such as sanctions on unconstitutional change of government through coups such as the Sani Abacha's regime, which was also grasped with human rights violations. For example, before European Development Fund aid was suspended in Nigeria in 1995 due to democratic and human rights abuses during General Sani Abacha's regime, the allocated funds between 1992 and 1995 amounted to €210.2 million. They were significantly reduced after that (European Commission, 2008). However, it is worth noting that these measures primarily affected political ties between the EU and Nigeria rather than the former's economic interests (Kenyon, 2018), highlighting the dilemma of choosing between interest-based objectives and value-based principles. While the US adopted a comparable strategy of imposing sanctions during the Sani Abacha regime, it faced a challenging dilemma between reaping diplomatic and economic advantages and adhering to value-driven goals, as highlighted by the advocacy of Black Americans for the US government to implement diplomatic isolation and economic sanctions akin to those employed against the white-minority regime in South Africa (Lippman, 1995; Lopez & Cortright, 1996). A New York Times report titled *US Seeking Tougher Sanctions to Press Nigeria for Democracy* rightly captured the dilemma of Bill Clinton's administration choosing between economic interest and values when it concludes that:

> "The Administration has ruled out any embargo against Nigeria's oil exports, currently running at about 1.8 million barrels a day, which provides the Government with 90 percent of its foreign exchange earnings. About 40 percent of Nigeria's prized low-sulfur crude is bought by American companies. Just yesterday, Royal Dutch/Shell confirmed it had made a potentially significant oil discovery off the Nigerian coast." (Lewis, March 12, 1996, para.3)

Another New York Times report titled *Trade Bans Are Boomerangs, US Companies Say* explains why the US double standard consideration for protecting trade over values is pronounced with its foreign policy approach when considering the application of sanctions on Sani Abacha's regime in Nigeria:

> "The issue is unilateral sanctions against several countries, like Iran, Libya, and Nigeria, under which the Clinton Administration and Congress have closed off a market to American companies, but no other nation participates. As a result, foreign suppliers replace the Americans." (Uchitelle, September 11, 1996).

Recently, this development has been exemplified by the way Washington addressed the Gabon coup in contrast to the Niger coup (both occurring in 2023). The Biden administration, in collaboration with its European partners, including the EU and France, urged ECOWAS—under the chairmanship of President Tinubu of Nigeria—to deploy troops to reinstate the civilian administration of Mohammed Bazoum. Additionally, the US has shown little concern for Nigeria's democratic situation following the 2023 elections despite public outcries. Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie wrote an open letter criticizing the election despite President Biden's recognition of Tinubu's presidency after election observers deemed the polls unfair to the EU Election Observation Mission.[4]

The US also takes a similar approach by developing an interest-based approach within its bilateral policy towards Nigeria. However, this emphasizes a balance between militarized bloc politicization and economic exigencies. Barbara and Kristan (2005) argue that when comparing Venezuela and Nigeria, the US intertwines its democratic considerations with the strategic need for reliable and inexpensive oil, mainly from non-Middle Eastern sources. As Ayam (2008) noted, the US policy towards Nigeria in the Cold War was guided by two key issues: the containment of communist expansion, and the provision of aid and the strengthening of bilateral economic ties. However, the 9/11 attack in New York and the growth of terrorism globally necessitated a shift to the hard-core conception of security and development, where democracy promotion is considered a geostrategic objective of full-scale military invasions among policymakers in Washington DC, leading to the invasion of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya. A series of counterterrorism initiatives, such as military-stationed bases such as the $110 million largest base for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), known as Niger Air Base 201 and Air Base 101, serve as joint mission sites for US and French forces, and the troops stationed in N'Djamena are instructive of the US conceptual security-democracy discourse (Arslan, 2023; Chason et al., 2024).

The US has more strongly adapted its democracy promotion efforts to situational challenges, such as the 'historical opportunity' after the breakdown of the Soviet Union or the 'war on terrorism' after the 9/11 attack (Van Hüllen & Stahn, 2009). In the West African sphere of influence, where Nigeria is a key actor, the US has partnered with Nigeria and other countries, such as Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Chad, in the fight against insurgency. Recent debate has sparked over the attraction of the US and France to venture into Nigeria as a viable security partner following their eviction from those

countries. Like the US approach in the Middle East, such a tactical move aims to address political Islam not as a problem of Islamic culture itself but rather because of poor social and economic conditions worsened by long periods of authoritarian rule (Amirah-Fernandez & Menendez, 2009; Ploch, 2013). This geostrategic interest in security using the language of authoritarian governance is the source of societal ill, which is overtly conjoint with activities of democracy promotion efforts such as CSOs, election strengthening and observation, projects, and programs aimed at civil education.

4.1.3 Election observation and reforms as imperatives

The electoral process constitutes an essential element of democratic governance. The electoral landscape of Nigeria represents a significant aspect of its democratic evolution, characterized by the impactful engagement of actors such as the US and EU. Studies have shown that the country's electoral system has been compromised by vote-buying, ballot box snatching, and various forms of electoral malpractice (Oni, 2014; Obi, 2004; Omotola, 2010). Nonetheless, public trust has been further eroded by the dependability and partiality of the election management body (EMB) (Thompson et al., 2023). The EU and US have provided financial and technical assistance to improve electoral management bodies in Nigeria, monitored elections since the country's return to democracy in 1999, and advocated for electoral reforms informed by the insights of their election observation teams (Khakee, 2007; Obiefuna-Oguejiofor, 2018; US Department of State, 2022). Semi-dependent institutions such as the EU Election Observation Mission (EUEOM), Independent Republican Institute (IRI), and National Democratic Institute (NDI) have received funding from the EU and the US, contributing notably to Nigeria's democratic development.

Free and fair elections are essential for the integrity of a democratic system (Omotola, 2011; Silver et al., 2024). Reforming the electoral system is a priority in several countries, including Nigeria, by addressing legal ambiguities in existing laws; implementing new legal requirements; reforming electoral geography (e.g., redrawing constituency boundaries), electoral and party systems, and the EMB; and facilitating the digital transmission of results to align with the evolving sociopolitical and electoral landscape. The results of Silver et al. (2024) study published by the Pew Research Center indicate that 14 percent of Nigerians believe that electoral reform is one way to improve democracy in Nigeria, making it one of the few countries where individuals associate changes with enhanced citizen representation through reform, facilitating easier voting and precise vote conversion.

A fundamental similarity between the democracy promotion efforts of the US and the EU in Nigeria is their focus on enhancing electoral institutional capacity. Both have made substantial investments in strengthening electoral institutions by advocating for reforms that improve the clarity of electoral laws, enhance transparency, and ensure the responsible conduct of elections by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). These efforts include intensive training, workshops, and initiatives to bolster INEC capacity before each electoral cycle. For example, in January 2019, the EU

conducted a one-day intensive training session in Keffi for the INEC's election and party monitoring unit, organized by the European Center for Electoral Support. This training aimed to improve the unit's ability to monitor political financing and vote for trading in compliance with the 2010 Electoral Act (Abogonye, 2019).

Similarly, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has supported INEC's efforts to build public trust and enhance voter education. USAID's initiatives include the Electoral Empowerment of Civil Society Project (EECSP), which strengthens the capacity of civil society organizations to monitor and document electoral processes independently. This project trained 2,500 domestic observers to conduct quick counts and parallel vote tabulation, contributing to a more robust election management system across Nigeria (USAID, n.d.).

The substantial investment by the US in electoral training—amounting to $50 million allocated for training journalists, INEC officials, and civil society organizations—demonstrates a rigorous commitment to ensuring the credibility of Nigeria's 2023 general elections (Punch Newspaper, 2022). In addition, the support extended to 44 civil society organizations for civic and voter education, benefiting an estimated 68 million Nigerians and highlighting a strategic effort to bolster democratic engagement through a bottom-up approach (Miller, 2024). These bottom-up approaches (and, to some extent, horizontal-level strategies between EU or US think tanks and Nigerian CSOs), characterized by technical assistance, capacity building, and material support, reflect the critical role of robust institutional frameworks for successfully promoting democratic governance in the US and EU. The emphasis on strengthening institutions such as INECs and CSOs working in the political and human rights domain and the judiciary working on electoral issues underscores a broader perception of Western policymakers that democracy in Nigeria is best supported through comprehensive institutional reinforcement (Onwuzoo, 2024).

Ensuring that elections in Nigeria adhere to international standards is a critical priority for both the US and the EU in their efforts to promote democracy (Youngs, 2001; Khakee, 2007; US Department of State, 2022; Thompson et al., 2023). Both have expressed significant concerns regarding the efficacy of Nigeria's electoral reforms, as highlighted by reports from the EU Election Observation Mission (EOM), International Republican Institute (IRI), National Endowment for Democracy (NED), and National Democratic Institute (NDI), which underscore substantial deficiencies in electoral law reforms.[5] Key areas requiring attention include media freedom, establishing a more effective regulatory framework, enhancing security during elections, and promoting an inclusive civil society. Additionally, US and EU policymakers emphasize the necessity of judicial reform and capacity building to effectively address pre- and postelection issues.

4.1.4 Strategic non-involvement in Nigeria's domestic politics

Guided by the recognition of shared values, the EU and US emphasize the importance of promoting democracy, the rule of law, and human rights in their bilateral commitments, addressing various matters of mutual interest and giving Nigerian

stakeholders agency and role-playing to take charge of their affairs. Article 2 (1) of the UN Charter affirms that "The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members" (United Nations, 1945). Article 45 suggests that the "…relationship among [member states of the UN] shall be based on respect for the principle of sovereign equality." Although these provisions of the UN, of which Nigeria, the US, and EU member states are parties, indicate the equality of all states, it is essential to highlight the inequality among states to project political power, economic interdependence, and social values. There is power asymmetry between Nigeria on the one hand and the EU and the US on the other hand (Khakee, 2007). Although the academic literature on Africa–EU relations tends to define such relations as asymmetrical (Khakee, 2007), the politics around the negotiations of large-scale Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with regional economic communities in Africa, such as ECOWAS, through postcolonial lenses, reveals contestations around the assumptions of such asymmetries, asserting agency through diplomacy by regional and state actors and the actions of civil society (Sebhatu, 2021; Ezemenaka, 2019; Mattheis & Kotsopoulos, 2020). Some scholars even believe that policymakers in developed countries need to revise the whims to maintain a colonial perspective on Africa, looking at Nigeria's growing expertise and the demand not to be a passive receiver of any foreign interest (Oloruntoba, 2015; Haastrup et al., 2021).

In this way, the support provided by both actors does not meddle deeply in the internal affairs of the country, such as those states of the Middle East post-9/11 new security considerations, since the recognition of mutual concerns suggests some practices of democracy by the Nigerian state rather than just financial support, training, capacity building, and diplomatic signalling, which has become the mainstay activity of the US and EU (Del Biondo, 2011). The above call for the US not to recognize the 2023 general election and the US failure to heed the call illustrates that the US might sponsor democracy promotion through the activities of the NDI and IRI or USAID regarding election observation but might not directly intervene to prevent disastrous outcomes, as experienced in the Middle East.

The US ICS for Nigeria suggests a unique representational country-to-country approach that elucidates the bilateralism of two states, Nigeria and the US, in which the US has foreign policy-set goals and objectives, including mission goal 1 of stronger democratic institutions, governance, and respect for human rights, to be pursued through the activities of the US mission in Nigeria. However, the motivation for this country-specific strategy aligns with broader African policy goals articulated in the 1994 National Security Strategy, which emphasizes a comprehensive approach to regional security, democratic development, and economic recovery (US Department of State, 2022; Goldgeier & McFaul, 2003; The White House, 1994:5). This strategy demonstrates how overarching continental frameworks shape national policies. Similarly, the EU's approach, as evidenced by the Cotonou Convention, integrates democratic principles, human rights, and the rule of law into multilateral agreements with African, Caribbean, and Pacific states. This agreement, including the establishment

of the joint EU-ACP parliamentary assembly, underscores the EU's commitment to democratic reforms in these regions, including Nigeria, which is part of the African region (The Cotonou Agreement, 2012; Luxembourg Center for Contemporary and Digital History, n.d.). The EU's *Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa* report illustrates the use of political conditionality, such as the €2.7 billion 'Incentive Tranche' from the 10th European Development Fund (EDF), to link aid with governance standards (Council of the European Union, 2007; European Commission, 2020; Haidara et al., 2008:8). While this broader foreign policy strategy exists among EU actors, the national strategy adopted for relations with Nigeria includes the 2008 Nigeria-EU Joint Way Forward and the 2008-2013 European Community-Nigeria Country Strategy and National Indicative Program. The US and EU initiatives are intricately linked to broader regional strategies, emphasizing the critical role of continental organizations such as the African Union in achieving their goals.

4.1.5 Political dialogue

Furthermore, both the US and the EU stress intensified government-to-government political dialogue as a valuable factor in anchoring their relations with Nigeria, elucidating a top-down approach towards the question posed by democracy and democratic governance. Political dialogue is essential in both actors' repertoire to discuss progress and challenges to democracy in their countries. The 2008 Nigeria–EU Joint Way Forward guidelines follow the principles and objectives enunciated in the revised Cotonou Agreement and are recalled in the Lisbon Joint Africa–EU Strategy (Nigeria–EU Joint Way Forward, 2008).[6] The broader development framework of the EU, known as the Cotonou Agreement, is explicit about political dialogue. Since 2000, relations between the EU and African countries and regional organizations, otherwise known as EU-African relations, have undergone dynamic institutional and organizational reordering. The establishment of periodic EU-Africa/Africa-EU/AU-EU Summits created the basis for a region-to-region forum bringing together African and European leaders (European Council, 2022; Haastrup et al., 2021). Article 15, which spells out the structural compositions of the EU-ACP Council of Ministers, stresses the importance of political dialogue in Article 9. According to the last paragraph of Article 9:

> "These areas [promotion of human rights, democratization processes, consolidation of the rule of law, and good governance] will be an important subject for the political dialogue. In the context of this dialogue, the Parties shall attach particular importance to the changes underway and to the continuity of the progress achieved. This regular assessment shall consider each country's economic, social, cultural and historical context." (Cotonou Agreement, 2000).

The political dynamics surrounding the US promotion of democracy in Nigeria exhibit a notable resemblance to the strategies employed by the EU (see Van Wyk, 2020),

especially when examining its extensive diplomatic interactions with the African continent, as illustrated by the 2022 US-Africa Leaders' Summit (US Department of State, 2024). This raises critical questions about the depth and authenticity of such engagements, suggesting that they may often be more about the US strategic interests than a genuine partnership of equals or one intended to strengthen the democratic space in Nigeria. It is imperative to acknowledge that the US has formed a unique commission with Nigeria, known as the US-Nigeria Binational Commission, aimed at facilitating political dialogue at the bilateral level. This initiative, launched during the Obama administration in 2010, reflects the changing international relations in Africa, where summit diplomacy is an essential platform for formal interaction between the two nations and is characterized by its diverse composition. Structurally, it serves as a bilateral platform for dialogues distinct from the US-Africa framework, where the agenda-setting process prioritizes trade and various socioeconomic interests, lacking a mechanism for oversight on political values, in contrast to the EU-Africa summits, which are anchored in Article 9 of the Cotonou Agreement.

The use of political dialogue to promote democratic ideals springs from the recognition and self-reflection of US and EU ownership of normative ideals as global actors who attempt the socialization of foreign governments that might hold the promise of similar normative ideals or are open to learning and accepting such ideals (European Parliament, 2017; Checkel, 2005; Schimmelfennig, 2005a). This norm diffusion remains significant even within the EU, the US, and its neighbourhood (Park, 2006). Schimmelfennig (2005b) noted that EU socialization efforts primarily target governments, providing material rewards such as assistance and the advantages of EU membership contingent upon adherence to liberal democratic norms. If compliance is not achieved, the EU withholds the reward, refraining from imposing additional penalties on noncompliant countries or providing extra assistance to alter their cost-benefit dynamics. An example of this can be found in how the EU and US downplayed the outcome of the 2023 Nigerian general election owing to the exigencies and requirements of geostrategic interests in migration, security, and Nigeria's ability to influence geopolitical outcomes in West Africa following the waves of coups in the Sahelian belt despite US and EU election observation bodies stating otherwise regarding the credibility of the process.

4.1.6 Convergence approach for CSO

In the horizontal approach, the EU and US institutions such as EOM, USAID, and other respective bodies provide Nigerian institutions such as the INEC, police, legislative, and judiciary with capacity training for conducting a credible election exercise (Del Biondo, 2011; Khakee, 2007; European Commission, 2023; Leonardo, 2023). Additionally, an essential component of top-down political dialogue involves government-to-government and often includes CSOs to discuss the development of democratic ideals and how to improve lagging areas.

On the other hand, from the bottom-up perspective, policymakers commonly believe that democratic assistance should be kept pragmatic and practical to the public but within a limited definite boundary. It should serve as a symbolic external source of funding, skills, and protection for NGOs operating in Nigeria's challenging domestic environments (Youngs, 2001; US Mission Nigeria, 2024). As such, the Cotonou Agreement essentialized the importance of civil society and other nonstate actors in realizing the agreement's objectives, including those in Articles 8 and 9. Table 1 highlights the EU's bottom-up approach through phase I (2016-2021) of the EU Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) program, aimed at empowering civil society organizations (CSOs). The initiatives aim to improve election and civic education within local communities, advance the digitalization of government budgets, provide leadership and legislative training for young Nigerians, and facilitate real-time tracking of public projects, among other essential areas.

Component Area	Key Partners	Amount Allocated
Component 1: Support to the Independent National Electoral Commission	European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES)	13 million Euros with an additional contribution of 650,000 Euros (5% of the total funding to Component 1) from ECES core funds
Component 2: Support to the National Assembly	Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) and Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth and Advancement (YIAGA)	3 million Euros
Component 3: Support to Political Parties	Political Party Leadership and Policy Development Centre of the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS)	2.7 million Euros
Component 4: Support to Media	Institute for Media and Society and the International Press Centre	2.6 million Euros

Component 5: Support to Civil Society Organizations	BBC Media Action, CLEEN Foundation, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, and the Albino Foundation	3 million Euros

Figure 1: EU Support for Democratic Governance in Nigeria, Phase I (2016-2021). Source: European Center for Electoral Support, n.d.

On the US side, according to USAID (2019), CSOs that receive support from the US government have demonstrated their credibility in Nigeria. This support has empowered Nigerians to hold the government accountable during elections, which justifies the financial and technical aid provided by the US government. An example is the current US Embassy Abuja Public Diplomacy Section (PDS) Annual Program for the 2024 fiscal year. The grant of up to $50,000 each, totalling $450,000, is focused explicitly on NGOs operating in the Northern Niger Region, with priority given to the states of Adamawa, Jigawa, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Niger, Taraba, Yobe, Sokoto, and Zamfara. The main objectives of this grant are to promote women, girls, and youth empowerment; encourage civic participation; and support programs and initiatives of NGOs, such as YIAGA and PLAC, that advocate good governance, including transparency and accountability in government (US Mission Nigeria, 2024).

4.2. Differences between EU and US democracy promotion in Nigeria

This subsection examines the comparative aspects of differences, encompassing funding instruments and geostrategic imperatives of the EU and US democracy promotion in Nigeria.

4.2.1 Funding instruments

Although there are similarities in the democracy promotion strategies and instruments of the EU and the US in Nigeria, there are also some significant differences in their funding instruments, attitudes towards democratic promotion, and motivations or security considerations, among others. One key aspect is in the realm of funding. The EU employs the Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation-Global Europe Instrument (NDICI) and the European Development Fund to bolster democracy promotion in Nigeria. However, the US offers financial support through a different avenue, such as the US Agency for International Development (USAID), which oversees US development and humanitarian assistance abroad based on its agency priority goals established by the Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act (GPRAMA). Parts of the USAID funds for democracy are channelled to the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which in turn funds the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) for their election observation work and other related activities in Nigeria and other parts of the world.

While the United States articulates lofty ideals regarding democracy in Nigeria, the allocation of resources required to substantiate such rhetoric remains markedly insufficient. The Strengthening Advocacy and Civil Engagement (SACE) project represents a substantial investment of $19.2 million, funded by USAID and executed by Chemonics International from January 2, 2014, to January 1, 2019 (USAID, 2019). The World Bank's population estimate for Nigeria in 2014 stands at approximately 179.3 million individuals, indicating that the per capita allocation for the project amounts to merely 10.7 cents. Moreover, one would expect some improvement in democracy-related funding in recent years; however, among the top five USAID support sources, the government and civil sector receive the least support.[7] A comparable situation is documented in the EU funding initiative, exemplified by the SDGN phase one, which allocates a mere 13 cents per capita to support democracy projects, calculated based on the 2016 population estimate of 188.6 million individuals. This juxtaposition of lofty rhetoric and diminishing financial resources significantly hamper the potential for substantive democratic advancement, particularly as direct-democracy initiatives remain inadequately funded (refer to Crawford, 2005 for the Ghana case study).

4.2.2 Geostrategic imperatives

The European Union's efforts to enhance democracy and good governance in Nigeria via electoral policy reforms are shaped by multiple factors, including migration and socioeconomic development (Khakee, 2007). Its approach sought to address the complex relationships among these issues, recognizing the need for comprehensive measures to address the root causes of migration, alleviate socioeconomic decline, and foster improved governance practices in Nigeria. However, the US implementation of policy reforms in Nigeria has been motivated mainly by different geostrategic interests, specifically aimed at maximizing economic benefits and countering terrorist groups (Amirah-Fernández & Menéndez, 2009; Aka, 2002). Appreciating the significance of Nigeria's role as a regional power and its promising economic prospects, the US prioritized democracy initiatives to enhance economic cooperation and trade relations with Nigeria. In addition, considering the existence of different terrorist organizations in the Sahel, the US placed great importance on assisting Nigeria in combating these dangers and fostering stability in the region.

The linkage between security and democracy is integral to both the US and the EU's strategies, emphasizing that security is essential for maintaining democratic norms and vice versa. In the 1990s, Western reform policies, influenced by post-Cold War security theories, incorporated ethical and pragmatic considerations, including political, social, economic, and environmental factors, to address the multifaceted nature of security (Amirah-Fernández & Menéndez, 2009). The EU and US international agreements and bilateral policies towards Nigeria reflect this approach by highlighting the interdependence of democracy and security. However, while they stress collaboration and strategic stability, they differ in their geostrategic concerns in addressing migration and poverty (for the EU) and terrorism and trade (US), issues that drive individuals

toward nonstate actors and transnational networks that threaten both US and EU interests. An area of geostrategic convergence that both actors see as important in Nigeria in promoting democracy is the oil and natural gas supply, especially since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the sanctions preventing oil trade with the Kremlin.

While migration is somewhat contained as one of the utmost security concerns for the EU in promoting democratic norms since most Nigerians use the Saharan desert route to reach the Mediterranean Sea in northern Africa and the southern border of the EU, US policymakers take a more kinetic approach through increasing military cooperation as an important appendix to democracy support.[3] During a press briefing, US President Joe Biden reiterated his unwavering dedication to Nigeria, emphasizing the areas of economic development, security, and safeguarding of human rights (The White House, 2023; Ploch, 2013). This reaffirmation of commitment underscores the enduring nature of the bilateral engagement between the US and Nigeria. As Amirah-Fernández & Menéndez (2009) noted, [Political] reform in democratic and good governance values was enhanced by the link common in Western policy circles between democratization and Western security concerns. Securitizing democracy involves examining the neorealist perspective on the competition between state and non-state actors striving for control over Nigerian territory. The dynamics of power, both on a global scale and within local contexts, significantly influence the outcomes of democratic success or failure. Terrorism in the northern part of Nigeria, which spreads across the Sahel, is an obvious predicament here. Democracy in Nigeria has been threatened by the activities of terrorist groups. Additionally, the failure of past democratic dispensations to be consolidated into practical benefits in terms of good governance that improves the lives of the population exposes youths to ideologies and recruits them by terrorist groups that threaten the US's geostrategic interests in Africa (Onuoha, 2014). The post-9/11 declaration of war on terrorism worldwide reinforced this thinking among stakeholders in Washington, the Bureau of African Affairs, and the US Mission in Nigeria, burdened by the responsibility of monitoring changes in Nigeria and executing policy directions on behalf of the US government.

Conversely, it is the conviction of policymakers in Brussels and various European capitals that the enhancement of governance in Nigeria is fundamentally linked to the augmentation of development cooperation, the promotion of human rights and democracy, and the rectification of job creation problems. They argue that capacity-building support is beneficial and essential in tackling the underlying factors contributing to migratory pressures (Van Wyk, 2020; Ezemenaka, 2019). Furthermore, this approach is posited as a means to fortify adherence to human rights and democratic values in regions where such adherence is notably deficient, while simultaneously reinforcing the progress made.

Democratic consolidation, human rights, and governance serve as political conditionalities in the EU canon of policies towards Nigeria. At the same time, the US does not have such a clear-cut political conditionality embedded in its bilateral policy and, thus, remains flexible in its approach. However, it can invoke sanctions to restore

democratic governance as it did in General Ibrahim Babangida's annulment of the 1993 election (Nwokedi, 1994).

Despite claims that the EU's influence on development cooperation has diminished, ACP states still value their partnership with the EU and its consistent, long-term resources (Pichon, 2023). Some argue that ACP states such as Nigeria may prioritize development aid over democratic norms by turning to donors such as China, who have less stringent requirements regarding human rights and democratic governance. However, policymakers in Abuja cannot throw away years of partnership with the EU. The institutional arrangements, such as the EU–Nigeria joint program and the 2008–2013 European Community–Nigeria Country Strategy and National Indicative Program employed by the EU, underpinned by articles 9-10 on the issue of ensuring essential elements regarding human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, and fundamental elements regarding good governance, are established in collaboration with the various interest groups, including the government in Abuja, playing a significant role in giving it agency on the question of democracy in Nigeria—creating the spirit of ownership and partnership. Article 8 reinforces the notion of accountability of the Nigerian state through political dialogue.

5.Conclusion and implications

A comparison of the EU and US democracy promotion initiatives in Nigeria uncovers notable similarities in the instruments employed by both actors. While emphasizing the impact of Nigeria's political environment on the progress of these strategies, the geostrategic necessities of migration control, security, trade, and development significantly influence the EU and the US's endeavours to design and execute their democracy promotion in Nigeria. Both actors regard promoting democracy as a fundamental foreign policy objective, balancing strategic–material goals with value-based ideals. Despite the difficulties in aligning economic and security interests with democratic principles, the EU and US persist in their dedication to fortifying Nigeria's democratic institutions, perceiving democracy promotion as a solution to the challenges impacting their geopolitical significance in Africa and their domestic political landscape, where migrants from countries such as Nigeria, facing socio-economic and security issues, are viewed as a challenge to manage.

Criterion	Similarities	Differences
Foreign international agreements	Both parties use their international agreements, which include bilateral and multilateral policies, to promote democracy in Nigeria	The EU utilizes bilateral foreign policy instruments for ACP countries, such as the 2000 Cotonou Agreement or the 2023 Samoa Agreement, with democracy, human rights, and the rule of law clause to promote democratic values in Nigeria, while the US employs the

		Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) for Nigeria and the Joint Regional Strategy (JRC).
Approach	Dual approaches of top-down and bottom-up depending on the interaction with which domestic actor in Nigeria, e.g., CSOs or INEC or executive arm of government	While the EU emphasizes a more country-specific approach, greater coherence, and stakeholder involvement, the US combines rhetorical and diplomatic pressure with support for CSOs and grassroots movements.
Financial provision	Availability of financial support for democratic governance but poor quantity	The EU utilizes the financial provisions of the European Development Fund (EDF), which supports the realization of Nigeria's objectives of the National Indicative Program (NIP), including its components of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and good governance. The US utilizes congress-approved funding managed by USAID, which directly funds CSOs in Nigeria through calls and grants and even the activities of NED, IRI, and NDI that observe elections.
Political dialogue	Both parties utilize bilateral dialogues and meetings to discuss progress and show commitment to democratic principles.	The EU promotes democracy in Nigeria through international meetings and forums (Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement), reinforcing democratic institutions and stakeholder involvement. Conversely, the US engages in high-level discussions mainly where areas of good governance are intermixed with geostrategic issues of trade and security matters.

Development cooperation, democracy, and security nexus	The EU and US formal agreements and bilateral policies towards Nigeria underscored the interrelation between development, democracy, and security.	While the US focuses on traditional security measures such as counterterrorism against terrorist groups as a threat to the consolidation of democracy and trade in Nigeria, the EU takes a broader approach by considering how insecurity contributes to migration and vice versa and the threat to democracy in Nigeria.

Figure 2: Criteria for comparison of US and EU democracy promotion in Nigeria.
Source: Author's construct.

Moreover, it is essential to emphasize the findings that reveal that the EU and US frequently employ analogous strategies, such as election observation and civil society involvement, which have somewhat bottom-up significance, to bolster the democratic development of Nigeria. However, any such relevance is dependent on domestic agency. This alignment prompts an inquiry into the question of agency among political stakeholders in Nigeria (ranging from the government to civil society), indicating that the domestic political landscape significantly influences external actors' adoption of cooperative or adversarial strategies. Although both actors prioritize cooperation, their tactics exhibit subtle variances shaped by their distinct geostrategic priorities and funding mechanisms.

Ultimately, the collective affirmation by the EU and the US regarding the critical role of robust institutional frameworks—such as electoral governance—in promoting democratic governance in Nigeria raises significant concerns. This reliance on a cautious approach to managing stability in a fragile state such as Nigeria, divided along ethno-religious cleavages, can lead to the troubling endorsement of fraudulently elected candidates driven by geostrategic priorities. The recognition of incumbent Bola Ahmed Tinubu in contentious political contests, such as the 2023 general election, starkly illustrates this troubling dynamic. Nevertheless, their [US and EU] efforts highlight the imperative and persistent need to adapt democracy promotion to the unique political landscapes of the nations in question, ensuring that support is relevant and practical. Finally, the cooperative approach is indeed favoured, suggesting a notable consensus on the importance of democratic norms in fostering stability and progress in Nigeria. However, it is essential to recognize that this perspective falls short of providing a comprehensive evaluation of the accountability of institutional factors regarding electoral malpractices, a concern frequently lamented by critics such as Chimamanda showcased in her letter to US President Joe Biden.

Notes

1. Information regarding the ranking of the global freedom index, which includes political rights and civil liberties, and the methodology employed can be found: https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores

2. Some scholars have suggested that there are various kinds of democracies (Mwenda & Obi, 2019), which include deliberative democracy (O'Donnell, 1994; Elstub, 2018), participatory democracy (Barber, 2014; Pateman, 2012), elite democracy (Good, 1999; Higley, 2006), and representative democracy (Alonso et al., 2011; Urbinati, 2011).

3. For the full speech of the former US President speech during the Iraq invasion, please check the Operation Iraqi Freedom website: https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/iraq/news/20030319-17.html

4. For a look at the letter written by renowned Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Adichie and published by The Atlantic with the title *Nigeria's Hollow Democracy*, check   https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/04/nigerias-hollow-democracy/673647. Additionally, the 2023 EU EOM report can be found here: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eom-nigeria-2023/european-union-election-observation-mission-nigeria-2023-final-report_en

5. These institutions cited their recommendations for reform in the following electoral year reports: IRI/NDI, 2019; NDI, 2023; EUEOM, 2011; 2015; 2019; 2023.

6. The report outlines the modalities of the political dialogue in the Nigeria–EU Joint Way Forward.

7. The USAID's top five sectors funded in Nigeria are humanitarian emergency response ($327 million), basic health ($163 million), HIV/AIDS ($98 million), maternal and child health ($92 million) and government and civil participation ($35 million). All the data can be obtained from the USAID result database: https://results.usaid.gov/results

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Conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to report.

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A National Security Perspective on Armed Banditry in Northwest Nigeria[1]

Abubakar Abdulkadir Alkali[2], Dries Putter[3]

Abstract:

This study seeks to explore the negative impacts of armed banditry in North-west (NW) Nigeria from a national security standpoint. The qualitative research design was used in the study to examine pertinent discourses with respect to armed banditry in the NW region and Nigeria's national security. The paper adopts the theory of functionalism given that it provides a framework for all the stakeholders in a whole-of-society approach to collaborate and interact as a functional structure in addressing the menace of armed banditry. The study identified socio-economic impediments as a major underlying factor that trigger armed banditry attacks. The paper argues that armed banditry has affected educational development in the NW region and disrupted economic activities with huge consequences on Nigeria's national security. The study found that weak local government administration, prevalence of porous borders, criminal justice impediments and inter-agency rivalry were major challenges affecting the efforts of the government in addressing the menace of armed banditry. The paper proffered some strategies to curb the spate of armed banditry in the NW region. These included increasing investment in human security, effective border management, and streamlining the roles of security and law enforcement agencies amongst others.

Introduction

National security is paramount for socio-economic development, as emphasized by Robert MacNamara's assertion that "security is development, and without development there can be no security" (Okolie, 2022, p. 248). The Nigerian Constitution mandates the government to ensure the security of its citizens (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). However, Nigeria faces numerous security challenges due to the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) nature of the environment, which includes threat such as Boko Haram terrorism, farmer-herder conflicts, crude oil theft, and armed banditry (Okoli & Abubakar, 2021).

Armed banditry, characterized by unlawful acts such as robbery, kidnapping, and looting using arms and coercion (Akinyetun, 2022), has escalated since the Nigerian Civil War in 1970 (Okonkwo et al., 2015). The proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW), exacerbated by porous borders and the Libyan Civil War (2011-2020), has intensified armed banditry as a national security threat (Madubuegwu et al., 2022). The North-western (NW) region of Nigeria has been particularly affected, with 1,058 deaths reported in Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, and Niger states in 2019 alone (Abdullahi & Muktar, 2022).

This paper aims to analyze the impact armed banditry in NW Nigeria has on national security and propose strategies to address the menace. Employing a qualitative research design, the study examines relevant discourses and existing literature to discern key issues affecting the Federal Government of Nigeria's (FGN) efforts to counter armed banditry. The functionalist theory serves as the theoretical framework for presenting arguments.

The paper will provide an overview of armed banditry in Nigeria, explore its root causes, examine its impacts on national security, and evaluate current government efforts to address the problem. Additionally, it will discuss challenges hindering these efforts and propose some strategies to mitigate armed banditry as a significant security threat in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Theories offer a structure for understanding various discourses and their relationships with other phenomena (Bolu, 2021). The frustration-aggression theory, as proposed Dollard et al. (1939), is particularly relevant for understanding social behaviors manifesting as violent acts, such as armed banditry. It posits that when individuals or groups experience frustration due to unmet basic needs, especially in contexts of social injustice, they may resort to aggression (Dollard et al., 1939). Frustration-aggression theory assumes that all individuals possess fundamental needs and that failure to satisfy these needs can provoke violent reactions. The theory highlights the gap between individuals' desires and their actual circumstances (Ogege, 2013). Consequently, when the legitimate needs of groups are disregarded, frustration and anger often manifest as violent actions (Ogege, 2013). However, the utility of this theory is limited in analyzing the broader issues surrounding armed banditry in the NW region of Nigeria. While it

can help elucidate the behavioral motivations behind such criminality, its applicability is constrained.

Equally, functionalist theory offers insights into strengthening communication and information flow among stakeholders (Mele et al., 2010). By fostering harmonious interactions between institutions and key societal players, functionalism enhances governmental efforts to address social issues. This theory provides a framework for understanding how institutions operate and emphasizes the essential roles of various societal segments—including institutions, norms, and ideas—in maintaining system stability (Damian, 2007). Functionalist theory was adopted for this paper due to its focus on the necessity for units to interact and collaborate to achieve a common goal, specifically enhancing Nigeria's national security. Stakeholders—including security agencies, governmental bodies, and local communities—must work together as a cohesive structure to combat armed banditry. The interdependence of these components is crucial, as they cannot function in isolation. As such, this study will examine the challenges posed by poor synergy among security stakeholders and the disruption of social order, stemming from weak local governance and a flawed criminal justice system, which hinder governmental efforts to address armed banditry in NW Nigeria.

Historical Overview of Armed Banditry in Northwest Nigeria and National Security

Armed banditry in Nigeria has a pre-colonial history, dating back to pre-independence in 1960. The NW region, historically a key trans-Saharan trade and migration route, became a focal point for bandit activity against traders, particularly in areas such as Kwotarkoshi and Chafe in Zamfara State (Ojo et al., 2023). The first recorded incident of armed banditry occurred in 1901, when a group of bandits attacked a caravan traveling from Hausa land to the Tahoua region in present-day Niger Republic, resulting in the deaths of 210 traders and the theft of goods valued at approximately £165,000 (Akinwunmi, 2001). During this time and since, along this crucial trade route, pre-colonial governance in Northern Nigeria employed community policing to suppress these criminal activities (Ikeme, 1980).

However, the incidence of armed robbery surged following the end of the Nigerian Civil War in 1970, a period marked by the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) across the country (Ajayi, 2011a and 2011b). This influx significantly contributed to the rise of armed robbery and other violent crimes, undermining national security. From 1976 to 1985, Nigeria experienced an average of 28 armed banditry incidents annually, a direct consequence of the civil war's aftermath (Ibrahim & Mukhtar, 2017). In response, the military government initiated various reforms in 1983, including overhauling the criminal justice system. A gradual decline in banditry and related crimes due to expedited legal proceedings can be attributed to this (Inyang, 2013). Nevertheless, the return to democratic governance in 1999 brought an escalation in political violence, as some politicians began recruiting unemployed youth as political

thugs, supplying them with weapons to disrupt electoral processes (Chidi, 2014). Many turned to armed banditry, kidnapping, and robbery for sustenance once abandoned by their political sponsors (Chidi, 2014). This shift marked the beginning of a new wave of armed banditry in NW Nigeria.

Since 2011, the NW region, encompassing Zamfara, Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi, Kano, and Jigawa states, has witnessed a troubling increase in armed banditry (Habila, 2017). Armed banditry evolved into a pressing national security concern with the rise of notorious groups such as Buharin Daji and Fulanin Kundu, which began operating in Zamfara but expanded to over 120 criminal gangs across the region (Rufai, 2021). These groups engaged in mass killings, abductions, cattle rustling, sexual violence, and various human rights abuses. It is estimated that around 10,000 bandits in Zamfara alone killed over 12,000 individuals and destroyed approximately 120 villages, displacing more than 50,000 people between 2011 and 2021 (Rufai, 2021). Consequently, Zamfara state emerged as the epicenter of this social crisis.

Between January 2015 and May 2024, the NW region experienced 2,650 armed banditry attacks, resulting in 8,438 abductions and 7,084 fatalities (Beacon Security and Intelligence Limited, 2024). A breakdown of these incidents reveals that Zamfara, Kaduna, and Katsina states were disproportionately affected, linked to ongoing farmer-herder conflicts, illegal gold mining, and ethno-communal clashes (Ojo et al., 2023). Despite efforts by security agencies to combat this menace, armed banditry remains a persistent threat to national security in the region.
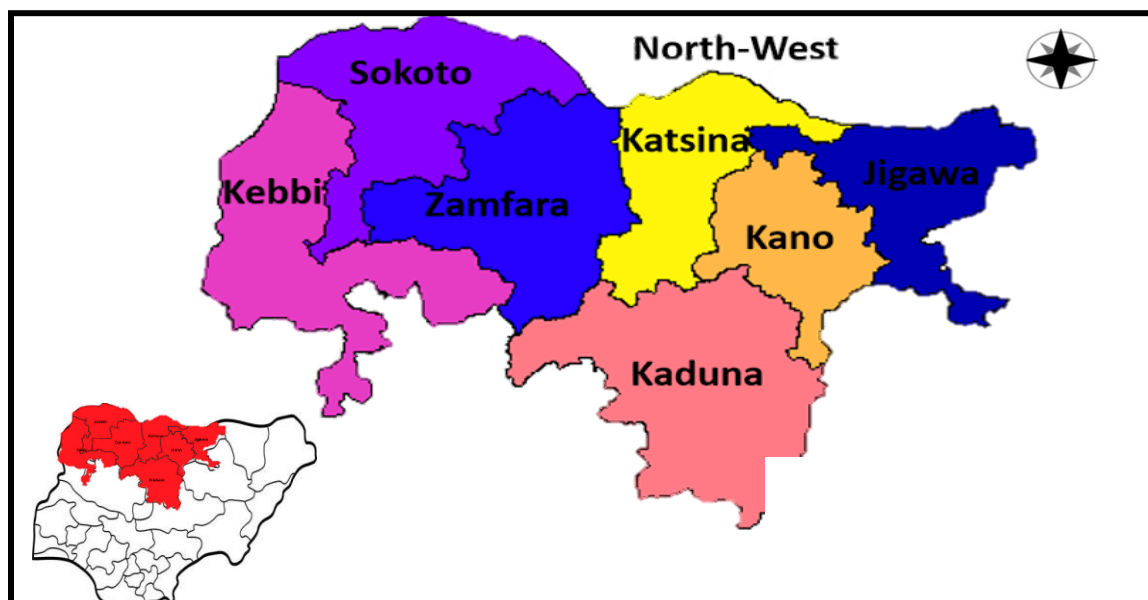

Figure 1: Map of Northwest Nigeria. Source: Researcher's Design.
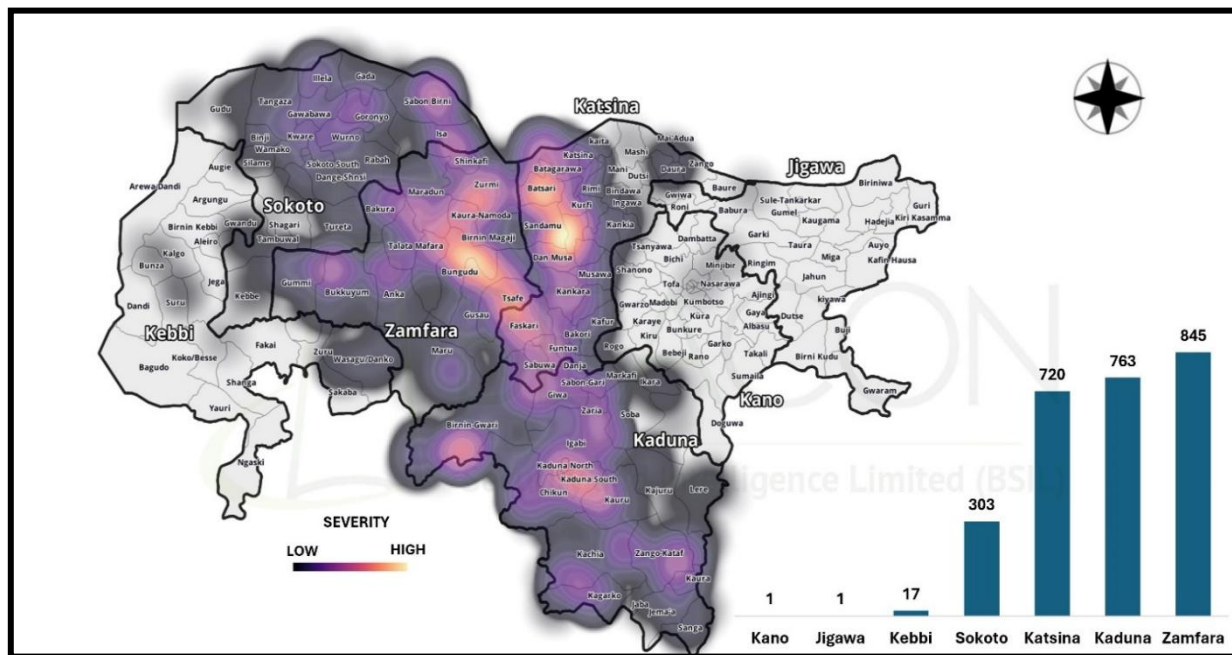
Figure 2: Bandit attack density in the North west region of Nigeria from 2015 to May 2024. Source: Beacon Security and Intelligence Limited, Nigeria (2024).

Background: Causes of Armed Banditry in Northwest Nigeria

Independent Nigeria has faced significant security challenges. The government's failure to meet the welfare and security needs of its citizens has often led to unrest, manifesting in peaceful protests, armed resistance, and violent criminal activities such as terrorism and armed banditry (Samuel & Omotola, 2023). The roots of armed banditry are deeply embedded within Nigeria's socio-political landscape, driven by socio-economic-, ideological-, and environmental factors.

Socio-Economic Factors

A society's well-being is often gauged by its security, low poverty rates, and employment opportunities, all of which reflect the state's socio-economic condition. Nigeria struggles with endemic poverty, affecting approximately 62% of its population, with about 133 million people classified as multi-dimensionally poor (Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics - Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2022). The northern region bears a disproportionate burden, with 65% of Nigeria's poor residing there, highlighting stark regional disparities (Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics - Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2022). This widespread poverty in northern Nigeria serves as a major catalyst for violent acts, including armed banditry. Poverty and economic hardship are significant drivers that push individuals toward criminal activities, including banditry, in search of survival. Unemployment also plays a critical role in exacerbating these conditions. Nigeria's high unemployment rate has been largely attributed to rapid population growth outpacing economic development as well as ineffective economic policies. Recent data from the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics shows a growth in

unemployment rate among individuals aged 15-24 during 2023 - 8.6% (2023 fourth quarter), up from 7.2% in the previous quarter (Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics Unemployment Data Report for 4th Quarter, 2023). Similarly, urban unemployment increased slightly to 6.0% in the same period. Despite changes in the methodology used to assess employment, the challenges remain, with many still unable to find sustainable jobs (Gbogbo, 2023). High unemployment creates frustration and desperation, which can lead individuals to engage in criminal activities such as armed banditry.

Ideological Factors

Ideological influences, particularly those tied to religious beliefs, significantly impact the spread of radical ideas and violence in Nigeria. In the face of widespread poverty, unemployment, and lack of education, many individuals turn to religious extremism as a means of addressing their socio-economic challenges. Extremist groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP) exploit these vulnerabilities, using religious rhetoric to radicalize and recruit followers (Maiangwa, 2014). Boko Haram, whose name translates to "Western education is forbidden," manipulates religious beliefs to incite rebellion against the state, targeting the economically disenfranchised population. This ideological radicalization fosters a mindset that justifies the use of violence to achieve extremist goals, creating a sense of alienation and opposition to state authority. Although Boko Haram insurgents and armed bandits operate as distinct entities, their shared tactics and ideological foundations often overlap, leading to coordinated criminal activities (Okwuwada, 2023). The presence of ungoverned spaces in the NW region provides these groups with the opportunity to establish operational bases, from where they launch attacks on remote communities (Okon et al., 2023). This growing ideological influence, augmented by criminality, has heightened political instability in the NW, posing a severe threat to national security.

Environmental Factors

Environmental factors, such as desertification and unfavourable climatic changes in the NW region, are significant drivers of armed banditry in Nigeria. These conditions have triggered climate-induced migration and intensified competition for scarce natural resources (Ojo et al., 2023). Climate change has notably influenced the recurring movement of pastoralists in search of pasture and water for their livestock, often resulting in conflict with crop farmers. The pastoralist-farmer conflict typically arises from competition over grazing land, water, and other essential resources (United Nations, 2018). This conflict has frequently escalated into armed confrontations, leading to significant losses of life and property in various NW communities.

The ecological pressure in the northern region, driven by an increasing demand for expansive farmlands, has further constrained the available grazing land for herders. Additionally, the impact of climate change has exacerbated desertification in the NW

region, leading to prolonged dry seasons and further contributing to the migration of herders seeking sustainable environments for their livestock. Between 2015 and 2019, approximately 7,000 people were reportedly killed, and about 1.3 million individuals were displaced internally due to violent clashes between farmers and herders in Nigeria (Corps, 2019).

Desertification, drought, and other adverse climatic effects not only disrupt traditional livelihoods but also deepen poverty among affected communities. This economic strain sometimes pushes individuals towards armed banditry and other forms of violent crime as a desperate means of survival.

Negative Impacts of Armed Banditry in Northwest Nigeria on National Security

Since the return of democracy in 1999, Nigeria has faced numerous security challenges, including political violence, farmer-herder conflicts, Niger Delta militancy, and armed banditry. Each region of Nigeria grapples with unique security issues that undermine socio-economic development and national security. In the NW region, the persistent threat of armed banditry has profoundly affected various aspects of life, leading to significant negative impacts on education, economic activities, rural-urban migration, and humanitarian conditions.

Adverse Impact on Education

Armed banditry in the NW region has severely undermined educational development, impeding human capital growth and, in turn, socio-economic progress and national security (Ibrahim, 2020). The targeted attacks on schools, particularly for the kidnapping of students, have exacerbated Nigeria's already critical issue of out-of-school children (Osasona, 2023). According to the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), Nigeria accounts for the largest share of the world's 13.2 million out-of-school children (United Nations, 2021). The northern region, especially the NW, are disproportionately affected, with approximately 3.49 million out-of-school children, in stark contrast to the South-East, which has about 713,716 (Premium Times Special Report, September 2021; Ojo et al., 2023).

The alarming number of school closures due to banditry further illustrates the crisis. For instance, in Katsina state, 99 schools were closed, and in Zamfara state, 75 schools were shut down as of August 2022 due to the threat of attacks (Save the Children International, Nigeria, 2023). Vulnerable schools in rural areas have been relocated and merged with those in safer neighbouring towns as a temporary measure. However, these closures disrupt the education system and hinder the academic progress of countless students, leading to increased school dropout rates and a further rise in the number of out-of-school children.

The psychological impact on students and their families is also profound. Fear and anxiety about safety have discouraged many from pursuing formal education (Akpa-

Achimugu & Ibeh, 2023). This reluctance to attend school heightens the risk of children becoming susceptible to recruitment into criminal activities, perpetuating the cycle of violence and insecurity. While the government's response to close schools following attacks may prevent immediate harm, it fails to provide a sustainable solution to the broader issue.

Addressing the crisis requires a comprehensive approach from the FGN, involving the development of robust policies and strategic frameworks to protect educational institutions from banditry. This would not only safeguard the right to education for children in the NW region but also contribute to long-term national stability and socio-economic resilience.
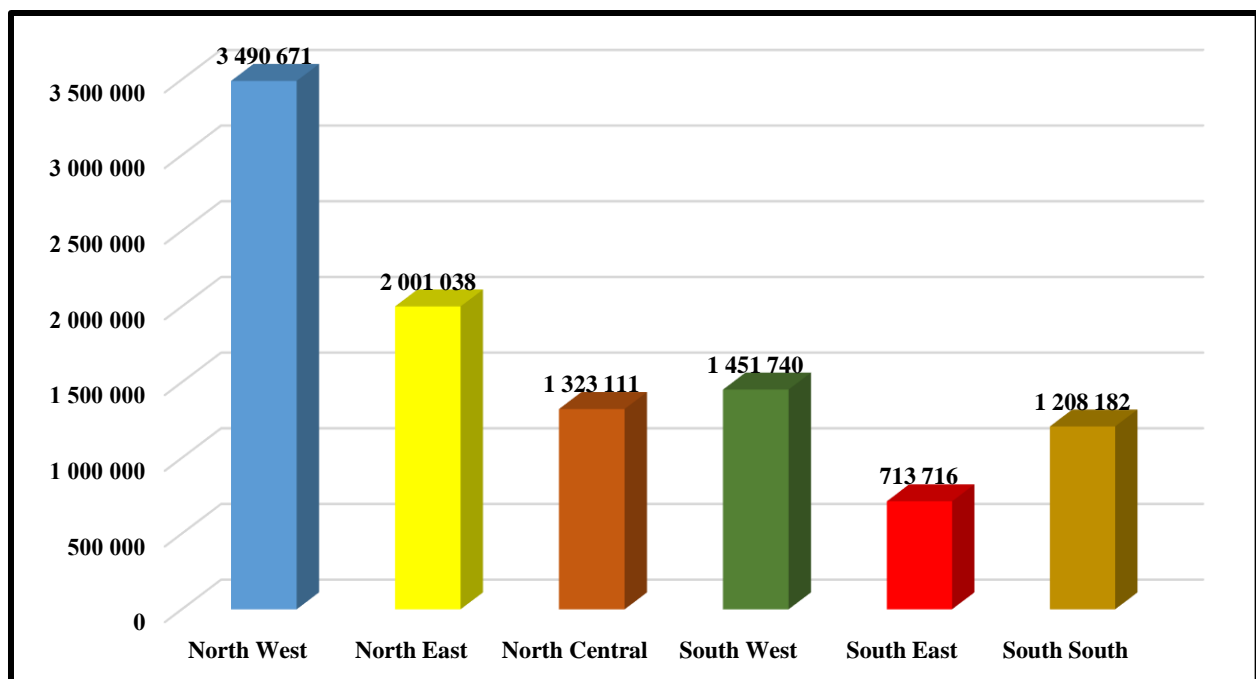

Figure 3: Bar Chart showing the number of out-of-school children in the six geo-political regions of Nigeria. Source: Researcher.

School	Number of students Abducted	Year of Abduction	Place of Abduction	State
Government Science Secondary School	344	December 2020	Kankara	Katsina
Islamiyya School	80	December 2020	Mahuta	Katsina
Government Girls Secondary School	279	March 2021	Jangebe	Zamfara
Bethel Baptist Church School	140	July 2021	Chikun LGA	Kaduna

Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation	39	March 2021	Afaka	Kaduna
Greenfield University	23	April 2021	Kaduna	Kaduna
Federal University, Gusau	24	September 2023	Gusau	Zamfara
LEA Primary/ Secondary School	287	March 2024	Kuriga	Kaduna
Almajari School	15	March 2024	Gidan Bakuso, Gada LGA	Sokoto

Figure 4: Breakdown of the number of school children abducted from schools in the NW Region from December 2020 to March 2024. Sources: 1. Vanguard, Punch, Thisday and Daily Trust Newspapers 2024, Government Bulletin (2021) and Ibrahim, A. (2020).

Humanitarian Impact

The protection of lives and property is a fundamental responsibility of the government and a core objective of Nigeria's National Security Strategy 2019. Despite various measures implemented by the government, armed banditry in the NW region has led to significant loss of lives and property, undermining national security. In 2021 alone, 213 people were killed in Katsina State and 1,192 in Kaduna State due to these attacks (Osasona, 2023). Furthermore, about 210,354 individuals were displaced in the NW region as a result of violence by armed bandits, severely impacting livelihoods and disrupting agricultural activities (International Crisis Group, 2020). The forced abandonment of homes and farms has led to reduced agricultural production, exacerbating food insecurity (Oyewole & Utibe, 2024).

The fatalities and economic losses caused by armed banditry have increased social risks and deepened poverty in affected communities. These attacks are particularly prevalent in areas with large expanses of ungoverned spaces, which provide safe havens for bandits and hinder prompt security responses (Ogbonnaya, 2020). Notable examples include the Rugu and Kumuku forests in Zamfara and Kaduna states, which serve as bases for launching attacks across the NW region (Ojo et al., 2023). The collaboration between armed bandits and insurgents in recruitment, training, and logistics has further escalated violence in the area (Ojo et al., 2023).

Disruption of Economic Activities

Armed banditry has severely disrupted economic activities in the NW region, deterring investment, causing job losses, and reducing revenue. Violent criminal acts, including banditry, negatively impact Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), with a reported decline of $132.59 billion (8%) in 2021 due to increasing violence (The Guardian-

Adekoya, 2021). Key markets in Zamfara and Sokoto states, which play crucial roles in regional trade, were closed in 2019 because of security concerns (West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, 2020). These closures have not only disrupted commercial activities but also reduced state revenue.

Agricultural productivity in the NW has also been heavily affected, as large populations in the region depend on farming for their livelihood. Recurrent banditry has led to the destruction of about 13,000 hectares in Zamfara and 21,316 hectares in Sokoto through burning and theft (International Crisis Group, 2021). This decline in agricultural output poses significant threats to the socio-economic well-being of the population, further undermining national security.

Rural-Urban Migration

The persistence of armed banditry has driven significant internal displacement, with over 210,354 people forced to flee their homes in 2019 across 171 communities in Zamfara, Sokoto, and Katsina states (UNHCR, 2020). Rural-urban migration driven by insecurity increases urban population pressures, stretching existing infrastructure and resources while negatively impacting rural agricultural production (Oyewole & Utibe, 2024). Such movements have worsened the humanitarian crisis in urban centers and contributed to declining socio-economic conditions in rural areas, threatening Nigeria's broader security and development goals.

Current Measures by the Government to Address Armed Banditry Attacks in Northwest Nigeria

The FGN and state governments in the NW region have implemented various strategies to combat armed banditry, employing both kinetic (military) and non-kinetic (soft power) approaches. Despite these efforts, the threat persists in many communities, indicating the need for more comprehensive strategies.

Kinetic Responses

Kinetic measures primarily involve the use of military and law enforcement operations. The FGN has deployed the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN) and other security agencies to restore stability in affected areas. For example, the Nigeria Police launched Operation PUFF ADDER in 2016 to address the rising banditry (Madubuegwu & Abah, 2023). During the same period, the Nigerian Army and Air Force increased their presence through military campaigns like Operations SHARAN DAJI (2016–2019), HARBIN KUNAMA (2015–2019), and SAHEL SANITY (2017–2019), aimed at securing vulnerable communities (Babatunde, 2023).

To streamline command structures, the FGN established the Joint Task Force (JTF) Operation HADARIN DAJI in 2019, consolidating various anti-banditry efforts in Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi, and Katsina states (Aina et al., 2023). The JTF Operation WHIRL PUNCH was also launched in 2020 to counter banditry in Kaduna and Niger

states. These coordinated operations have led to successes, including the neutralization of key bandit leaders, destruction of camps, and seizure of weapons (Babatunde, 2023). Additionally, in collaboration with Niger Republic, the FGN initiated a joint military patrol in 2020 to enhance cross-border security (Madubuegwu & Abah, 2023). Despite these efforts, continuous attacks highlight the need for sustained and more adaptive strategies.

Non-Kinetic Responses

Non-kinetic approaches focus on addressing the root causes of insecurity through socio-economic interventions. The FGN introduced the National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) in 2015, aimed at poverty alleviation and youth empowerment through initiatives like N-Power, National Cash Transfer Programme, and the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (Elemo, 2023). However, the impact of NSIP has been limited due to issues such as corruption and inadequate funding. The Safe School Initiative, launched in 2014 to protect educational institutions from attacks, also suffers from poor implementation and funding (Wilson, 2021; Onje, 2024). Although initially well-received, the initiative has struggled to create a secure environment for schools in the NW region. In a legislative move, the FGN enacted the Terrorism Prevention Act in 2011, recently updated to the Terrorism Prevention and Prohibition Act 2022, to enhance legal measures against violent acts (Attah, 2016). Another non-kinetic measure, the Pulaaku Initiative launched in 2023, aims to rebuild infrastructure and stimulate economic activity in affected areas with a budget of 50 billion Naira (33.5 million USD) (Nwanchukwu, 2024).

The establishment of the North West Development Commission (NWDC) in 2024 marks a further step in addressing the socio-economic fallout of banditry by focusing on infrastructure development (Akinwale & Aborisade, 2024). Meanwhile, state-led initiatives like the Amnesty Programmes in Katsina and Zamfara have yielded mixed results; while they initially reduced violence, a lack of trust and continued hostilities hampered long-term success (Omotuyi, 2021; Madubuegwu & Abah, 2023).

Challenges Associated with Government Efforts to Address Armed Banditry in the Northwest Region

The government's efforts to combat armed banditry in Nigeria's NW region face several significant challenges, including weak local governance, porous borders, criminal justice impediments, and inter-agency rivalry.

Weak Local Government Administration

Ineffective local governance is a key issue undermining efforts to address armed banditry in the NW region. The lack of autonomy for Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Nigeria, coupled with the influence of state governors who often control LGA funds, hampers their capacity to deliver essential services and development projects (Okorie et al.,

2023; Ejekwonyilo, 2024). As a result, poverty persists, with an estimated 68% of Nigerians living below the poverty line, which is linked to increased insecurity (Otekunrin et al., 2019).

The functionalist theory suggests that LGAs, as integral parts of Nigeria's political system, must operate effectively to support overall national stability. Weak LGA administration exacerbates poverty and limits government presence in rural areas, impacting socio-economic development and increasing the risk of violent activities, including armed banditry (Williams, 2012; Miguel, 2006).

Prevalence of Porous Borders

Nigeria's extensive border with countries like Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Benin remains largely unguarded, complicating efforts to curb armed banditry. With over 1,400 illegal border crossing points, including 217 along the NW region's border with Niger Republic, these gaps allow the free movement of armed groups (Asiwaju & Adeniyi, 2016). Only a fraction of these points is secured, enabling cross-border criminal activities that undermine national security.

The porous borders have also led to a significant influx of small arms and light weapons (SALW), estimated at around 10 million, mostly smuggled from conflict zones like Libya and the Sahel (Audu, 2021; UN Office on Drugs and Crime, 2022). These arms fuel violence in the NW and North East regions, posing a major challenge to law enforcement agencies (Abdullahi, 2022). Addressing these security gaps through enhanced border management strategies is essential to stem the flow of weapons and combatants.
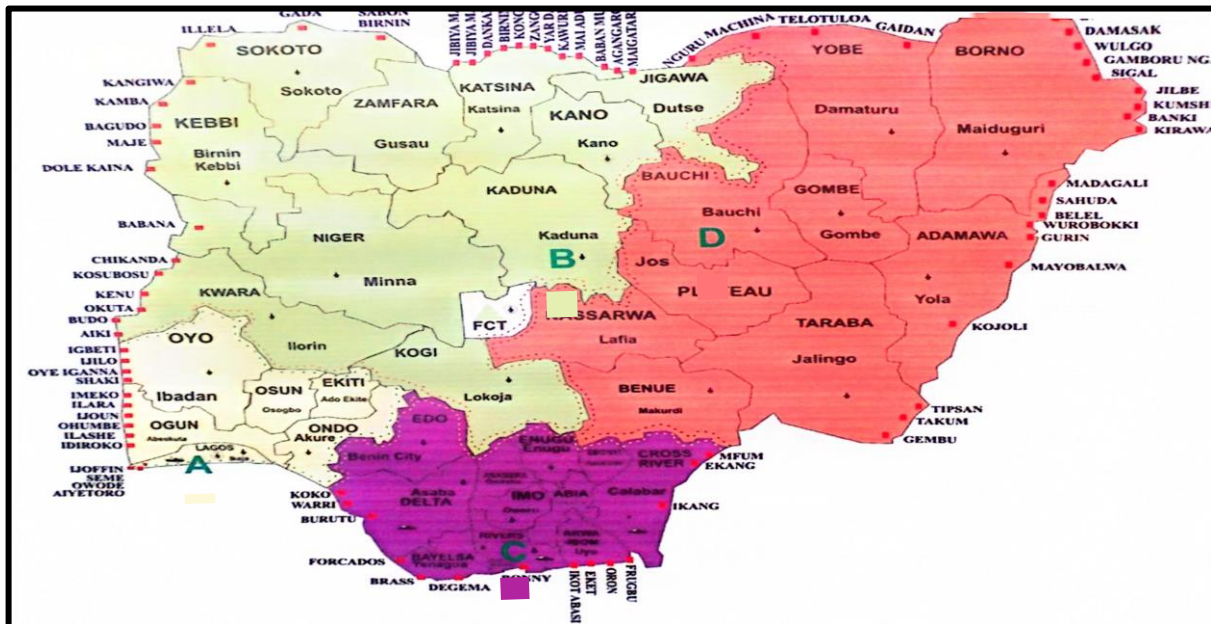

Figure 4: Map of Nigeria showing some illegal border points. Source: Nigeria Customs Service with amendment by the Researcher

Impediments of the Criminal Justice System

The effectiveness of a criminal justice system is vital for the timely prosecution of crimes, including armed banditry, to deter potential offenders. However, weaknesses in the Nigerian justice system often lead to delays that undermine justice, with trials dragging on for extended periods. Amnesty International's report described Nigeria's judicial system as a "conveyor belt of injustice, from beginning to end" (Amnesty International, 2008). It highlighted that at least 65% of inmates in Nigerian Correctional Service facilities had not been convicted, with many awaiting trial for up to 10 years (Amnesty International, 2008). These delays can result in the loss of evidence and witnesses, ultimately undermining efforts to combat armed banditry in the NW region.

Despite efforts to reform the justice system, such as the enactment of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) in 2015, challenges persist. The ACJA aimed to address inefficiencies through innovations like stricter remand timelines, speedy trials, and the electronic recording of confessions (Udombana, 2022). While these measures have yielded some positive outcomes, the system still suffers from significant delays. For example, between 2010 and 2019, security agencies arrested 4,988 suspects for armed banditry and kidnapping, yet only 875 had been tried and sentenced by 2021 (Abdullahi, 2022). Such delays weaken the effectiveness of law enforcement and hinder efforts to address the rising threat of armed banditry in the region.

Inter-Agency Rivalry

Inter-agency rivalry is another critical issue, stemming from weak institutional coordination among stakeholders combating armed banditry. The complexity of Nigeria's security challenges requires a collaborative approach, yet conflicts of interest and a sense of superiority among agencies often hinder cooperation (Abdullahi, 2022). This problem dates back to 1977, when disputes arose between the Nigerian Army and the Nigeria Police over overlapping security roles in Port Harcourt (Odoma, 2014). Since then, recurring clashes among various security bodies have obstructed joint efforts in national security operations. Between 2018 and 2020 alone, there were 57 recorded incidents of inter-agency disputes involving the Nigeria Police and other law enforcement agencies (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Nigeria, 2021).

This unhealthy competition is frequently driven by mistrust and a lack of confidence among the leadership of different agencies, resulting in disjointed operations and ineffective intelligence sharing. Such inefficiencies compromise the government's ability to conduct intelligence-driven operations against armed banditry in the NW region. Effective inter-agency collaboration is critical for pooling resources and harmonizing efforts to achieve the shared goal of national security (Alao et al., 2018). According to functionalism theory, each security agency has a specific role to play, and when these

units collaborate effectively, they contribute to a coordinated effort in curbing armed banditry.

Strategies to Address Armed Banditry in Northwest Nigeria

To effectively address armed banditry in the NW region, the FGN could adopt a multi-pronged strategy that includes increased investment in human security, enhanced border management, criminal justice reform, and streamlining the roles of security agencies.

Investment in Human Security

While the Nigerian government has adopted both kinetic and non-kinetic measures against armed banditry, a greater emphasis on non-kinetic strategies is needed to address the root causes of violence, such as poverty, unemployment, and weak socio-economic conditions. Investment in human security, which prioritizes the welfare of individuals over state-centric approaches (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2015), is crucial.

The FGN's National Social Investment Programme (NSIP), initiated in 2015, aims to improve living standards through components like N-Power, the National Cash Transfer Programme, and others (Gulleng & Suchi, 2021; Elemo, 2023). However, these efforts require expansion and better state-level support to reduce poverty and unemployment. Legislative and policy reforms that prioritize human security can lead to the establishment of quick intervention programs in agriculture, rural development, and infrastructure, enhancing both socio-economic conditions and national security.

The recent Supreme Court ruling affirming financial autonomy for LGAs is a significant step toward grassroots development (Agbo, 2024). Strengthening this autonomy through free and fair LGA elections, potentially managed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), could promote sustainable development and stability.

Effective Border Control

Border security is essential in preventing transnational crimes, including armed banditry. The National Border Management Strategy (NBMS) 2019-2023 outlined measures to strengthen border control but left gaps in managing unmanned areas (NBMS, 2019). A Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) could address these gaps by integrating technology like remote sensing and UAVs for real-time monitoring (Boukhalfa & Amine, 2022). This approach would enhance the existing Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) and improve the Multinational Joint Task Force's operations.

Implementing the CIBMS requires coordinated efforts among stakeholders such as the Federal Ministry of Interior, Nigeria Customs Service, and other relevant agencies to ensure a holistic approach to border management.

Reforming the Criminal Justice System

Nigeria's criminal justice system needs comprehensive reform to expedite the prosecution of criminal cases, particularly those related to national security. Prioritizing criminal cases and limiting court adjournments could enhance judicial efficiency (Igbokwe, 2023). Digitalizing court proceedings and exploring legislative interventions can further streamline criminal justice administration.

Establishing a Special Tribunal for violent crime suspects, with a focus on armed banditry, could lead to faster trials and stronger enforcement of the Terrorism Prevention Act 2022. A dedicated committee should assess the feasibility and legal frameworks required to operationalize such tribunals.

Streamlining Roles of Security and Law Enforcement Agencies

The overlap in roles among security agencies has hindered their effectiveness in addressing armed banditry. Creating a Joint Intelligence Coordination Centre (JICC) in the NW region, modeled after the USA's Combined Intelligence Fusion Centre (CIFC), could foster better synergy and intelligence sharing (Lowe, 2004). This center would facilitate real-time intelligence processing and dissemination, improving response to security breaches.

Positioning the JICC within the Department of State Services (DSS) in Kaduna State, with sub-units in other NW states, would ensure coordinated efforts against armed banditry. Incorporating strategic communication within the JICC's operations would also counteract misinformation and strengthen public awareness about the threats of banditry.

Conclusion

The study reveals that addressing the menace of armed banditry in the NW region of Nigeria requires a holistic, non-kinetic approach that tackles the root causes of poverty and unemployment to enhance stability and national security. The rise of armed banditry in the region began in 2011 with the emergence of notorious groups led by Buharin Daji and Fulanin Kundu (Habila, 2017; Rufai, 2021). Collaboration between these groups and radical jihadist sects like Boko Haram and ISWAP has further exacerbated violent crimes (Maiangwa, 2014). Conflicts between pastoralists and farmers frequently escalate into armed banditry, resulting in significant loss of lives and property.

Armed banditry has severely affected educational development in the NW region by instilling fear in children and their parents, leading to a rise in the number of out-of-school children, which reached approximately 3.49 million in 2020 (Premium Times Special Report, September 2021; Ojo et al., 2023). These attacks have also driven rural populations from their communities, reduced agricultural productivity, and disrupted local economies, particularly in Zamfara and Sokoto states (Oyewole & Utibe, 2024).

Despite the adoption of kinetic and non-kinetic strategies by federal and state governments, armed banditry persists. The study identifies a lack of local government

autonomy as a critical factor contributing to weak administration and socio-economic stagnation in rural areas, exacerbating poverty and instability (Williams, 2012). The NW region remains the poorest in Nigeria, with the highest poverty rate (Otekunrin et al., 2019). Additionally, porous borders along the Nigeria-Niger corridor facilitate the movement of bandits and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW).

Recommendations for a non-kinetic approach can be proposed. Given these challenges, the government should prioritize non-kinetic strategies by increasing investments in human security to address poverty and unemployment—the primary drivers of armed banditry in the NW region. Legislative reforms to transfer the authority for local government elections from state electoral commissions to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) could strengthen grassroots governance and development.

The implementation of a CIBMS is also crucial. This system would integrate advanced technology and communication networks to improve border surveillance and control. Hi-tech surveillance tools, including UAVs and remote sensing devices, could significantly enhance border security.

Reforming the criminal justice system to prioritize cases based on their threat level would expedite trials and reduce delays. Legislative and policy interventions are necessary to digitize court proceedings and improve judicial efficiency. Establishing Special Tribunals to handle cases related to violent crimes, including armed banditry, would ensure timely justice and strengthen enforcement of relevant laws.

Furthermore, creating a JICC in the NW region would facilitate real-time intelligence sharing and enhance the operational capabilities of security agencies. This coordination would promote synergy among agencies, leading to more effective anti-banditry operations.

Notes on Contributors

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Conflict of Interest

The authors hereby declare that they have no financial interest in this manuscript.

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Branding the Ballot: How the Labour Party Shaped Voter Behaviour in Nigeria's 2023 Presidential Election[1]

Nwaonuma Okoro[2]

Abstract:

This paper investigates the Labour Party's branding strategies and their impact on voter behaviour during Nigeria's 2023 presidential election. Emphasising candidate positioning, digital interaction, and grassroots mobilisation, it underscores the party's attraction to youthful urban dwellers through social media and reform-based messaging. Adopting a qualitative case study approach, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with Labour Party officials, political analysts, and voters, together with focus group discussions and social media content. Thematic analysis showed that although digital branding invigorated urban voters, limited rural reach, driven by cultural affiliations and ethnics, limited widespread electoral outcomes. The findings underline the role of political branding in influencing voter behaviour in fledgling democracies. The study advocates for integrated approaches, incorporating digital and grassroots strategies. This paper enriches African political marketing literature, providing knowledge for parties working to improve voter participation.

Keywords:

Political Branding;
Voter Behaviour;
Digital Engagement;
Nigeria's 2023 Election;
Grassroots
Mobilisation.

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Introduction

Background

The Nigerian political environment has been largely dominated over the years by two major parties: the All Progressive Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). According to Punch (2023), the 2023 presidential elections, however, signalled significant change with the emergence of the Labour Party as a powerful force. This shift can be linked to broad public dissatisfaction with the entrenched political system, pervasive corruption, and worsening socio-economic conditions, creating an opportunity for alternative political narratives to gain support (Manuwa, 2022). The labour party exploited this opportunity, positioning itself as a champion of change and reform, attracting support from the youth, who comprise a major part of Nigeria's voting population (Mokuye et al., 2023).

The Financial Times (2023) contends that the rebirth of the Labour Party in 2023 is widely attributed to the widespread appeal of its presidential candidate, Peter Obi, whose reputation as a transparent-driven and reform-orientated leader resonated among voters frustrated with Nigeria's leadership failures. Obi's campaign highlighted accountability, economic reform, and infrastructural development, positioning the party as a viable alternative to the ruling elite. Besides, the Labour Party leveraged social media and local mobilisation to communicate its messages, especially among Nigeria's tech-savvy youth, who were crucial on organising and sharing campaign messages (Adekunle & Iredia, 2023).

Schneider (2004) posits that political branding, a principle originating in marketing and utilised in politics, plays an important role in influencing voter perception and behaviour. It requires developing a party's identity and values in a way that connects with particular voter demographics, using carefully crafted messaging and symbols to evoke emotional and psychological bonds (Lees-Marshment et al., 2019). The Labour Party's branding strategy for the 2023 elections framed its electoral strategy around being the party for the youth, transparency, and transformative change. The employment of social media platforms and local community involvement emphasised the party's effort to develop a brand that appeals to the youth and those disillusioned by the current political system (Akinyetun, 20220).

Despite the Labour Party's strategic branding efforts, how these efforts significantly influenced voter behaviour and impacted the election outcome remains insufficiently examined in the academic literature. Understanding how political branding influences voter behaviour, especially in an African setting like Nigeria, is important for political marketers and scholars investigating the relationship between political communication and the electoral process. This paper examines the Labour Party's branding approach and its influence on voter behaviour during the 2023 presidential elections in Nigeria.

Literature Review

The concept of political branding became popular in political marketing, which integrates traditional marketing principles into the political discipline. It stresses the importance of developing and managing a political brand similar to commercial brand management (Scammell, 2007). According to Lees-Marshment et al. (2019), political branding entails crafting a party's identity, values, and messages to create a unique image that appeals to a targeted voter group. This image development is important as it distinguishes a political party from its competitors. Also, it develops an emotional and psychological connection with voters, promoting loyalty and influencing voter behaviour (Needham & Smith, 2015).

At the heart of political branding is the concept of identity formation, which confines itself to how parties present themselves as empathetic individuals that connect with the values, hopes, and beliefs of voters. Theories such as social identity theory suggest that individuals often associate with groups that align with their self-concept. Pointing to the idea that political parties that effectively align their brand identity with voter identities are inclined to win their support (Aaker, 1997; Needham, 2006). Branding strategies, for example, that reach out to marginalised youth, using their own language and cultural icons and symbols, can enhance the party's appeal and voter identification (Susila et al., 2019).

Another essential element of political branding is brand loyalty. Smith and French (2009) argue that just as consumer loyalty to brands is dependent upon perceived value, trust, and emotional connections, political brand loyalty emerges when voters perceive a party as a reliable proponent of their interests. Parties that develop robust, consistent branding over time are inclined to sustain voter loyalty, even in the midst of a changing political environment (Needham & Smith, 2015). This consistency also increases the trustworthiness and credibility of a party, which serves as key indicators of voting behaviour (Hennesberg et al., 2009).

Voter Behaviour in Nigerian Elections

In Nigeria, voter behaviour has historically been influenced by a complex interaction of ethnic, religious, and regional ties (Babalola, 2020). Following the country's restoration of democratic governance in 1999, elections have consistently highlighted these differences, with political parties exploiting ethnic and religious identities to galvanise support (Sanusi, 2007). Voters often support candidates who reflect their ethnic or regional identity, seeing them as better representatives of their interests (Abdulahi et al., 2023). Furthermore, vote buying and electoral manipulation have over time shaped voter behaviour, frequently undermining the impact of ideological or issue-centred voting (Osimen & Emeka, 2022).

In Nigeria, socioeconomic conditions and cultural factors significantly determine voter decisions. Economic uncertainty and pervasive poverty lead many voters to focus on immediate financial gains rather than long-term policy planning, consistently making them vulnerable to vote buying (Hoffmann & Patel, 2022). In addition, religious

associations play a critical role, as religious leaders have strong influence in mobilising voters by appealing to collective beliefs and values (Eze, 2020).

Electoral outcomes are also influenced by cultural practices, which emphasise communal unity and shape voter preference. In rural communities, for instance, social bonds deeply influence traditional leaders and voter decisions, often favouring candidates aligned with local or communal interests (Ihemeje, 2019). Despite this, the 2023 presidential elections showed a departure towards issue-based voting among younger, urban voters who are increasingly critical of ethnic and religious politics (Abdulrasheed, 2023).

Exploring global and African studies on political parties and their electoral impact offers an important perspective into the Labour Party's situation during the 2023 elections in Nigeria. Studies across the globe have repeatedly revealed that political parties' branding, identity formation, and grassroot mobilisation strategies considerably determine electoral outcomes. Studies in the United States and Europe, for example, show that political parties that effectively connect their platforms with the identity and needs of voters regularly achieve greater success (Somer-Topcu, 2015). In such contexts, political parties utilise targeted branding strategies and communication techniques to create deep emotional bond with their supporters, leading to increased voter loyalty and turnout (Dean et al., 2015)

Across Africa, political parties are confronted with distinct challenges, including ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic factors that impact voter behaviour differently than in Western democracies (Basedau et al., 2011). Studies indicate that parties across African countries frequently leverage ethnic, regional, and religious identities to rally voter support. According to Norris & Mattes (2003), in many African countries, political parties target dominant ethnic groups or regions for strategic alignment to ensure votes, underscoring identity over ideology.

Notwithstanding, research also reveals that political parties in Africa make greater use of branding strategies akin to those employed by Western democracies. In South Africa, for example, the African National Congress (ANC) has continually deployed its historical legacy as a liberation party to brand itself as a party of liberation, identity, and progress (Lodge, 2004). Similarly, in Kenya , the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) has sought to rebrand itself as a forward-thinking agent of change, employing social media and grassroot campaigns to align itself with younger voters (Holmquist, 2012). Such branding strategies are becoming central to African politics as parties work to engage the rising youth population, which is steadily becoming more urban and exposed to digital media (Van & Anyidoho, 2019).

Branding and the Labour Party

The Labour Party of Nigeria, originally founded in 2002 (see https://labourparty.com.ng/), as a platform supporting labour unions and working class interests, was largely sidelined in the country's political environment until recent years. In its early days, the party was mainly associated with the promotion of workers rights,

an equitable wage, and social justice. However, its branding efforts remained largely traditional and fell short of the vigour needed to compete against Nigerian dominant parties, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressive Congress (APC), which had widespread appeal and reinforced political structure.

The transformation of the Labour Party started in the late 2010s as it realised the need to extend its appeal beyond the primary working-class constituency to attract a more diverse range of voters. The party's rebranding strategy focused on highlighting governance, transparency, and economic reforms, positioning itself alongside the increasingly influential middle class and youth populations unhappy with the existing political structure.   The rise in youth activism played a role in this transformation, especially movements like #EndSARS in 2020, which emphasised the increasing call for accountability, transparency, and reform (Obadare, 2021).

The Labour Party's brand underwent a major transformation when Peter Obi, a former governor of Anambra State, renowned for his impeccable records of governance and technocratic style, became the presidential candidate for the 2023 elections. Obi's entry into the party signalled a major change in its branding strategy as the party adopted a more contemporary and youth-orientated image (Mokuye et al., 2023). The "Obident" movement, led by young voters and professionals , developed into a grassroot mobilisation effort that redefined the party's image from a small, labour-orientated party to a major force in driving change across the country. (DW, 2022). The party leveraged this momentum by using digital strategies, employing social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp to reach urban, tech-driven voters, and magnifying its message of reform and progress. (Bassey et al., 2024)

In addition, the Labour Party directed its branding efforts to emphasise inclusivity and national unity, striving to attract support from diverse ethnic and regional groups, which have historically influenced Nigerian politics. This approach differed immensely from both its past image and the strategies of its competitors. In establishing itself as a genuinely national and reform-driven alternative, the Labour Party evolved its brand identity to contest the stronghold of entrenched politics in Nigerian environment.

Research Design

I adopted a qualitative approach, making use of a case study methodology to explore the Labour Party's branding efforts and its impact on voter behaviour during the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria. A qualitative design allowed for thorough exploration of complicated social structures, particularly when examining perceptions, strategies, and behaviours (Creswell, 2013). The case study method is especially appropriate as it offers an in-depth exploration of the Labour Party's unique branding techniques and their influence on various voter demographics (Yin, 2028). This technique allowed me to examine different sources of data, including interviews, campaign materials, and social media contents, making it possible for triangulation and in-depth understanding of the party's strategies and voter responses (Stake, 1995).

Participant Recruitment

To present diverse perspectives on the Labour Party's branding strategies and voter behaviour, I recruited participants using purposive sampling, a method considered effective for qualitative research as it targets specific knowledge and experience (Patton, 2015). I targeted three major groups: Labour Party officials, political analysts, and voters from different demographic backgrounds. To successfully enlist participants for this study, I used a multi-pronged strategy designed to access credible opinion within the field. Recruiting efforts were originally carried out using professional networks, taking advantage of established contacts within political and academic circles to reach stakeholders directly involved in or knowledgeable about the Labour Party's branding strategies. These methods enabled me to locate important informants, such as political analysts, party officials, and active voters, capable of offering in-depth insights into the 2023 presidential elections in Nigeria.

Besides, social media platforms were instrumental in the recruitment. Platforms like Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook were strategically employed to connect with politically engaged individuals and figures who had made public comments or indicated interest in political branding and voter behaviour. By focusing on particular groups and discussion threads related to the Labour Party and Nigeria's political climate, I was able to engage a larger and more varied pool of participants who could offer broad perspectives on the topic. Recommendations from early participants played a key role in the recruitment process through the snowball sampling method, which is especially successful in engaging niche or hard-to-reach participants (Patton, 2015). As initial participants proposed additional contacts within their network, this technique widened my reach, which was successful in reaching potential stakeholders and voters who might have been difficult to engage. This snowball sampling method ensured I reached voices from various demographics, including different age groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and political alignment, thereby improving the study by incorporating a broader cross-section of opinions and experiences.

Ultimately, this recruitment strategy using multiple channels provided a well-grounded body of knowledge from participants closely connected to Nigeria's electoral environment. It offered a robust framework for examining the Labour Party's branding effect on voter behaviour (Bryman, 2016).

Interviews and Focus Group Discussion

I conducted 15 in-depth interviews using Zoom to ensure convenience and reach participants across the different regions of Nigeria. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, giving the participants enough time to share their knowledge in detail (Opdenakker, 2006). The interviews included 5 Labour Party officials, 5 political analysts, and 5 voters from different socio-economic backgrounds. Besides, I organised a focus group discussion, each with 6 to 8 participants, using Zoom, targeting younger voters due to their significant influence in shaping the 2023 elections (Basil & Zekeri,

2024). These sessions lasted about 90 minutes, promoting interactive exchanges and focusing on mutual values

I analysed campaign materials, including social media posts from platforms like Twitter and Facebook, the Labour Party's election manifestos, and public speeches by its leaders. Using multiple data sources facilitated a broad and detailed understanding of the branding strategies employed while also offering triangulation to validate interview findings (Creaswell, 2013).

Data Analysis

I used thematic analysis to identify themes in voter perception and behaviour, as this method is well-suited for   in-depth qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis facilitated a systematic approach to coding and categorising data, revealing fundamental patterns and insights that deepen understanding of the Labour Party's branding effect.

To begin, I transcribed the interviews and focus group discussion held through Zoom. Then, I familiarised myself with the data, reading and re-reading the transcripts to gain an in-depth understanding (Creswell, 2013). Next, I used NVivo software to code the data, generating initial codes that highlight particular facts of voter behaviour, branding strategies, and perceptions. The software helped to organise and visually present the data effectively. This process allowed me to compare codes across various demographics

I grouped the code into these broader categories: "youth engagement," "branding effectiveness," "social media influence," and "regional appeal." Next, I analysed the connection among these categories to uncover major themes like "digital mobilisation of youth voters" and "trust in political transparency." Thematic analysis facilitated the reintegration of these patterns to the research questions, presenting an encompassing view of how the Labour Party's branding strategies engaged different categories of voters.

Theme	Description	Examples
Youth Engagement	Focused on how youth responded to the Labour Party branding efforts, especially through digital channels	Increased social media participation among urban youth
Branding Effectiveness	Evaluate the perceived success of the Labour Party's branding, differentiating itself from competitors	Positive perception of candidates transparency
Social Media	Analysed the role of social media in	Viral campaigns and

Influence	shaping the spreading of Labour Party's messages	grassroot mobilisation efforts
Regional and Ethnic Appeal	Investigated how the Labour Party attempts to transcend traditional regional and ethnic divide	Inclusive messaging is seen as appealing across demographics

Using this method, I was able to achieve a systemic understanding of how branding influence voter behaviour, in line with conventional practices in qualitative political research (Brau & Clarke, 2006).

Ethical Considerations

Throughout this study, I rigorously followed ethical guidelines to uphold respect, confidentiality, and informed consent for all participants. Before participation, I provided each participant a detailed explanation of the objectives of the study and the procedure, stressing that participation was strictly voluntary and that they were free to back out at any time without any consequences. To uphold confidentiality, I concealed all identifiable information and confirmed the data were stored securely (Bryman, 2016). Recognising the fragile nature of political opinions and affiliations, especially in relations to Nigerian politics, I was specifically attentive to protecting participants' privacy and avoided probing for information that could put them at risk.

Findings and Discussion

To explore the Labour Party's branding strategies during the 2023 presidential elections, I asked participants important questions during the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. I asked them, "What branding strategies did the Labour Party adopt to distinguish itself from other parties?" and "How did the party engage with different demographic groups, especially the youth?" The response highlighted three principal strategies: candidate positioning, social media utilisation, and grassroots mobilisation.

Candidate Positioning

The decision to nominate Peter Obi as the Labour Party's presidential candidate was a strategic effort to alter the party's perception among voters. Respondents noted that Obi's reputation for transparency and economic reforms was key in framing the party as a distinct option against the prevailing status quo (The Nation, 2022). Party officials stressed that Obi's technocratic appeal was essential in winning over middle-class and youth voters who had lost faith in the ruling parties. A party official stated:

"To build the Labour Party as a credible option for change, we concentrated on Peter Obi's track record. By presenting his key accomplishments and management philosophy, we strived to show the party's potential to address the critical

problems Nigeria is grappling with, consequently drawing the interest of voters seeking a genuine alternative in the political environment."

This upholds the theory that political parties frequently position candidates with personal traits that connect with the target demography to build credibility (Scammell, 2007).

Leveraging Social Media

Social media was another notable branding technique used by the Labour Party. I asked participants about the role of social media in the party's campaign efforts. A substantial number of respondents, especially younger voters, emphasised that platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp were crucial to mobilising support. The Labour Party successfully used these platforms to connect voters, share campaign messages, and address negative narratives from the rival parties (Adekunle & Iredia, 2023). A youth voter remarked: "Social media enhanced our experience by establishing a sense of belonging in the movement; it amplified our voices, enabling us to engage, share ideas, and rally support more efficiently." This finding supports research that underscores the growing importance of digital tools in modern political campaigns, particularly in engaging younger population (Opeibi, 2019)

Grassroots Mobilisation

The Labour Party also concentrated heavily on grassroots mobilisation, an approach centred on creating community networks and alliances to reach voters at the community level. I asked political analysts how successful this strategy was, and they stressed that the Labour Party's grassroots mobilisation set it apart from its competitors. Through focusing on door-to-door outreach and community town hall meetings, the party established a direct and personal connection with voters, strengthening its image as a party of the people (Keschmann, 2013). This finding affirms the necessity of grassroot, community-focused engagement in establishing voter trust and support in emerging democracies (Jung & Long, 2023).

Voter Perceptions and Reactions

To explore voter perspectives and responses to the Labour Party's branding activities during the 2023 elections. I asked tailored questions: "How did you perceive the Labour Party's campaign messages?" and "Did factors like age, ethnicity, or socioeconomic standing influence your view of the Labour Party?" the responses indicated different reaction to diverse demographics to the party's branding efforts, emphasising the effectiveness of these elements on voter perception

While analysing the impact of age on voter perception, it was apparent that younger voters were particularly amenable to the Labour Party's branding efforts. I asked young participants to share their reasons for their support of the Labour Party. And many

emphasised the party's progressive messaging and strong social media presence as considerations that were meaningful to them. A participant stated: "The Labour Party engaged directly with voters, using their platforms to address relevant issues. This approach established a strong sense of connection and responsiveness, revealing their commitment to understanding and representing the concerns of their electorate effectively." This is consistent with research indicating that digital engagement is impactful for mobilising young voters (Opeibi, 2019). By presenting Peter Obi as a candidate for change who prioritise transparency, the Labour Party successfully engaged with this population group, that has increasingly raised its voices against systemic corruption and failed governance within Nigeria.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity remains a crucial element in Nigerian politics, and I asked voters if ethnic identity influenced their perception of the Labour Party. While there was a range of responses, many participants affirmed that ethnicity remains important, but the Labour Party branding sought to bridge these divides by advocating for national unity and inclusiveness. A middle-aged voter shared his thoughts:

> "For the first time, I believed that a political party was earnestly striving to unite us beyond ethnic lines. Their message of inclusivity appealed to people from a wide range of backgrounds, cultivating a feeling of unity and common purpose that transcended our traditional divisions."

Nevertheless, some voters from areas traditionally associated with other parties acknowledged that loyalties still determine their perception, emphasising the enduring influence of ethnic identity on political behaviour within Nigeria (Orunbon & Babatunde, 2023).

Socioeconomic Status

The socioeconomic background was also a key factor in determining voter reaction. I asked participants how their economic realities influenced their support for the Labour Party. Many low-income voters saw the Labour Party's promise of economic reforms and anti-corruption efforts as appealing. A voter remarked: "I supported the Labour Party because they promised to create jobs that directly affect me and also fight corruption."

These findings validate that socioeconomic factors are still at the heart of voter choices, especially among the poorer populations seeking immediate economic relief (Kirchgässner, 2019).

Influence of Voter Participation on Election Outcomes

To explore the impact of the Labour Party's branding on voter participation and election outcomes, I asked participant questions like "Do you believe the Labour Party's branding factors influenced your decision to vote?" and "How effective do you think the strategies were in mobilising voters across various populations?" The responses offered valuable perspectives into how branding influences voter participation and revealed both success and limitations of the party's strategies.

The data collected points to a clear correlation between the Labour Party's branding efforts and high voter participation, especially among youth and urban populations. I asked young voters how branding influenced their participation, and many noted that the party's persistent use of social media and messages of reform motivated them to vote. A youth voter had this to say: "The Labour Party's campaign on social media instilled a sense of belonging and compelled me to vote because I was convinced we could drive a change." The Labour Party's branding promoted a feeling of responsibility and urgency among the voters, resulting in higher participation rates in urban areas where there is a concentration of youths.

I explored the connection between these branding efforts and their impact on electoral success by asking participants if they believed the Labour Party's branding made a measurable impact on election outcomes. Respondents remarked that although the Labour Party attracted huge support, especially in metropolitan locations like Lagos and Abuja, its impact was less significant in rural areas. A political analyst said:

> "In urban areas, the Labour Party's message found a strong audience, successfully addressing major challenges and connecting with voters. However, it had troubles establishing a foothold in rural communities where deeply rooted political loyalties and ethnic affiliations continue to dominate, limiting its engagement and effectiveness in these areas."

These limitations suggest that while the Labour Party's branding strategies successfully engaged digitally connected voters, they were unsuccessful in bridging the gap between rural and urban areas.

Furthermore, some voters noted that while the Labour Party's branding successfully communicated its vision of reform and transparency, without the necessary political networks, the party struggled to convert this enthusiasm into votes in certain regions. "Despite this strong message, the party did not have the local structure to mobilise votes in rural areas," a participant observed. This indicate that while branding is a significant asset, it must be complemented by proper support to achieve wider electoral success (Lees-Marshment, 2011).

Comparative Analysis with Other Political Parties

To understand the Labour Party's branding strategies compared to those of other major parties in the 2023 elections in Nigeria, I asked the interviewees, "How did the Labour

Party's branding differ from the strategies used by the All Progressive Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP)?" and "What aspect of these strategies was least effective?" The respondents pointed out the important differences and similarities in branding strategies, exploring the competitive framework of the 2023 elections.

The Labour Party's branding focused on positioning itself as a reformist youth-centred alternative, while the APC and PDP relied extensively on established political networks, ethnic bonds, and regional allegiances. I asked participants how these approaches differed, and many of them pointed out that the Labour Party differentiated itself by prioritising transparency, economic reforms, and anti-corruption initiatives. A respondent remarked: "The Labour Party's messaging seemed invigorating and attractive, particularly to young people disillusioned with the status quo." This strategy contrasts significantly with the APC and PDP, which continue to rely on established narratives (Chioma and Sopuruchi, 2024).

Respondents also stressed that APC and PDP relied on traditional campaign methods. Like rallies and local political alliances. Conversely, the Labour Party made greater use of social media and grassroot mobilisation to connect with voters, especially in urban areas. One political analyst emphasised that "While the APC and PDP were strong on-the-ground in the rural areas, the Labour Party's digital-first approach was evidently crafted to engage a youthful segment of the urban population."

The Impact of Social Media on Voter Behaviour

To study the impact of social media in reinforcing the Labour Party's branding messages during the 2023 elections in Nigeria, I asked participants these questions: "How did social media platforms influence your perception of the Labour Party?" and "Do you think the Labour Party's use of social media was effective in engaging voters?" The responses reflected the major impact of social media on voter behaviour, especially among younger and urban population

I discovered that Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp were major platforms where the Labour Party successfully communicated its branding messages. When I asked voters about the influence of these platforms on their level of engagement, many respondents noted that the Labour Party's active presence on social media increased their feelings of connection to the party and its campaigns. A respondent mentioned: "The Labour Party's presence on Twitter was a significant shift; it felt like they were engaging with us directly, unlike other parties that depended on mainstream media." This perspective corresponds with studies indicating that social media platforms are remarkably effective for political engagement, particularly among young voters who prefer digital over traditional media (Xenos et al., 2014).

Party officials I interviewed stressed that the Labour Party employed social media to share campaign messages and develop interactive and participatory content. The "Obidient" movement, an initiative championed by youth supporting Peter Obi, thrived on those platforms, where users organised rallies, distributed campaign visuals, and participated in live discussions on political matters. When I asked about the effectiveness

of those strategies, a party official had this to say: "We deliberately used social media to create a sense of community and urgency, especially among young voters."

Conclusion

In this paper, I explored the impact of the Labour Party's branding strategies on voter behaviour as well as the final outcome of the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria. My analysis reveals that the Labour Party's branding strategies, especially its application of social media, candidate positioning, and grassroot mobilisation, played a major role in shaping voter engagement and outcomes, particularly among younger and urban demographics. By framing Peter Obi as a reform-minded and transparent candidate, the Labour Party skilfully resonated with the frustration and ambitions of Nigerian youth, leading to higher voter participation from this group (Chioma and Sopuruchi, 2024).

The strategic application of social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp by the Labour Party reinforced its branding message, creating an engaged online community and rallying support. These platforms offered a successful means to communicate directly with voters, creating an atmosphere of belonging and active participation, especially for young people knowledgeable with technology (Fishr et al., 2024)

Ultimately, the Labour Party's branding significantly shaped the election outcome, but it also faced limitations because of its weaker grass-roots engagement in rural areas and reliance on digital platforms. This underscores the need to narrow the rural-urban divide in order to increase voter participation.

Theoretical Implications

The knowledge gained from this research contributes to the increasing scholarship on political branding in Africa, showcasing how branding strategies can be modified to suit specific socioeconomic and cultural settings. Participants emphasised that the Labour Party's focus on youth mobilisation and digital engagement is consistent with global political marketing theories that advocate for the importance of digital and grass-roots engagement in building solid voter-brand relationships (Vaccari, 2016). Notwithstanding, my analysis demonstrates that these theories have to be contextualised for the Nigerian and African environment, acknowledging that rural areas frequently experience limited digital access and that ethnic and regional affiliations continue to affect how voters behave. (Fortune, 2021). This implies that even though digital branding is important, political marketing theories in Africa must acknowledge this unique socio-political dynamics to craft strategies that are more effective and inclusive.

Practical Implications and Recommendations

In line with these findings, I recommend that political parties in Nigeria and indeed Africa consider a hybrid branding strategy that combines digital approaches with

grassroots mobilisation to effectively reach a broader demographic. When I asked participants what strategies they found most effective, many suggested that parties like the Labour Party could strengthen their outreach by building local connections and alliances that complement their digital engagement efforts. A voter stated: "While social media is powerful, it cannot replace the trust built through direct community engagement, especially in rural areas."

To strike a balance, political parties should commit resources in a mix of online and offline branding efforts, ensuring that their online messages are bolstered by a visible presence in communities through local offices, townhall meetings, and collaboration with influential figures within the community (Kumar et al., 2017). Besides, to connect with a more varied audience beyond urban youths, parties must adapt their messaging to highlight concerns that resonate with rural and older voters, such as local economic initiatives and traditional values (Zynep, 2014).

Limitations of Study

I acknowledge limitations in this study that may have influenced the findings. First, the sample size is a notable limitation. Though I conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with a varied range of participants, the number of respondents was relatively small. This could affect the generalisation of the findings, as having a larger sample size would allow for a more accurate representation of voter behaviour across Nigeria's diverse demographic spectrum. (creswell, 2013).

Another limitation is the dynamic nature of the political environment. Political branding and voter behaviour can change quickly due to evolving socioeconomic political factors. For instance, voter sentiments and perceptions may evolve quickly due to emerging political events, economic crises, or shifts in party strategies (Bryman, 2016). Considering the changing political environment in Nigeria, my findings only provide a snapshot in time and would not adequately reflect long-term voter behaviour or the effects on branding. I recognise that the constantly changing nature of the political environment can impact the stability and consistency of the data collected.

In addition, using self-reported data from interviews raises the possibility of response bias, as participants might offer opinions that align with social expectations or political agendas. Despite using triangulation methods by integrating data from multiple sources like social media analysis and campaign materials, the inherent limitation must be recognised when drawing conclusions from the findings. (Yin, 2018).

In order to address these limitations, future studies should expand the sample size to represent a wider array of demographic groups and examine voter behaviour over an extended timeframe to more effectively capture the evolving dynamics of political branding.

Conflict of Interest

The authors hereby declare that they have no financial interest in this manuscript.

Notes on Contributors

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Intra-gender Victimization: An Hamper to the Affirmation of Women's Political Rights in Nigeria[1]

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Abstract:

Appreciable women's political participation in Nigeria is yet to be a reality even after several years of advocacies, policies and litigations and a court order. Women's poverty, patriarchy, culture, religious among other factors beyond women's control have often been highlighted as being responsible for hindering their political participation. Springing from the perspective of victim culpability introduced into victimology by Mendelsohn, this paper argues that there are some forms of passive and active intra-sexual victimization that actually are lending support to these other limiting factors already identified by most scholars. Intra-sexual victimization among women expresses itself through failed socialization function, ineffective negotiation, intra-sexual envy and unhealthy rivalry, greed and selfishness, failure to make significant difference with few opportunities. etc. To this end, it is recommended that in the pursuit of this course, women be more united, take advantage of their socializing function, invest more in personal development, shun all forms of corrupt practices, take more deliberate steps towards mentorship and sponsorship of potential and suitable female candidates, explore the informal mode of negotiation and practice the principles of nego-feminism.

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Introduction

Intra-sexual victimization is used here as some forms of oppression, deprivation, sabotage or opposition of a sex by members of the same sex. It may also refer to the indifferent attitude of member of a gender towards the advancement of the interest of their members. This conveys a similar idea with what kiner (2020) refers to as female rivalry except for the fact that her conceptualization was narrowed towards the female sex. This type of victimization might be very destructive because as Enyia, Ayuk, Otu, Andrew, Njong, Ebagu, Unwanade, and Okpa (2023:245) noted, a kingdom divided against itself shall not stand.

In many parts of the world, even among united nation subscribers and the first world countries, women have been blatantly victimized particularly in deprivation of prominent political offices. Akuindo's (2023) world list of elected and appointed female Heads of States, and Government proves that when compared to their male counterparts, the number of female Presidents or Heads of States and Vice or Deputy past and present is very negligible. For instance, the United States of America since her independence in July 1776 has never produced a female President till date even though according to Abel (2023), her first female presidential candidate Victoria Woodhull contested in 1872. It was only in 2020 that the US will even have the first female Vice President in the person of Kamala Harris. The United Kingdom has had only three Prime Minister- Margaret Thatcher, Theresa May, Ms Liz Truss (Finnis, 2022). The continent of Asia has had a handful of female number one citizen, Africa has had 4 Acting, 1 Interim and 5 elected female President.

Nigeria as an African nation since 1963 she became a republic is yet to have a female President/Head of State, Vice President, Senate President, nor Governor/Military State Administrator apart from Dame Virgy Etaiba who acted as the governor of Anambra state for 6 month following the impeachment of her principal- Peter Obi. Only a few states have had female Deputy governors and Speakers of the House of Assembly. The only female Speaker of the lower chamber Patricia Etteh who was latter forced to resign on corruption allegations, Olu (2023) observed, served between June and October of 2007. Even the 35 percent Affirmative Action for women prescribed by the National Gender Policy since 2006 is yet to be actualized (Alliance for Africa, 2022) now after 17 years. This is however not to say that some commendable efforts have not been made by some political administrations both at the federal and the state level.

This apparent subjugated position of the women in political leadership over the years, scholars have attributed to many factors inter alia: patriarchy (Uwa, John, Dauda & Onyidamola 2018), female poverty (Abdo-Katsipis 2017), low education among female (Zembere, 2020), culture (Andrew & Ashibi, 2022; Eniola, 2018), religion (Eniola, 2018), violent nature of politics (Nwabukeonye, 2014) among others. The three established waves and most popular existing strands of feminist theory such as gender schema, radical feminism, liberal feminism, radical feminism, black feminism, African feminism among others have pointed to other factors other than the women for their lower status in society. By this the female gender is portrayed as mere victims of circumstances in which they have no hand. Specifically, the male gender has received most of the blames from these theorists for the political situation of women. In the light

of the identified factors, solutions have been proffered which some nations have adopted to improve the political conditions of women to an appreciable extent. However, there are paucity of scholarly efforts invested in the critical consideration of the possible role women might be passively and actively playing to scuttle their chances in politics. Without any attempt to deny the much men often manipulate to keep women out of political lime light, it might not be sacrosanct to assume that men are omnipotent in this situation as they have been projected. There are possibilities that the female folk are doing or failing to do somethings which has helped sustained the status quo. In fact, Abekwe (2017) arguing from the 'how women look at women's perspectives of the Feminist film theory advanced by Rachael Sampson suggested that women contribute to their subjugation in the society. It is against this backdrop that this article was conceived and perceived a worthwhile venture.

Statement of the problem

Nigerian women appear to have lots of opportunities and advantages that have the potential to change their political lots for good. Nevertheless, they have remained in the background maybe because of their failure to recognize these opportunities or the potentials therein. Consequently, instead of using their chances to their advantage they use it against themselves and then turn back to blame the men for their political retrogression. Hence, women are observed publicly vituperating fellow women who appear to be making headway in politics or even in life generally. Women also publicly show their preference for male politicians as against their fellow women and teach their wards to do same. They campaign, spend finances in support of men, for cheap selfish political interest as against the promotion of the course of their gender even when it is readily obvious that a female will do better. They socialize their children to believe that only men should take political positions among other misogynistic expressions. These express and sometimes subtle show of intra-gender animosity has persisted alongside all efforts to actualize gender equality by local and international civil societies which have not engendered the expected result.

   To this end, this article seeks to emphasize the blameworthiness of women in their political backwardness, and suggest some workable solutions that may help ameliorate the situation.

The paucity of women political leaders in Nigeria

Nigeria since her independence has been through the military political dispensations and the democratic which happens to be the current dispensation with so many leaders but only a few women has been a part the leadership. Throughout the military Era, no woman was given the opportunity to head a state or be a part of the supreme military council. In the democratic era, since 1999 specifically till date, no woman has been a President, Vice President nor a State Governor. Within the same period, (1999-2023), Okafor and Ileyemi (2013) observed that only 157 women have been elected into the National Assembly compared to 2,657 men. The 2023 election results announce in 2023, indicate that only 18 women (3 Senators and 15 House of Representative members) are part of the National Assembly. In the same vein, Alliance for Africa (2022)

noted with dismay that in 2022, out of the 109 Senators in the National Assembly just 9 happen to be women and of the 360 member of the house of representatives, only 27 were women. This is a conspicuous far cry from the 35% Affirmative Action of the national gender policy.

For appointed positions, women have also suffered setback through Nigerian History. National Bureau of Statistics reported that between 1999 and 2022, women had only occupied 13.73 percent of Ministerial Offices, while the remaining 86.27 were taken by men (Oluwafemi, 2022).

Legal Framework for Women's Political Participation in Nigeria

The Constitution, the National Gender Policy, International obligations and commitments and the Court Judgement are some legal backings for women's right to political leadership at any level in Nigeria.

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is the first and supreme legal document which contains the basic principles of the laws of the nation in its chapter IV. In this chapter, it guarantees equality and non-discrimination in all areas of life on account of sex. The National Gender Policy stipulates that the implementation of a 35 percent quota reserved for women in politics and the economy as a temporary measure to bridge the gender gap.

Also, Nigeria is a signatory to a good number of women friendly regional and international treaties. Notable among these are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women (The Maputo Protocol) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act Cap 10, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) (1995), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals

Furthermore, in 2022, a Federal High Court in Abuja ordered the federal government to comply with the 35% affirmative action for women following a suit filed by nine civil society organizations against the Federal Government on August 24, 2020. The civil society groups include: Women Empowerment and Legal Aid (WELA) Initiative, Nigeria Women Trust Fund (NWTF) International Federation of Women Lawyers, 100 Women Lobby Group, Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD- West Africa), Vision Spring Initiative (VSI), YIAGA Africa and Women in Politics Forum (WIPF) (Ejekwonyilo, 2022).

Affirmative Action for Nigerian women in politics

Affirmative Action (AA) refers to temporary policy measures designed to favour a disadvantaged group or reverse discrimination to create a sense of fair representation. Robert (2009) opined that it is a policy program that seeks to redress past discrimination through active measures to ensure equal opportunities as in education and employment. American Association For Access Equity and Diversity - AAAED (2023) argued that AA has its origin in the civil rights movement of the United States of America when President

John F. Kennedy on March 6, 1961 by Executive Order 10925 established the President's Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity which demanded Federal contractors with American Government to take affirmative action to ensure the avoidance of any form of discriminatory treatment on the basis of race, colour or nationality towards applicants and employees. The Affirmative Action eventually was solidified by the Civil Right Act of 1964 sponsored by Senators Joseph Clerk and Clifford Case. Subsequently in 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson amended his 1965 order which was a reiteration of Kennedy's to include sex. (AAAED, 2023). From the foregoing, it is evident that the term affirmative action did not begin with inclusion in political leadership nor was it specifically designed for the sake of women although has grown to encompass it.

In the Nigerian political space, it is necessary to note that some commendable efforts have been made by various government administrations towards the affirmation of women's political leadership. In the year 2000, President Olusegun Obasanjo introduced the National Policy on Women and in 2006, in a bid to improve policy, he went on to introduce the National Gender Policy. President Goodluck Jonathan Achieved about 33% of women appointees in Political Offices besides the many women empowerment programs initiated. By this, his administration became the best in terms of AA for women's political representation in comparison to others before and after him (Ibekwe & Chidiobi, 2022). The Buhari's administration also witnessed a few empowerment programs for women and most interestingly, the initiation of the Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill still waiting to be passed.

A Snapshot on Feminism

As a theoretical standpoint, feminism seeks to advocate for the equality of the male and the female gender in all spheres of human endeavor. Various waves of feminism have their unique emphasis and achievements just as various strands have their different explanations to women's denigration.

First wave

The wave is formally traced to the Seneca Fall Convention in 1848 when three hundred men and women rallied in pursuit of equality for women (Rampton, 2015). The first wave which adopted mass protest as its prominent approach finally archived a major success in 1920 when the Congress passed the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote Grady (2018).

Second wave

According to Grady (2018) the wave majorly began with the Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique, of 1963 with the* theme that justifies that the unhappiness of housewives owing to their relegation was rational and was for no fault of theirs. Grady (2018) further argued that another prominent figure in the second wave was Carol Hanisch who argued in her 'the personal is political' that domestic labour, access to abortion were systemic, political and central to the fundamental rights of women. This phase thus pursued the outlawing of marital rape, raising of awareness about domestic violence, legislations against sexual harassment in the workplace, the right for women

to hold personal credit cards and to apply for mortgages as ways to achieve gender equality.

Third wave

Grady (2018) contends that third wave is pegged to two things: The Anita Hill case in 1991 which revolved around work sexual harassment and the emergence of the riot *grrrl* groups in the music scene of the early 90's.Tthe emergence of Timothy in the Supreme Court despite the testimony against him opened up a new dimension of women's struggle for political representation because they believed Anita's case would have received a more intense attention if they had political representation in leadership. To this end the wave struggles and achieved 24 seats for women in the House of representative and 3 seats in the Senate Rampton (2015).

Black Feminism

According to Richardson (1987), Maria W. Stewart one of the major proponents of black feminism identified race, gender, and class as the major reasons for Black women's poverty and therefore admonished African-American women to reject the negative images of Black womanhood so prominent in her time. Maria specifically charged black women to use their special roles as mothers to forge powerful mechanism of political action.

African Feminism

One of the first African feminist texts was Awa Thiam's *Black Sisters Speak out: Feminism and Oppression in Black Africa* (1986). This presented story of African women, particularly in Senegal, and called on black women to speak out against polygamy, forced marriages and female circumcision. For Thiam (1986:118), "the Black woman of Africa suffers a threefold oppression: by virtue of her sex: she is dominated by man in a patriarchal society; by virtue of her class, she is at the mercy of capitalist exploitation; by virtue of her race she suffers from the appropriation of her country by colonial or neo-colonial powers". African feminism perspectives share similar views whether they be called womanism, stiwanism, motherism, snail-sense feminism or nego-feminism. It is however important to note that these differ a little in their proffered solution to gender inequality.

Classifications of Victims on the basis of culpability

Benjamin Mendelsohn (1900-1998) besides coining the term victimology in 1947, is renowned for his classification of victims from the angle of victim's culpability (Clevenger, Navarro, Marcus & Higgins, 2018). His classification is particularly of interest to this study because it serves as a springboard from whence the central idea of the article was conceived. Citing Schafer (1977), Clevenger, Navarro, Marcus & Higgins (2018) noted that Mendelsohn in 1956 classified victims as follows:

1. Completely innocent victim: This refers to a victim who bears no responsibility at all for victimization; but victimized simply because of his or her nature, such as being a child.
2. Victim with minor guilt: This refers to a victim who is victimized due to ignorance; a victim who inadvertently places himself or herself in harm's way
3. Victim as guilty as offender/voluntary victim: This refers to a victim who bears as much responsibility as the offender: a person who, for example, enters into a suicide pact and blood covenant relationship.
4. Victim more-guilty than offender: This refers to a victim who instigates or provokes his or her own victimization.
5. Most guilty victim: This refers to a victim who is victimized during the perpetration of a crime or as a result of crime he or she is trying to commit.
6. Simulating or imaginary victim: This refers to a victim who is not victimized at all but, instead fabricates a victimization event.

One thing that this categorization helps to establish which is central to this study is the fact that some victims contribute to their own victimization. However, although the classification of victims is not necessarily the point of interest to this study Mendelsohn's typology is still applicable if victims are considered as a group and not necessarily individuals. In this regard, victims with minor guilt might be exemplified by women who expose the weaknesses of their fellow female politicians for some unscrupulous male politicians to explore. Women may become victims as guilty as offenders when they try to adopt the mainstream unsavory political tactics to gain advantage over their male or female competitor. More so, women may fit into the categories of victims more-guilty than offenders when they decide to go confrontational against the political status quo. Beyond the purviews of this typology, there exist other aspects of women's culpability which the authors now discuss in the next segment.

Other areas of culpability of Nigerian women in the failure of the affirmation of their political rights

Socialization function:

Marxist Feminism contends that women are kept at home to do unpaid jobs as homemakers, "labor force manufacturers", character molders (socializers), and supports givers. This particularly mirrors the situation in Nigeria where socialization function culturally and practically is largely left for cisgender woman by default as housewives. According to Soetan (2014), some men prefer to pay their own wives salaries and wages rather than allow them work in any organization. Even a good number of working women today tend to have more opportunities with their children than the men partly because of the prevailing cultural orientation. Socialization is a very strong tool that can be exploited by women to change the mindset of men from childhood and secure a

more accommodating society for the female gender. This may inform why Maria one of the foremost black feminists, charged black women to use their roles as mothers to forge a strong mechanism for political action (Richardson, 1987). But some mothers, instead of teaching their boys the essence of treating their girl counterparts as equals, tend to make them feel superior to the girls. They allow them exercise aggression and other forms of subtle behavior that female politicians today complain about their male counterparts. At the same time, the girl child is sternly discouraged from most of these behaviours that are tolerated in boys. These boys grow up to maintain the trend of perceiving and treating women as second class citizens and the negative cycle continues. On the other hand, some mothers both working and stay-at-home ones contract out the socialization functions of their children to Nannies, relatives and other domestic servants. By this, they ignorantly compromise their chances of reshaping the misogynistic social structure to reflect the much desired balance in the nearest future.

Effective Negotiation:

The extent to which persistent and humble negotiations can go in bringing about change cannot be over emphasized. Nnaemeka (2004) in her strand of African Feminism known as nego-feminism argued that for African women to achieve and enjoy the elevation of status, feminists must negotiate and compromise enough as this is required to deconstruct patriarchy and obtain freedom from oppression. Women have good opportunities as beloved wives, revered mothers, cherished daughters and valued friends to negotiate for a good social standing politically with men on a daily basis. But it appears that instead of maximizing informal channels of negotiations available to them to the of benefit their gender, what is mostly observed is the formal negotiations by women organizations and CSOs which is yet to accomplish the desired result.

Envy and unhealthy competition:

Envy keep women apart with distrust and competitiveness. It encourages them to hide their strength and failures from other women for fear they may not measure up (Matsoso, 2022). This makes it almost impossible to develop a strong team spirit within the gender that can help them actualize their dreams in politics. Kara-Yokoubian (2022) noted that there have been reports by women about frequent indirect victimization on them by other women simply because they possess some desirable qualities. Reenkola (2022) argued that inferiority complex and humiliation which are major instigators of envy usually trigger the devaluing, spoiling and destroying the enviable. Women mostly use negative gossips as an aggression tactics against same sex competitors (Kara-Yokoubian 2022).

In politics, women compete among themselves through wiles, innuendos and other forms of manipulations. Marcus (2016) contended that the male dominated workplace set women up to compete against themselves due to scarcity of top position for them. In the view of Kiner (2020), when women adopt the scarcity mindset and fight among themselves, it holds all women back. This is particularly true in politics and unfortunately, women have fallen for the temptation of intra-gender rivalry due to the fact that they have a few 'vacant' positions for women to occupy. This competitive

behavior among them limits their chances as a whole and has further given men the advantage over them till date.

Women may also be tempted to victimize fellow women in politics because they see most male politicians adopting similar strategy. But the challenge with this approach is that if men who has been favored by the system compete among themselves, women who are seeking to gain entry may not have such luxury as they may need to maintain a common front to make a mark.

Distrust and doubts in women's capability:

Some women sincerely do not believe that women can do anything better than men in political leadership. They have been brought up to believe that men are always superior, more capable, and more competent than women and they have continued in this mindset. This according to Kiner (2020) is referred to as 'internalized sexism'. To this end, they throw their support behind male political candidates financially and otherwise to the detriment of a female candidate. They don't just support and garner support for men, they also denigrate women and find ways to deflate their confidence. In the same vein, Rivers and Barnett (2018) argued that when male politicians are seen as power seeking, both men and women interpret it as assertiveness and competence but when women candidate express the same power seeking behavior, fellow women line with men to label such women as "unsupportive and uncaring" and express anger and disgust towards them.

Greed and Selfishness:

In Nigeria, money bag politics has been the prevailing culture for many decades and not much has changed till present (Andrew, Egbe & Ayuk 2023). Even in the just concluded 2023 elections, it was strongly alleged that most politicians virtually in all the political parties bribed heavily to secure their party's tickets and to emerge elected candidates for the contested state and national political offices. Women are also caught up in this web as they collect money to support men against women who may not have so much money to throw around. By this behavior, they sell off their chances and political future for immediate parochial and selfish benefit thereby pegging themselves at the mercy of the same men who have not been 'able' to successfully implement the gender policy stipulated 35% quota for women since 2006 till date.

Failure to make significant difference in Political Offices

Among the significant difference Nigerians long for is a clear demonstration of transparency and capacity among politicians. These were the attributes among others that were observed in Peter Obi the Labour Party Presidential Candidate which suddenly made him a household name and a formidable political force to reckon with.

For some of the female political appointees in the past, there were alleged issues of incompetence, corruption and fraud just as obtainable among their male counterparts. Ibekwe and Chidiobi, (2022) contended that these negative behaviors have affected the course of women politically. They went on to cite the classical case of alleged corruption and financial misappropriation involving Mrs. Dieziane Allison Madueke the first female

minister of petroleum in Nigeria who was alleged to have diverted over ₦20billion of the ministry into her private purse. Also mentioned, was the case of was involving Senator Stella Odua who was accused of inflating the contract for the procurement of BMW armoured vehicles to the tune of 225M. On the issue of incompetence, a significant number of women underperformed in office. For instance, Mrs. Ruqqayyatu Rufai as the Minister of education then, couldn't resolve the impasse between the federal government and the Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU). In addition, there was low enrolment of pupil at both primary and secondary levels across the nation during her time (Ibekwe and Chidiobi, 2022).

As already mentioned, the issues leveled against women is not unique to them. However, for a group facing strong resistance from male chauvinists while seeking acceptance among a citizenry desperate for salvation from bad political leadership, they just cannot afford to play the conventional politics.

Complacency

While credit should be given to a few women who are making serious efforts in developing themselves and taking up opportunities in legitimate fashions, it is very important also, to note that some women's visions are so myopic that they tend to be comfortable just being the first lady or *Side-chick* of political office holders. Others are okay being the women leader or at most deputy governor and nothing more so long as they are able to gain access to some funds and a few contracts. Sometimes, complacence is mistaken for contentment but the difference according to Cheng (2023) lies in the fact that while contentment results from realizing that one has everything that can make one happy, complacency on the other hand connotes doing little or nothing to change situations one is not truly satisfied with maybe as a result of lethargy. Matlock (2021) observed that complacency brings the feeling of being "overly content" and needing no further advancement. According to Sanz (2023), complacency is the reason people place the responsibility for their shortcomings on others rather than themselves. It is responsible for why they play the victim and convince themselves that external factors are the cause of their frustration and unhappiness. Hence, they relax and refuse to make any personal attempt at changing their situation. This disposition has contributed to weakening the possibilities of women in political leadership over the years and not so much positive change may be experienced if the attitude of remains among them.

Mentorship and sponsorship functions.

Not many women are sincerely interested in raising younger generation of women particularly non-relatives on the part of life where they have recorded success. There are a few female politicians like Kofoworola Bucknor of Lagos State, Dr. Hadiza Balarabe Sabuwa of Kaduna among others who rose to the level of deputy governors in Nigeria. There are other, Senators and some who have not necessarily occupied any office but yet very influential. Despite the presence of these women not so much is being heard about their mentorship programs for women interested in politics. Yet, mentorship of younger women by older female politicians have been advocated as a

necessary strategy to increase the presence of women in political leadership with international organization like United Nations, and a few other CSOs leading the way.

Conclusion and Recommendations

For women's political leadership to be affirmed in Nigeria, women themselves, need to begin by looking within their gender circle with the aim of identifying possible encumbrances to the fulfilment of this dream. So much efforts and resources have been expended on trying to handle the "enemy without" without much results. This work argues that there are some women consciously and some unconsciously sabotaging the affirmative action through failure in their socialization function, complacency, greed, selfishness, envy and unhealthy competition, ineffective negotiation strategies, distrust and doubt in women's capacity and inadequate mentorship programs. The work also argues that except within-group positive change occurs the struggle may persist for unnecessarily long a time without victory. In relation to these the following recommendations were made:

1. Unity of Purpose:

Efforts should be channeled towards achieving unity among women in politics without which progress may remain utopian. Women leaders and other influential female politicians can begin a serious campaign in that direction and also show serious commitment by exemplary living towards achieving unity.

2. Adoption of the *Negofeminism* principles

Women should use every available platform to negotiate their way up in politics with humility. They need not view men as foes who should be defeated by confrontation or brute force. Particularly, they should employ the informal channels as mothers (as Stewart already advised), wives, sisters and friends of male politicians to secure the much needed political ground.

3. Intense Mentorship Programmes

Women who have gained some advantageous heights in their political careers should begin deliberate and intense mentorship programmes to encourage and groom younger female politicians. Financially buoyant women can support this vision with their resources to the extent which they can.

4. Selflessness

Women politicians should embrace and reflect selflessness in their dealings. They need not seek personal interest at the expense of group interest as self-interest will always remain a divisive tool in the hands of some who would not see women actualize their political dreams in the country.

5. Continuous self-development

Continuous self-development among women will help them build capacity that will change the negative mindsets of other women who believe that men are always superior to women particularly when it comes to political leadership.

6. Proper socialization

Women should take advantage of the time they spend with their wards to teach them the essence of gender balance. Boys particularly should be trained to come to respect, see the leadership potentials of women and accommodate them. No iota of boy child preference should be exhibited by women in their homes so the children do not grow up with the stereotypic believe that men are always superior to women.

7. Self-Actualization

Women should not be content with themselves until they have been able to actualize all their positive potentials even in leadership. The fact is that social potentials such as leadership has nothing to do with sex of a person and a woman can be better endowed than a man.

Conflict of Interest

The authors hereby declare that they have no financial interest in this manuscript.

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The Haitian Revolution, 1791-1804: Slave Insurgency as a Background to the Abolition of Slavery[1]

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Abstract:

This paper examines the indocility of slaves in the fight against slavery. It re-establishes slave insurgency in the Caribbean as a key precursor for the promulgation of the Acts of Emancipation by European nations in the 19th century. The slave revolution in Haiti and insurgencies generally in other states were significant precipitators of the liberation of slaves. Unfortunately, while discussing the abolition of the slave trade, studies continue to expend much attention on initiatives such as humanitarian movements and Christian religious organisations, thereby relegating the influence of slave insurgency in Haiti to the background. Besides, one area of neglect in the reconstruction of black history, and the slave trade and its abolition, is the significance of the Haitian revolution in the emancipation process. Explanations on the emancipation of slaves have significantly excluded the Haitian insurgency. Therefore, it is the position in this paper to re-appraise the importance of slave insurgency, particularly the Haitian revolution, in the emancipation of slaves and the subsequent abolition of the slave trade. The study seeks to establish slave insurgency and its attendant wanton destruction of lives and property, as a plausible background narrative for the Acts of Emancipation. The study reveals that African slaves were not docile as they fought and revolted against human travesty. The conclusion here is that the ultimate emancipation of slaves significantly had its roots in the Haitian insurgency.

Introduction

The abolition of slavery in the 19th century had its roots in slave revolts which took place in the Dutch colony of Berbice (modern Guyana) in 1773, and the French territory of St. Dominique (Haiti) between 1791 and 1804. Throughout slavery, the Caribbean and Guianas declared the abolition of slavery in the colonies as their main objective. Though the Guyana revolt was unsuccessful as it lasted for only 10 months, it significantly, like the successful Haiti insurgency, played a major role in the abolition and/or emancipation processes. While the former protest was short-lived, the latter soared on to serve as an impetus for the freedom of black slaves across the globe [Poppe-Hennessy, J., 1967].

Existing studies have given much attention to the issue of morality as an underlying factor for the abolition of the slave trade. The recent blockbuster movie, 'Amazing Grace' depicting Wilberforce as an outstanding humanitarian who sought to abolish the trade in Africans is a good example of morality at work. Most renowned historians of the Caribbean, such as Lowell Ragatz, Eric Williams, and Selwyn, H. Carrington, are, however, critical of morality as the leading factor in the abolition of the trade in 1807. Instead, these scholars have argued with deep conviction that economics was the singular most important reason for the 1807 abolition bill [Dave Gosse, 2010].

Furthermore,

"It would also appear that, although the French Enlightenment as a whole sounded no clarion call on abolition, there was a stream of it - quite apart from Montesquieu - epitomized in the Abbe Raynal, which had considerable influence in England. Strongly hostile to slavery was his *Histoire philosophique et politique des itablissements et du commerce des luropeens dans les deux Indes,* and, significantly, the work went through fifteen English editions between its first appearance in 1776 and 1804" [Roger Anstey, 1972].

The key to the abolition is the way in which the abolitionists conceived the tactic of using a particular, fortuitous, conjunction in Britain's politico-economic position, brought about by war, to present the abolition of up to two-thirds of the British slave trade as an elementary dictate of the national interest in time of war. To this tactic, Grenville gave wholehearted and vital support [Roger Anstey, 1972].

While discussing the abolition of the slave trade, most available literature on the subject accords ample space to the role of the abolitionists, Christian religious organisations, and the various Acts of Emancipation promulgated by Britain, France, Holland, and Spain. These studies have conspicuously neglected the background role of the Haitian revolution in the abolition process. Any serious academic discussion on the precipitating factors for the abolition of slavery cannot be void of the activism of slave insurgents in Haiti and the impact this had on other subsequent initiatives, including the Acts of Emancipation in Europe. Indeed, Claudius [2010] avers that historians should have the courage to recognize Haitian emancipation as a triumph for human liberation [Claudius, 2010: 140].

This paper reappraises the Haitian revolution as one of the principal drivers of the promulgation of the Acts of Emancipation which eventually brought an end to the slave trade towards the close of the 19th century. It seeks to establish slave insurgency as the background narrative for the declaration of the Acts of Emancipation. This study examines the appalling socio-economic conditions of slaves within the colonies and how these instigated the Haitian revolution. The Haitian revolution merits particular attention for the following reasons: first, it was the only successful slave revolt in the Americas to overturn slavocracy, and in fact, the only recorded one in modern history; second, the tremendous impact of the insurgency on other slave theatres was dramatic; the specter of revolution that it created continued to haunt slave societies long after the demise of slavery. Third, it had inspirational value for black people throughout the Americas. Fourth, the reasons behind the success of the insurgency which became a revolution provide a clearer understanding of why most slave uprisings in other areas failed. Fifth, the revolution had an international dimension because of the conflicting interests of European and American powers, which further complicated the course of events. And finally, the slave insurgency in Haiti deserves more attention because of the role played by Toussaint L'overture [Thompson, 1987].

For a better understanding of this chapter on slave insurgency in Haiti, and how this played a major role in the abolition of the hideous trade, this study is structured into the following sections:

Origin of Slave Trade;
>   Mode and Methods of Slave Procurement;
>   Impact of Slave Trade on African States;
>   The Middle Passage and Slave Revolts;
>   Understanding Slave Insurgency and the Abolition of Slavery

Origin of Slave Trade

The origins of the slave trade could be traced to the trading intercourse across the Sahara to the Mediterranean world, broadly defined to include the whole of the Muslim world north of the Sahara [Fisher, A., and Fisher, B., 1970]. Although it is not possible to give a precise date for the evolution of this trade, it is generally agreed that it became quantitatively important between the ninth and sixteenth centuries. There were different demand factors in the Mediterranean slave-receiving territories. Three main sources of demand in these territories were generally distinguishable. One of these sources, and probably the most important quantitatively was the demand for domestic slaves by affluent groups in Mediterranean urban societies. Secondly, another source of Mediterranean slave demand was the military. The building of militarily powerful states in a region with a relatively low total population imposed on the Mediterranean states at an early date the necessity to recruit soldiers from outside populations. The third source of Mediterranean slave demand was labour in agriculture and mining [Curtin, 1969]. In the late 9th century, several thousands of black slaves recruited from East Africa were employed in southern Iraq to clear agricultural land. In the 11th century, the Bahrain

community of Carmatthian sectarians was said to have employed 30,000 black slaves to do their agricultural work [Alpers, 1975]. The above factors among others played a major role in the demand and flow of slaves within the Mediterranean communities up to the nineteenth century.

That as it is, the Portuguese and Spanish oceanic voyages of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries thus introduced a new form of trade. The Oceanic voyages gave rise to the establishment of European colonies in the West Indian Islands, the American mainlands, and the Indian Ocean Islands [Rout, 1976]. The phenomenal rise in European colonies within these regions informed a new demand for Black slaves which superseded the volume of trans-Saharan demand. The newly European colonies were established based on large-scale mining and highly capitalistic agriculture in regions where Indigenous labour was either non-existent or unsuitable. The Indians could not cope with the tedious task of mining and plantain agriculture. Many of the Indians lost their lives as a result of the new diseases which the Europeans brought to the Americas. Some free or indentured labour was obtained from Europe, but the quantity fell far short of the demand. Moreso, the population situation in Spain and Portugal, the two largest owners of these colonies, was such that those countries were completely incapable of supplying labour to their colonies from internal sources [Rout, 1976].

Moreover, European immigrants to the New World were not prepared to put up with wage labour in plantation agriculture. Against this backdrop, the exploitation of colonial resources from the sixteenth century onward came to depend almost entirely on the employment of Black slave labour [Rout, 1976]. Thus, the expansion of mining and agricultural production in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean territories was accompanied by an ever-growing demand for Black slaves from Africa.

It is important to note, that the slave trade across the Sahara provided the foundation for the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Before the development of European plantation agriculture overseas, following the oceanic discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries southern European countries, particularly Spain and Portugal were already obtaining Black slaves to farm their estates through the trans-Sahara trade [Mannix & Cowley, 1962]. One can say that the Atlantic slave trade began with the shipment of slaves to Portugal and Spain, following the discovery of the sea route to West Africa by the Portuguese. So large was the importation that by 1600 there were 100,000 African slaves in Spain [Rout, 1976]. By the time the labour problems of the Americas became serious, there were already European Merchants (Portuguese and Spaniards) familiar with the slave trade from Africa. These merchants were quick to respond to the profitable opportunities created by the new situation. The Dutch, the English, the French, and the Danes came to join the Portuguese and the Castilian merchants in the slave trade.

In due course, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, which later became known as the 'Triangular trade' became an elaborate organized trade. Ships were specially constructed for the regular shipping of slaves from Africa to the slave-receiving territories. Firearms, Spirits, attractive textile materials, trinkets, and metal wares of all

types were assembled by European merchants and were carried to Africa in exchange for slaves [Inikori, 1977]. The consumption incentives provided by these commodities commanded the creative response of African entrepreneurs who ensured the regular flow of slaves to the coastal regions, where the slaves were being assembled and arranged like sardines in European ships onward to the Americas.

Acquisition of slaves

Between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, thousands of people were denied their fundamental rights such as liberty, freedom of movement, and association, and were sold as slaves to Arab and European merchants [Roger Anstey, 1975]. The Arab and European merchants acquired these slaves through various sources. Individuals who were described as anti-social elements within the African society were sold into slavery. These anti-social elements were people who committed some very serious crimes including witchcraft and murder. By way of punishment, these individuals were being sold into slavery. Crimes carrying the penalty of sale into slavery in foreign lands were those that usually carried the death penalty. Thus, since those found guilty of crimes carrying the death penalty were sold into slavery, after impartial legal processes, the external slave trade could be said to have simply taken the place of the guillotine [Roger Anstey, 1975].

Slaves were also acquired through religious institutions [Roger Anstey, 1975]. Like many pre-industrial societies, witchcraft in some African societies carried the death penalty. During the slave trade period it became a general practice to sell into slavery people found guilty of witchcraft. The quantitative importance of this source of slave supply for external trade tended to depend on the deliberate manipulation of the processes evolved by those in charge of the religious institutions, under the influence of the slave trade itself. A good example is the use by the Aro people of their famous oracle to provide slaves for the external trade [Thompson, 1987]. Thus, many innocent people were sold into slavery through such religious institutions.

The sale of relatives at times for extreme economic distress is usually cited as another source of slave supply for external trade [Thompson, 1987]. While some isolated cases of this category may have occurred, this source could not conceivably have been quantitatively important. For one thing, the low ratio of population to cultivable land must have made such institutions very rare, and probably restricted to drought zones. Even in the drought zones and wherever such situations may have arisen once in a long while, the institution of the extended family, which has always functioned in African societies as a kind of social welfare institution, must have sufficiently alleviated the consequent hardship to make the sale of relatives uncommon.

More importantly, the bulk of the people sold into slavery were acquired by force through warfare, raids and kidnapping [Rodney, 1972]. There is a growing body of evidence in this regard which makes the view indisputable. The large number of boys and girls among the slaves exported as shown by extant shipping records can only be explained in terms of forceful capture. The narratives of victims of the export trade

such as Olaudah Equiano show unmistakably the quantitative importance of forceful capture as a source of slave supply for the export trade [James, 1970]. The most telling piece of evidence is the very high preference of slave suppliers for firearms. The private records of the European slave merchants show very clearly that in the eighteenth century, every slave supplier in West Africa demanded that there should be as many firearms and as much ammunition in the assortment of goods employed in exchange for each slave as the ship captain could reasonably afford [Rodney, 1972]. Infact, for every slave sold to the Europeans, about three to five guns and large quantities of gunpowder were always included in the assortment of goods employed in exchange [Rodney, 1972]. This close connection between firearms and slaves shows very strongly that slaves were acquired largely by military actions, raids, and kidnapping. The brutal experience of slaves became worsened during shipment and movement to the Americas. This further contributed to subsequent revolts which took place in different colonies.

The middle passage and black settlements in the new world: A gory experience

It is imperative to examine the experiences of the slaves onboard European ships and within their various settlements, and how these instigated a series of revolts, as this would further help our understanding of the harsh conditions and sufferings of African slaves. Besides, it has become conventional wisdom that, for black slaves, the Atlantic was a physical and cultural divide. "Slavery", as observed by the prominent black writer, Alain Locke in 1936 [Uya, O., 1976].

> "not only physically transplanted the Negro, it cut him off from his cultural roots, and by taking away his language, abruptly changing his habits, putting him in the context of a strangely different civilization, reduced him, so to speak, to a cultural zero."

The horrors of the middle passage began with the actual sale of slaves in the coastal markets of Africa. At the coastal markets, the ship surgeons examined the slaves one at a time. The sick, old, and very young Africans were rejected, while the fit and able-bodied ones were purchased, and stored in the factories awaiting the arrival of a ship to transport them across the "endless body of water." Following the arrival of a ship, the slaves were shackled together and packed "into dark dungeons, squeezed together between the decks of stinking ships, separated often from their kinsmen, tribesmen, and speakers of the same languages [Uya, O., 1976]. So tightly packed were some of the ships that some writers have been forced to use the word "sardine" to describe the situation.

The slaves remained below the deck except when they came on the heavily guarded main deck and forecastle for meals, which they did twice a day [Klein, H., 1969]. The regular meal was porridge "made of ground Indian corn sometimes flavoured with salt, male Guetta pepper, and palm oil." Some female slaves were allowed to eat on the

quarter deck with the crew. Moreso, in the words of Alexander Falconbridge, a ship surgeon "glass beads" were issued to women to entice them to have sexual intercourse with the white crew [Uya, 1976]. Debauchery and sexual exploitation of female slaves were rampant on the ships. These practices strained the loyalty of some of the African women. Thus, a former slave, Ottobah Cugoano, reported several instances when slaves planned "to turn and blow up the ships, and perish altogether in the flames" and were betrayed by some of the country women who slept with some of the head men of the ship.

That as it is, the sanitary conditions in the ships were appalling. The ventilation in the ship was poor and thus there was excessive heat. According to Alexander Falconbridge, "the deck, that is, the floors of their rooms were so covered with blood and mucous: it is not in the power of the human imagination to picture a situation more dreadful and disgusting." The ships were usually rat-infested. Most of the crew, according to Hugh Crow, were "the very dregs of the community" – jail breakers, criminals", people of desperate character and abandoned habits" who wished to escape creditors [Uya, 1976].

The mortality and morbidity rates were very high for both crew and slaves. During the passage, according to Captain Thomas Philip, many were sick of dysentery, while a high number died, and were thrown into the ocean [Uya, 1976]. There were high incidents of smallpox, measles, and other communicable diseases. Food and water supplies were usually contaminated by infected persons. Going by the mortality rate in ships and the length of the voyage, the Portuguese described the slave ships as *tumbeiros* ("Floating coffins"). It is clear, however, that the middle passage was as hazardous for the European crew as it was for the slave cargo. Captain John Newton opined "that at least one-fifth part of those who went from England to the Coast of Africa, in ships which traded for slaves, never returned from hence" [Klein, 1969].

Despite the dehumanizing conditions of the ships and the sufferings experienced during the middle passage, the slaves did not allow their minds to be obliterated. With the tight security on the ships and manacles on both hands and feet of the slaves, the slaves organized and embarked on several hundred revolts against the crew. In Harvey Wish's analysis in 1937, at least there were two revolts a year for the period 1699 and 1799 [Uya, 1976]. A study of slavers emanating from the French seaport of Nantes by the French historian, Gaston Martin, shows that between 1714 and 1744 revolts occurred on an average of about one every fifteen trips or just over one and a half per year [Uya, 1976]. Daniel Mannix uncovered 300 references to slave insurrections among which he included successful attempts by the "natives" to "cut off" departing slavers [Mannix & Cowley, 1962]. Captain John Newton and Alexander Falconbridge submitted that the slaves planned to take over ships during voyages. Newton affirmed in his log, "that slaves were frequently plotting insurrections. Newton later became a vigorous abolitionist minister.

The middle passage was unquestionably a jarring and brutal experience, both physically and emotionally for the slaves. The middle passage was a bridge through

which the enslaved Africans found their way to the New World. In the Americas or elsewhere slaves continued to experience untold hardship. Though the Atlantic slave trade was the agency through which people of African extraction arrived in the new world, they were treated as sub-human and massively exploited. For example, in the Caribbean and other places, slaves contributed to the development of the sugar economy. The black population, the majority of whom were slaves from Africa also cultivated crops such as coffee, cocoa, and cotton. The colonies were designated territories to be exploited for the benefit of Europe. Eric Williams' *Capitalism and Slavery* [Williams, 1961], demonstrates how Africans helped to create the economic foundations for the Industrial Revolution. Mannix and Cowley point out in *The Black Cargoes*, "that the slave trade led to an accumulation of capital in ruthless hands, and much of the capital was reinvested in textile mills, foundries, coal mines, quarries, canals, and railways [Mannix & Cowley, 1961]

In addition to the main economic activities cited above, Africans provided several other services to the colonies. They performed all the menial tasks. They were employed as domestics, grave diggers, errand boys, boat hands, and the like. In the territories of Dutch Guiana, they were employed as beasts of burden to draw carriages in which ladies were seated [Mannix & Cowley, 1961]. Africans also performed important services as coopers, blacksmiths, carpenters, and Masons. All the torts built in the various territories resulted from the employment of Africans in large numbers. Another group of Africans fought as military auxiliaries in times of European warfare in the Caribbean. Very few of these men became members of European regular forces and advanced to positions of prominence, but they were not allowed to remain in the colonies, partly for security reasons [James, 1970, & Klein & Jacob, 1999].

The Europeans made every effort to prevent the blacks from rising economically. Africans were denied in theory and/or practice, the opportunity of securing their manumission. Manumission became as difficult as the plantation system developed in the various colonies. This was particularly true of Haiti, Cuba, and Guayana [James, 1970, and Klein & Jacob, 1999]. Even when manumitted, they were often prevented by discriminatory legislation from becoming important members of the propertied class within the societies. Blacks held in slavery had even less opportunity to acquire property. In situations where blacks acquired property, they were mostly confined to a few household amenities, livestock, and little cash.

Inspite of what some modern apologists of slavery suggest, slaves were badly fed, overworked, ill-treated, badly housed, and poorly clothed. Adult slaves were going about in the streets, or serving at their master's table, virtually naked in the Dutch territories of Guiana [James, 1970]. There was little incentive and less opportunity, for them to ameliorate their economic conditions.

A more disheartening situation was the promulgation of several anti-human laws within the slave societies. These laws regulated the relations between slaves and masters. For example, the French promulgated the Code Noir in 1685, while the Spaniards in 1680 brought together their various laws under a comprehensive code called the

Recoplicion de las leyes [Uya, 1976]. The most striking feature of the slave laws is that they gave the Africans little scope to ameliorate their economic and social conditions. It was only in the last years of slavery (the "period of amelioration", as it is often called) that some meaningful improvements began to be effected in the slaves' conditions.

The stereotype of the Black man would be the next focus of this sub-section. It should be noted that white racism against Blacks was not purely a function of the New World slavery. Evidence shows that even before the beginning of Atlantic slavery and certainly before the "Sugar revolution" in the Caribbean, whites entertained highly prejudicial notions towards Blacks [Rout, 1976]. The significant point to note is that the prejudices, before Atlantic slavery, were not institutionalized. The institutionalization of prejudicial notions regarding Blacks took place during the New World Slavery. Greater emphasis was placed upon the biological inferiority of Africans than on their "environmental inferiority"

Several attempts were made to show that Africans were intellectually sub-human and that they were not rational beings. The Whites thus kept the Blacks on the margin of social and economic existence. The Whites looked upon the system of slavery that they had instituted as though it was based upon permanent and divine foundations. Several precautions were taken by the Whites to ensure that the Blacks were kept in their place. Extensive police regulations, restricting the slaves from accessing certain spaces were among the most striking features of the slave laws [Rout, 1976]. All slave societies in the Caribbean and the Guianas attempted to proscribe the movement of slaves. Ideally, the Whites would have preferred to force plantation slaves to remain on the estates to which they belonged. However, since their mobility on and off the estates was essential to servicing the needs of the Whites, a compromise was effected, allowing them to move off the estates with their masters to hunt wild game [Rout, 1976]. They were expected to show subordination to all Whites, as insubordination to a master or manager was regarded as a grave offense. For striking a member of his master's household, a slave is liable to severe punishment, and even to have his arm amputated. In extreme cases, or for repeated insubordination of this kind, he would be put to death [Williams, 1961].

Against the background of brutality and the innate desire for liberty, Africans attempted various means to undermine the plantation system. African resistance to the institution of slavery was a very important feature of all the societies in question. African resistance could be categorized into two – passive and active. Passive resistance focused on non-violent activities. Under this form, there was no physical assault upon the person of the Whites. Examples were: go-slow, sham sickness, destruction or loss of various kinds of small property belonging to their masters, and suicide. Active resistance was that form which resulted in large-scale damage to the property of the Whites and also to physical assault against them. Poisoning the food of the owners and the water supplies of the estates was indulged in, especially in the French territories [Williams, 1961]. The most renowned poisoner was a maroon named Francois Macandal, who lived in Haiti around the mid-eighteenth century. Francois had some "expert" poisoners

under him.   They created fear in the hearts of the Whites by the many incidents of poisoning.

A very important form of active resistance was running away from the plantations and setting up Maroon communities. These communities were usually set up with some degree of permanence and offered the Blacks the only serious alternative to White plantation society. Here, Blacks could create a new society, based upon their concepts of human freedom and dignity.

The most viable Maroon communities were located in Surinam, Haiti, Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) Jamaica, Cuba, and Guyana. [Williams, 1961]. These were the largest colonies, geographically and demographically. Large sections of these territories remained uncultivated and often inaccessible to the Whites, and it was in these areas that the Maroon communities were established. The Maroons were sheltered by mountains, caves, or forests. In Jamaica, for instance, the mountains and caves offered security to the Maroons, while in Surinam and Guyana, the forests provided shelter and security. The Maroons were often in touch with the plantations. They frequently harassed the plantations, carting away various articles. Maroons cultivated the soil, as their main source of food. They also established some form of political authority among themselves and maintained strict discipline [Poppe-Hennessy, 1967].

The most feared Maroons were those in Jamaica and Surinam. In most instances, the Whites were forced to come to terms with them, by signing treaties guaranteeing their freedom and autonomy. The Maroons, on the other hand, agreed to allow a White superintendent or resident agent to live among them. They also agreed to return all future runaways to the Whites. After the signing of the treaty by the Jamaican government and the Maroons in 1739, the latter lost their revolutionary spirit [Poppe-Hennessy, 1967]. In 1795, there was a disagreement between the two parties, which resorted to conflict [Uya, 1976]. In the ensuing battle, the Maroons were defeated by the Whites. Following this defeat, many of them were deported to Nova Scotia and later to Sierra Leone.

Active resistance also involved slave revolts or mass uprisings of slaves on the plantations. For example, in 1522, there was an uprising in Hispaniola [Uya, 1976]. The most serious revolts occurred in the larger territories. Surinam which had the most viable maroon communities, never experienced a large-scale uprising. In Jamaica, there were more slave revolts than any other Caribbean territory. But the most serious of these (in 1760, 1765, and 1831-1832) occurred after the settlement made with the Maroons in 1739 [Uya, 1976]. In Cuba, in 1844, a supposed large-scale plot to revolt was nipped in the bud; the same happened in Demerara (Guyana) revolt in 1823. In 1816, Barbados witnessed a major uprising [Uya, 1976].

Understanding slave insurgency and the abolition of slavery

In the history of revolts against slavery in the various colonies in the Americas and elsewhere around the New World, the Haitian revolution stands out as the only successful insurrection that significantly influenced the emancipation process in the 19th

century. Its success in upturning slavocracy ignited a series of revolts in slave colonies and strengthened the global movement for the abolition of the slave trade. While other factors also influenced the abolitionist movement, slave insurgency, particularly the Haitian Revolution, signified the beginning of the end of slavery in the Caribbean and around the world.

The revolution was driven by both external and internal factors [Franklin Knight, [2000]. Externally, the fervour of the French Revolution for "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" influenced Haiti. Like the French-speaking people in Europe, the Haitians sought socio-economic and political emancipation from their slave masters. The principles of the French Revolution alienated some sections of opinion in England and produced opponents. More importantly, the revolt occurred against a backdrop of frosty Anglo-French relations, and deteriorating Franco-American relations.

Internally, the revolution was fueled by the unbearable conditions in the colony. The arrogance of the planter class; the ill-treatment of African slaves and mulatto freemen, and the oppressive treatment of the lower orders by the poor whites created deep societal divisions. The accumulated grievances of these various groups provided the major causes of the revolt.

Towards the end of the 18th century, slaves in St. Dominque initiated their plans and held nocturnal meetings in the forests, waiting for the right time to strike. They observed their masters engaged each other in an internecine struggle and familiarized themselves with revolutionary literature. The arrival of the French troops from revolutionary France in 1791, who embraced the mulattos and blacks, signaled that the French had conceded equality to all. This backdrop led slaves in Port-au-Prince to seize arms and revolt, though their initial attempts were crushed by the National Guard under the leadership of Marquis de Caradeux.

On the night of August 22, 1791, under the leadership of Voodoo Priest Boukman, the leaders of the revolt assembled at the Mourne Rouge, where Voodoo incantations and prayers were rendered, marking the beginning of the beginning of the revolt. C.L.R James captured the essence of their resolve in a prayer:

The God who created the sun which gives us light, who rouses the waves and rules the storm, though hidden in the clouds, watches us. He sees all that the white man does. The god of the white man inspires him with crime, but our god calls upon us to do good works, our god, who is good to us, orders us to revenge our wrongs. He will direct our arms and aid us. Throw away the symbol of the god of the whites, who has so often caused us to weep, and listen to the voice of liberty, which speaks in the hearts of us all. [James, 1970].

Freed blacks and Mulattos, seeing the slaves in arms, joined the uprising. Leaders such as Dessalines, Toussaint, and Christopher emerged, with Mulatto leaders including Riguad and Petion forming a second front against the French [Ferrer Ada, 2012]. The Island, originally known to its indigenous inhabitants as Haiti but renamed Hispaniola

by the Spanish, became the battleground for a twelve-year struggle. The ex-slaves defeated the French, Spanish, and British expeditions by 1803, leading to the declaration of the independent state of Haiti, which was eventually recognized by most countries [James, 1970].

General Toussaint L'overture also known as Black Napoleon was a remarkable leader who played a vital role in the success of the Haitian Revolution. He built a disciplined army from the degraded and brutalized slaves, transforming the entire society into the independent state of Haiti. He worked tirelessly to improve the economy and security of St. Domingue, restored the plantation system with paid labour, and negotiated trade treaties with Britain and the United States. His automist constitution named him governor for life, but his capture and subsequent death in April 7, 1803, did not end the revolution. Instead, it galvanized the revolutionaries to fight even harder for their liberty. Following his death, Dessalines, the Chief General of the War of 1803, urged his soldiers to continue to fight, leading to the successful conclusion of the Haitian Revolution in 1804.

The Haitian revolution should thus be regarded as the harbinger of the liberation of slaves and the ideology of subjugation of the blacks [Jeremy Teow, 2018]. Haiti played a fundamental role in providing the impetus for the abolition of the slave trade and the recognition of the rights of all humanity. As Fergus Claudius argued, "The recognition of the Haitian Revolution as a major contribution to universal freedom was a fundamental fact. During the latter-nineteenth century, with the end of most of Europe's enslaved systems behind him, Karl Marx acknowledged the universalistic hope of freedom that the Haitian Revolution had unleashed [Claudius, 2010. Marx saw the Haitian Revolution as pivotal in the struggles for world liberation and the persistent class-race antagonisms between enslavers and the enslaved. Haiti's emancipation wars provided the critical arguments that ultimately undermined the anti-abolitionist defenses, demonstrating that the Haitian Revolution was a blessing to abolitionists and a pivotal moment in the fight for universal freedom [Claudius, 2010].

Conclusion

It is inferred here that the Haitian revolution was one of the precipitating factors for the abolition of the slave trade and slavery as an institution. Just like the growth and spread of liberal ideas from the second half of the 18th century gave credence to both the American and French revolutions and also favoured the abolition of slavery, and the Industrial Revolution, which influenced the use of machines for production and relegated human labour, so also, the Haitian revolution evolved as a challenge to slavery and the slave trade in its entirety. Slave insurgency in Haiti revealed the indocility and capabilities of slaves in challenging the loathsome existing status quo.

It is further deduced that after several centuries of slavery and dehumanized activities against African slaves, the latter evolved as major actors in addressing their precarious situation which subsequently provided plausible explanations for the abolition of slavery. This chapter has thus added to the body of knowledge on the abolition of the

trans-Atlantic slave trade and affirms that intellectual discourses on the slave trade and the dismantling of the institution of slavery cannot be void of slave revolts or insurgencies, particularly the Haitian Revolution. The chapter demonstrates that the independence of Haiti gradually translated to freedom for slaves in all the colonies. Freedom thus became established through Acts of Emancipation promulgated by the British in 1833, the French and Danes in 1848, the Dutch in 1863, and the Spaniards in 1873.

Conflict of Interest

The authors hereby declare that they have no financial interest in this manuscript.

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Climate Change in Ethiopia[1]

Linda Adjaoud[2]

Abstract:

Ethiopia is a country where there is a lots of fauna and flora. The country has a rich historical and cultural background. It is ethnically diverse. However, there is a lot of poverty in the country, which makes the fight against climate change very difficult. Many people leave the country due to extreme weather, but there is an internal migration, too. Climate change is due to human activity which can be direct or indirect. It can be said that Ethiopia is fighting climate change and receiving support, but the problem of climate change is so extreme and fast-paced that it is very difficult to compete with it. Climate change affects every living things on Earth: humans, mammals, fish, insects or plants. It is particularly problematic in countries where many people are already in need, where wars are raging, and where epidemics are ravaging. Animals cannot find shelter, food or water. They also feel the extreme weather, just like humans. The problem of the Nile Dam is causing conflicts between Egypt and Ethiopia. The dam may bring prosperity to Ethiopia, but water shortages to Egypt, and a consequent decline in living standards. In 2019, 350 trees were planted by the habitants. It was part of the state green program. Schools and public institutions had to be close at that time.

Introduction

> „My first big mission for UNICEF in Ethiopia was just to attract attention, before
> it was too late, to conditions which threatened the whole country. My role was
> to inform the world, to make sure that the people of Ethiopia were not forgotten."
(Audrey Hepburn) (What should I read next?)

The study explores the effects the phenomenon of climate change in an African country, which is called Ethiopia. Ethiopia is one of the countries that is particularly exposed for the negative effects of our planet, the country has extremely high poverty.

The hypotheses are:
- Climate change affects Ethiopia, as it does all countries on Earth.
- Extreme weather conditions are one of the most significant problems in the country.
- Ethiopia is trying to deal with climate change in its own way.

Ethiopia (named officially as Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia) can be found in West-Africa, located in the west of the horn of Somalia. From the ancient age till 1941 it was named Abessinia. The capital is called Addis-Ababa. The country's climate change is tropical dry, with rare periods of heavy rainfall. The western part of the Ethiopian Highlands is the home of tropical rainforests, while savannas can be found in areas with less rainfall. It has a very rich wildlife: for example cheetah, lion, lynx, antelope. The country borders: Eritrea on the north, Somalia to the east, Kenya to the south, Sudan and South Sudan to the west. The majority of the population is Oromo (or Galla). Other ethnic groups include Amara, Tigrayan, Somali, Gurage, Sidama, Velayat but other ethnic groups also occur in the country.

The mursi tribe lives in the Omo Valley[3] in huts made of branches and straw. They live a semi-nomadic lifestyle and they are perhaps the most adapted to the effects of climate change of all Ethiopian tribes. They also have problems because vegetation is dying, they have less pasture.

The early history of Ethiopia is intertwined with the Empire of Aksum. Christianity was adopted at that time. The spread of Islam resulted in the decline of the Kingdom of Aksum. The Zagve Dynasty[4] ruled Ethiopia until 1270. They were followed by the Solomon Dynasty[5]. Ethiopia was invaded by Adal and the Ottoman Empire. The empire was defeated at the Battle of Simba Kuré in 1529.

In the 1800s, Egypt was the biggest threat to Ethiopia. The unification of the country is attributed to Menelik II[6]. It is thanks to him that Italian attempts at colonization failed.

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[3] It is located in southern Ethiopia, there are a lots of monasteries and rock-cut temples there.
[4] They ruled Ethiopia from 1137 to 1270. They came from a Christian princely family.
[5] Also known as the House of Solomon. Actually, there is no evidence that the dynasty descended from Solomon.
[6] His birth name was Sahle Maryam, the king of Shewa (1866-1889) and the Emperor of Ethiopia (1889-1913)

However, the Italians won the Abessinian War, and the country gradually modernized thereafter, but at the expense of the Ethiopians (through forced labor). The droughts of 1973 resulted in military uprisings. In 1977, Somalia attacked Ethiopia, but they were defeated. The economy collapsed, another famine devastated the country. On 12.08.1994, a new constitution was introduced, the administration was reorganized. In 1998, Eritrea launched an attack on Ethiopia, but they managed to contain them. In 2000, the two countried made peace. In 2007, Ethiopia intervened in the Somali civil war, curbing islamic radicals. In 2020, war broke out in the north of the country, further increasing extreme poverty.

Farming has destroyed much of the original vegetation, there is only patchy of grassy and woody wastelands in the country. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there was much more area covered with trees than now.

The problem of climate change in the country

Drought is a big issue on the most parts of Earth. It is especially a problem in a country, where epidemics and famine depredates. Animals don't find food, clean water and shelter. There are animal species that are already extinct or are on the verge of extinction, such as Ethiopian wolf. There are areas on Earth where people don't have the possibility to drink clean water. This is partly due to armed conflicts and partly to extreme weather. The Ethiopian civil war is one of the most serious conflict. The East African country's Tigray region started to rebel after Nobel Peace-Prize-winning Ethiopian Prime Minister postponed the 2020 elections, referred to the Covid-pandemic. The local Tigray force occupied a military base of the Ethiopian army, to which central government responded by deploying additional armed units. Meanwhile, the alleged intervention of Eritrea, which made peace with Ethiopia in 2019, has aggraved the civil war into an interstate conflict.

In 2016, because of El Nino[7] phenomenon, the country suffered from record drought. It had a very bad impact on agriculture, and many people's livelihoods were at risk. A significant part of the livestock was also lost. The UN tried to help: they sent 13 million dollars in aid to 600,000 to people. FAO also tried to help the Ethiopian population: they gave food to them and also tried to provide them clean water.

The drought increases the lack of water, it also causes problems in agriculture. This might be because of armed conflicts and because of extreme weather. Lakes dries out. In South Guji also there were a problem about water shortage. There were no rainy seasons for five years, which led to famine.The rain distribution is not constant in Ethiopia: some regions have heavy rainfalls but others suffer from dry weather periods. None of these is good: too much rain can destroy people's home and the vegetation. A lots of animals are victims of flooding. According global circulation models, mean temperature will increase by 1.7-2.1 ºC by 2050. Average annual temperature might rise

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[7] A phenomenon related to the flow of seawater, it occurs cyclically. It lasts 9-12 months. The most critical period is in Christmas. The name refers to the birth of Jesus.

nationwide to 3.1 ºC by 2060 and it might be 5.1 by 2090. (Negussie Zeray & Ashebir Demie, 2015)

Effects on agriculture

Ethiopia is among the ten countries of the world who are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. It is considered as a rainfall-based agricultural country. The climate change has a very bad impact on agriculture (on cultivation) and on prices, too. In the country agriculture can be enset-based and cereal based, which means that farmers rotate maize, teff and sorghum with pulses like pea, haricot and faba bean. (Zenebe Adimassu& Aad Kessler, 2016)

They are one of the biggest coffee exporters in the world. They are the fifth larger producer of coffee. It is grown in the forests of Southwest Ethiopia. To sell coffee brings 800 million dollars per year to a country, and it is responsible for 15 million people's livelihood. In those areas the cultivation is significant:

- Sidamo
- Harar
- Limuru

They export a lot from it, for example, to the Netherlands. Ethiopian coffee is very popular in Hungary, too. The country has problems with coffee cultivation. It is an issue because lots of people work on coffee fields, their livelihood become in danger. Arabica coffee appeared firstly in South- Sudan, but after it was widespread in Ethiopia. The country is Africa's biggest wheat flour's importer. It has had a lack since 2022, it is not able to provide enough because of extreme weather conditions, people cannot export it, too. The country is a net wheat importer, they compensate their needs with 25 % of local imports. Climate change affects land sustainability. In many areas, cropping becomes very difficult, this can result more dependence on livestock keeping. Farmers used diverse strategies to deal with extreme weather conditions, for example: soil and water conservation, agroforestry practices, the application of improved crop varieties (Tamrat Sinore & Fei Wang, 2024) New varieties of crop and livestock management has their own risks. Farmers has to explore new markets, too.

There were many studies about how to help agriculture. A study was made in three zones where wheat- producing is significant. The areas are called:

- Silte (it is part of the Southern Nations)
- Gurage (it is located in the Central Ethiopia Regional State of Ethiopia)
- Hadiya (historical region)

The study area is about: dry and wet midlands, low midlands and highlands. The rainfall varies significantly during the three seasons. The Belg (February to May) and Kiremt (June to September) seasons are responsible and it rules agricultural production where the study was made. Kiremt is the mainly rainy season for crop cultivation. However, Belg's rainfall is significant for early- maturing and long-season crops. An other study with a random sampling technique showed that Abergelle district is the example of arid agro-pastoral livelihood zone. The district is situated 765 km away from Addis-Abeba.

In the examined decades the district lost a lots of human resources, they also had an agricultural yield reduction. They have only little water. (Ademe Mihiretu et al, 2021)

Economic effects

The World Bank made a report last year where we can see that the loss of the GDP is between 1 and 1.5 % and it will raise to 5% until 2040 which can led ethiopian people to biggest poverty. The World Bank previously introduced the Climate and Development Report (CCDR), which helps countries to identify and priorize measures to help curb greenhouse gases. The report consists of research and cost estimates, recommending priority measures to achieve low CO_2 emissions. CCDR sounds the alarm about bad weather conditions, which endangeres the development of the country. Climate change might destroy past development gains and slow down future structural economic transformations which is important for providing jobs. (World Bank, 2024) The new analyse highlights the welfare potential of climate-change development policies. This is particularly significant in agriculture, where reform subsidies could shift the country from being a net importer of agricultural commodities. Up to 20% more than domestic demand can be produced. (World Bank, 2024)

The analyse outlines three priorities:
- Rapid, structural reforms, coupled with overhauling social safety nets. It will bring development and growth benefits and better to combat the negative impacts of climate change.
- Existing structures should be urgently protected from the negative effects of climate change.
- Weather impacts occur at the local level, local governments should the design and creation of policies that respond to climate change. (World Bank, 2024)

The bad weather conditions and wars can accelerate migration. A lots of people leave their homes for a better life. There are others who have to leave home, otherwise they risk their own lives. Drought and the shortage of clean water can cause deaths. This year in January, there were serial earthquakes in Ethiopia. A lots of people fere forced to leave home. Actually, they were evicted. The earthquakes were in Afar, Oromia and Amhara. Experts say that the problem is because of the tectonic plates beneath the Great Rift Valley.

Migration has its bad and good effects:

Positive effects	Negative effects
New cultures in the recipient countries New language	The possible relegation of the country's Own culture, social strife
More possibilities to study More labor	Possible negative change in the official language
New products, innovation	More unemployment
More peaceful conditions to live	Domestic producers may be left out of the
Better weather condions	market

More safety	

Figure 1: The positive and negative effects of migration. Author's own edition.

Acording to the 2021 Labour Force and Migration Survey, 17.1% of the population is considered as migrant, excluding Tigray region. The survey also showed that women are more likely to leave their home country than men. (ILO, 2023) The reason might be because women feel discriminated in their home countries. There are societies in the world which are still very patriarchal. Women feel that they don't have the chance to study, to unfold. They often feel to be treated badly. For example, in some countries for a woman is still almost impossible to get a degree at university.

According to the ILO[8] report, unemployment, poverty and the political situation are also driving out Ethiopian immigrants, resulting in the emigration of low-skilled labor, especially to the Middle East. People leaving African countries often choose Europe, because it is a developed continent, and many of its countries offer a good standard of living for its residents. In 2024, the EU tightened visa requirements for people coming to Ethiopia. (Mathilde Rosina, 2023) The council of European Union justified its decision by saying that the Ethiopian government was not cooperating sufficiently with the EU readmitting illegal immigrants. The visa processing time for Ethiopian citizens has been extended from 15 to 45 days. EU countries cannot grant exemptions from visa requirements or issue multiple entry visas. Ethiopian officers and diplomats have to pay for the entry permits.

There are only a few Ethiopian citizens who return to their homeland. The reason might be that people can live under better and peaceful circumstances in the destination country. Ethiopia was the country who received the most migrants in 2023, from the region IGAD, 942000. But not everybody stays in the country, some people move on Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and to Kuwait. (ILO, 2023) Migrants are often received hostilely in an other country. People tend to be mistrustful with them. Maybe one of the reasons is the excessive fear of terrorism. People who leave their home countries are often dependent on themselves. They have to learn an other language, to adjust… and of course…they have to find a job, from which they can make a living. Cultural differences can be also a problem for a migrant.

ILO tried to help migrants with, for example, those measures:
-       government support for overseas employment
-       inceased participation of social partner sin the developement of implementation of labour migration policy

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[8] International Labour Organization, its function is to bring together workers, governments and employers organization. The headquarter is in Switzerland.

- developement of vocational training centers

In Ethiopia the lack of land cause issues, in rural areas a lots of people stay without land. A lots of people can only cultivate less than one hectar. They can't really inherit land from each other. Many of the state owners of the land are also deciding to emigrate. If habitants decide to leave Ethiopia they think that they should leave the land to relatives. Ethnic conflicts also increase migration. A lots of people go to Addis Abeba, people expect better living conditions and standard of living from it. However, without ID card, the process is not legal, they cannot receive healthcare or education. Young small farmers need more support. Free lands should be inreased, social inequalities should be reduced. The solution is to slow down the process of climate change but this needs financial support and cooperation between countries. People's point of view also should be changed, of course. Children has to be educated to environmental awareness since they are very young.

There is also an internal migration in Ethiopia. Addis-Abeba's population increases all the time, momently there are circa 5,4 million habitants in the city. People will mainly prefer informal settlements, this may be true especially for migrants. (Global Climate Risks,n.d.)

It is the second time that president Donald Trump, makes the United States quit from the Paris Agreement. The first exit in 2017 didn't really matter because the Covid pandemic has already slowed down. This might have a bad effect on the world. Besides in the USA there is a lots of greenhouse gas emissions. The continent might throw away all restriction of fossil fuels. (National Library Medicine, 2025)

The Gasgow Climate Summit and the UN Climate Change Framework Agreement

The UN wanted to get countries to sign an agreement that would require them to reduce greenhouse gas emmissions. The countries who signed the agreement are negotiating annually. The aim of the negociation is to accelerate the measures of the Paris Agreement. The agreement was accepted on the conference of year 2015, it has 197 members since now.

The aims are:
- the global average temperature should be below 2 ºC compared top re-industrial levels
- to adapt more to the effects of climate change (Climate Policy Institute, 2021)

The European Union was represented by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. One of the results was that 17,8 billions are redirected from ther coal industry to clean energy. The other result is that more than 100 countries have joined the Global Methane Pledge to reduce methane emmissions by at least 30 % by 2020. The third positive thing is that we can find the first international commitment which is for the stop of the support for the oil and gas industry. About 20 countries joined the

commitment, Ethiopia, too. COP is held annually (since 1995). It tries to find a solution for every problem of climate change.

What can be the difficulties?

Countries around the world plan to extract twice as much fossil fuel by 2030 as would be consistent with limiting global warming to 1.5%. It is good to see that some countries stopped to use fossil fuels. On the other side, lots of banks and financial institutes denies to support to stop it.

In 2020, because of Covid-19 pandemic CO_2 emmision has been reduced significantly, there was a curfew in most of the counties of the world. Lots of people worked from home office (who has a job which can be done from home). Public institutions were closed. The air was much more clean at that time, but after curfew was finished, people started to use cars again. They chose it becuase they were afraid to use public transport. But when the curfew wasn't so strict anymore and people got vaccinated againts Covid-19, they started to use cars again and the air become more and more polluted. Masks also contaminated the environment (which one is not environmentally friendly…)

Poverty and backwardness is also a difficulty. We can also mention lethargy. A country can do more against climate change if it has more financial support to do it and if education is higher. Until many habitans of the Earth have to fight for their own lives because of very bad conditions, it is not sure that they can care, for example, about the quality of the air so much.

People should be helped to attend school instead of starting to work when they are very young. Many companies should start to use renewable energy sources. This also requires that they do not look only what is good for them, things should be looked more globally.

The problem of the Nile Dam

Climate change can generate conflicts between people. They search a scapegoat who they can accuse for extreme weather conditions. For example, conflicts can be water resources based. Ethiopia's intention to build the Nile Dam has caused a great deal of controversy. Construction of the dam began in April 2011 in the Benisaguz-Gumuz region. Negotiations have been ongoing for more than a decade, but with little success. The project cost 4 billion dollars. The structure is 145 meters high and 1.8 km long, with a large artificial lake behind it.

I have summarized the advantages and possible disadvantages of building the dam in a table:

Advantages	Disadvantages

Many Ethiopians would have access to Electricity part of the electricity produced Could be exported the risk of floods Crippling Sudan would be reduced 500 Thousand hectares would be irrigated it Would increase food production Shipping transport, more commercials opportunities Fish resource development It is free of carbon dioxide	Conflicts arising from water retention many areas of Egypt do not receive enough water, Desertification decline in rice-growing areas retention of silt Water shortages (this impacts food production) Conflicts between the two countries

Figure 2: The advantages and disadvantages of the Nile dam. Author's own edition.

A lots of people are afraid of war because of the dam. What is good for one country and helps its economic and recovery can cause catastrophic conditions for another. Egyptians are anxious because of the agriculture. That is completely understandable because agriculture has a major role in most countries life. 95 % of Egypt's farmland is close to the riverbanks. (NASA, 2022) According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the temperature in some parts of Egypt will increase (betwen 1.8 and 3.6 degrees centigrade). The phenomenon requires more water to cultivate. Egypt had to reduce the area of rice production by more than half. Because of this they can sell less rice and this might cause some economic problems in the long term.

Ethiopia's grid in not developed enough to absorb the extra capacity of water. There are only a few transmission and distribution networks in the country. Besides there is a lack of high-voltage links to its neighbours to support electricity exports. For the project, technical and economic cooperation is recommended between the neighbour countries. (Yohannes Woldemariam& Genevieve Donellon-May, n.d.)

Measures against bad weather conditions

Firstly, tree planting in Ethiopia has to be mentioned. In 2019, 350 million trees were planted by the habitants. This become a world record. It was part of the state green program. Schools and public institutions had to be close at that time. With the mentioned project the quality of the air can be a bit repairable and it compensates extreme heat.

According to UN, 35 % Ethiopian areas were filled with forests, but by the 2000s this decreased to 4%. Forests are not appreciated enough, people kill them around the world.

The National Adaptation of Ethiopia (NAP-ETH) can be defined as a continuous fight against climate change.

It tries to focus on:
- agriculture

-   forestry
-   water management
-   industry
-   infrastructure (UNFCCC, 2019)

Some councils were given to the problems, for example:

-   increasing food security
-   cleaner water
-   strengthening sustainable natural resources
-   social protection of vulnerable persons
-   better agriculture (UNFCCC, 2019)

LT LEDS was based on Paris Agreement[9]. The aim is to provide a vision and guide countries on how to transition to net zero carbon emmissions by mid-century. Ethiopia has also launched recently the Green Legacy Initiative, this introduces the role of the countries if we talk about global activities. Ethiopia 's government wants to build a Climate Resilient Green Economy by 2025. It is considered as a middle-income and resistant to the negative effects of climate change.

UNDP Ethiopia is also mentionable. It helps the country to mobilise 2 billion dollars in green financing by 2030. It deals with the following projects:

-   developing protected area system
-   more agro-biodiversity concerning farming
-   helping dry lands
-   helping pastoralist communities
-   autonomous adaptation at the community level in Ethiopia (Belay Zerga Seware, 2016)

Ethiopia is helped by other parts of the Earth. This means that people are not completely insensitive to the world's problems. Hungary has a started a project which is called Climate of Change. It tries to shape the young people's point of view. The process is co-financed by the European Court of Justice under the Dear programme[10]. The project is tried to be widened throughout Europe. (Climate of Change,n.d.)

African and European leaders agreed on a vision for a renewed partnership in February 2022. The partnership has delivered the following: - EUR 150 billion Africa-Europe investment package - 450 million doses of vaccines by mid-2022 - closer ties for peace and security - strengthened partnership on migration and mobility - commitment to multilateralism. Cooperation between the EU and African countries is mainly organised around the two events mentioned:

- Samoa Agreement: a comprehensive framework governing its relations with Caribbean, African and Pacific countries.

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[9] A legally binding international treaty on climate change, it was adopted by 196 parties at a conference. The name of the event was UN Climate Change Conference. It was arranged in France.(UNFCCC)

[10] It commits people in Europe in worldwide problems.

- EU- Africa Joint Strategy: implemented through multi-annual operational and action plans adopted at Africa-EU summits, partners include EU and African institutions, and African and European countries. (Consilium Europa)

- Joint EU-Africa Strategy: implemented through multi-annual operational plans and action plans adopted at Africa-EU summits. (Consilium Europa,n.d.)

In 2020, the European Commission and the European External Action Service issued an initiative called „Towards a comprehensive strategy for Africa". It proposes a cooperation in five important areas:

- green transition
- digital development
- sustainable growth, new jobs
- migration, freedom of movement within countries
- governance, peace and security (Consilium Europa,n.d.)

The economic relationship with the Asian country should not be mentioned in terms of absolute interests, but rather in terms of its growth rate. The mentioned economic relationship with Africa consists of the following four factors: - potential market - migration destination - food source - raw material source.

The United States Agency for International Development is providing 500 million dollars in support for the development of African economic organizations. Joe Biden announced that the United States Agency for International Development will allocate 370 million dollars for new projects and 100 million dollars for clean energy development in the sub-Saharan region. (National Library Medicine, 2025)

Australia also supports Africa as a partner in creating regional and global stability, which ensures economic growth, security and development. Australia has strong and growing trade and investment ties with Africa. It maintains diplomatic relations with all 54 African UN member states. (Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, n.d.)

New Zealand's formal relations with African countries are led by diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa, Cairo and Pretoria. They have long-standing relationships across Africa, including through the Commonwealth and the United Nations. New Zealand's formal relations with African countries are led by diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa, Cairo and Pretoria. They have long-standing relationships across Africa, including through the Commonwealth and the United Nations. (New Zealand Foreign Affais and Trade, n.d.)

Well-known artists tries to help African people, too. For example, they give live aid concerts and the money coming from that is donated for charitable causes. They would like to shape a better furute for African people. In Hungray the one of the most well-known Africa-helping organization is the Hungarian Africa Society. The headquarter is in Budapest, it deals with fostering Hungarian-African relations. A lots of diplomats, actor, singer has joined it. Some of the members are: Al-Ghaoui Hesna (war correspondent), Dóra Behumi (singer), Tamás Frei (television presenter), Sorel Kembe (actor). It is always good if a famous person speaks up against war, poverty, etc., the case gots more attention, a lots of people gets the information. They think about the

message, it motivates them to action. Not only money helps, emotional support is also important, as does sharing experiences and embracing others. It is great when a famous people spend the money they earn not only on themselves, but also improving the lives of others.

Princess Diana done a lot for the elimination of landmines. She visited hospitals regularly, too. She gave spiritual support to patients, even she shook hands with people suffering from AIDS. The work Audey Hepburn Netherlandish actress is also should be mentioned. She become an UNICEF ambassador in 1988 (UN Child Support Found), her first mission was in Ethiopia.

Iman Abdulmajid Somalian model, David Bowie English singer's widow also tries to a lot for Africa. She mainly focuses on Congo, but she tries to help elsewhere, too. I would like to mention her because she moved from her home village though, she did not turn away from it, she spens one part of her money to caritative goals. She does campaign against AIDS, she is the global ambassador of „Keeping a Child Alive". She also tries to dop against violence within the family.

Bono tries to takes part in several campaigns (since the nineties), where he tries to draw attention to the Third World. In 2002 he took the USA's financial secretary of state to show him the problems there.

Audrey Hepburn's charity work also should be mentioned. She was a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador from 1988 to 1993. She went on a mission to Ethiopia in 1988, where there were problems about drought and civil strife, too.

What can be done even?

Deforestation has accelerated significantly in the last 20 years, primarily because people want to acquire agricultural land, but the wood is used for industrial activities. Urbanization is also one of the reasons for the disappearance of forests. More and more houses are being built, even in forested areas, and as a result of the construction, trees are being cut down. Roads are being widened, and trees are being cut down. Roads are being widened, and trees are being cut down there too. People like to exploit the Earth. They think that they can dispose of it as they want. They don't understand that every substantial has feelings…

Ethiopia has become the first country in Africa to ban internal combustion vehicles. Older vehicles will be taxed, which will encourage the import of newer vehicles.

In this table you can see the advantages and the disadvantages of electric cars:

Advantages	Disadvantages
There is no exhaust emission	It takes a long time to charge the battery
Low emissions	Short range
Easy to drive it	It is still expensive
Silent operation	The utility network might not be able to
Are less likely to catch fire	handle it
Low fuel and maintenance costs	

Figure 3: The advantages and disadvantages of electric cars. Author's own edition.

To ban vehicles which are not electrically powered would result cleaner air, which would ensure more liveable conditions. To do it, the country should generate surplus electricity. The country is still poor, it is not sure that they can do it. Electric cars are still very expensive, probably not many habitants will be able to afford it…

ACWA Power is a Saudi Arabian water solutions company that has developed a solar power program in Ethiopia. The two countries have signed a long-term power purchase agreement for 20 and a half years. The combined solar power will help Ethiopia increase its electricity capacity by 2050.

In Ethiopia, poisonous waste is still problem. In 2018, the first waste recycler was opened. The programme's name is Reppie project. It is supported by the UN. The power plan incinerates waste and boil resulting water, which turns into steam and drives turbines. This helps to reduce the amount of toxic substances in the soil. Selective waste collection also might be a solution. Of course, a lots of selectice dustbins should be put everywhere. We can see in other countries that there only a few from it and people tend to be lazy and they don't want to walk there… This might be thank you to the too comfortable life of nowadays…

Conclusion

Climate change has its bad and good effects (mainly bad effects) on everything on this planet. Humands, animals and plants also feel these effects.Poverty and vulnerability should decrease and prosperity should increase at the same time. Of course, this would require more empathy and a willingness to help people. As long as countries only take care of their own interests, there will be peaceful atmosphere on Earth and it will be difficult to deal with problems. Countries will not face problems together, but separately. Sometimes a little helps worth a lot. People should turn off electronic devices (such as smart phones) for a moment and to pay attention to the world around them. Together it would be easier: one for everybody, everybody for one.

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that she has no financial interest in this manuscript.

Notes on the Contributor

Linda Adjaoud is studying at Milton Friedman University (Hungary). In the last years, she worked as a back office manager, after she was junior sales manager. She graduated at King Sigismund University in international basic course bachelor's degree. She speaks English, her second mothertongue is French. She also speaks German at beginner's level.

After finishing her master's degree, she intends to become a researcher. She interests in doing researches on climate change and Africa in the future.

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A Review of: "The Routledge Handbook of the Horn of Africa" by Jean-Nicolas Back with Jon Abbink, Stéphane Ancel, Azza Ahmed Abdel Aziz, Emanuele Fantini, Patrick Ferras, Hassan Mwakimako, Clélie Nallet, Aleksi Ylönen and Jan Záhořík (Eds.)[1][2]

Gábor Sinkó[3]

The "*Routledge Handbook of the Horn of Africa*", edited by Jean-Nicolas Bach and a team of esteemed contributors, presents a comprehensive exploration of the complex political, social, and economic dynamics of a region often overlooked in broader geopolitical discussions. This gripping and informative handbook is an essential resource for scholars, policymakers and anyone seeking to deepen their understanding of the multifaceted issues facing this vital region. The editors of the book have certainly created a significant work that not only informs but also challenges readers to consider the intricate dynamics at play in the Horn of Africa.

The volume is organized into six distinct parts, each addressing different themes pertinent to the region. The first part (Liberation movements, separatism, and state formation) provides a historical overview, setting the stage for the contemporary challenges faced by the Horn. It discusses the rise and complexities of various liberation movements and separatist groups in the region, examining the trajectories of movements such as the Oromo Liberation Front and the Ogaden National Liberation Front, while highlighting their historical contexts, aims and challenges. The contributions also analyse the state formation processes in Eritrea, South Sudan, and Somaliland as well as the reactions of Sudan and Ethiopia to secession and autonomy movements. The dynamics of state legitimacy and the impact of historical grievances on modern politics are emphasized. Notably, the chapter by Tanja R. Müller on the militarization of higher education in Eritrea highlights how state control and militarized education systems have shaped national identity and governance (pp. 32-42). This historical context is crucial for understanding the ongoing conflicts and governance issues in the region.

Part 2 (Armed people, conflicts, and international interventions) focuses on the interplay between armed groups, state forces and international actors in the Horn of Africa. It addresses issues such as the role of the African Union's Peace and Security

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Architecture and the complexities of military strategies in the region. Contributions provide insights into the ongoing conflicts in South Sudan, Somalia and the impact of militias on state stability. The section also discusses international dynamics, including foreign interventions and the influence of global powers on local conflicts (for instance, Turkey in Somalia and Uganda in South Sudan). The contributors also address the political economy of conflict, military livelihoods and recruitment strategies for groups like al-Shabaab in Kenya. The third part (Authoritarianism, innovative regimes, and forms of resistance) delves into the nature of authoritarian governance in the Horn of Africa, exploring how regimes maintain power through innovative approaches to political control. It examines the resilience of authoritarian practices despite popular resistance, highlighting the role of electoral processes, civil society and individual agency in challenging state authority. The authors argue for a reframing of narratives around state-society relations, highlighting examples of citizen engagement and resistance against oppressive governance. The chapters analyse specific cases in Ethiopia, Sudan, and Eritrea, discussing the dynamics of power, resistance, and the complexities of state-society relations. The contributions from Jon Abbink and his co-authors discuss the complexities of federalism and diversity in Ethiopia and Kenya, exploring how these nations navigate their ethnic compositions while maintaining central authority (pp. 255-268). This analysis is particularly relevant in the era of rising ethnic tensions and the quest for autonomy among various groups.

Part 4 (Religion and religious movements – strategies and adaptation to new landscape) investigates the impact of religious movements on politics and society in the Horn of Africa region. It covers the evolution of political Islam in Somalia, the role of Islamic movements in Sudan, and the complexities of religious interactions in Ethiopia. Contributions highlight how religious groups adapt to changing political landscapes and engage with state power, often acting as dynamic agents of change. The section underscores the diversity of religious experiences and their implications for social cohesion and conflict. In the fifth part (People's movements: migration) migration trends within the Horn of Africa are studied and the various factors that drive people to migrate – including economic, political and environmental influences – are examined. This section discusses the experiences of migrants and refugees, emphasizing the complexities of cross-border movements and the role of diasporas in shaping regional politics. The contributions also critique international migration policies and their impact on local communities, highlighting personal stories of resilience and adaptation. The chapter by Michaela Stahl-Göken on the sedentarization of cross-border tribes in Eastern Sudan illustrates how migration patterns influence local identities and socio-economic structures (pp. 605-617). This theme resonates with the current global discourse on migration, emphasizing the need to understand the human aspects of these movements beyond mere statistics.

Part 6 (Connecting the Horn: infrastructures, investments, and networks) explores the political and economic integration of the Horn of Africa region through infrastructure development and investment initiatives. It discusses the interplay of

regional projects like the Belt and Road Initiative and the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa. The contributions analyse how these developments affect state relations, local economies and the geopolitical landscape, drawing attention to the need for inclusive approaches to development that consider the interests of marginalized communities. The chapter written by Marina Bertoncin et al. on the implications of Arab investments in Sudan (p. 657-669) is especially important, since it emphasizes the intersection of global economic interests with local realities, shedding light on how external investments can both invigorate and destabilize regional economies. Besides, the contributions by Benedikt Kamski and Nizar Manek highlight the strategic implications of China's investments in transport links within the Horn (pp. 681-691). Such discussions are critical in framing the Horn of Africa within the broader narrative of international relations and development strategies.

Overall, the "*Routledge Handbook of the Horn of Africa*" is a well-structured and thoroughly researched volume that successfully captures the complexities of a region that is often simplified in global narratives. The diverse perspectives presented throughout the chapters not only enrich the academic discourse but also provide a platform for future research. This handbook is a vital addition to the literature on the Horn of Africa and will undoubtedly serve as a reference point for years to come.

Book Review: African Peacekeeping.

Review of African Peacekeeping by Jonathan Fisher and Nina Wilén[12]

János Besenyő[3]

In recent years, an increasing number of books have been published on peace operations on the African continent and the African units involved in them, but from a regional (African) rather than primarily international perspective.[4] Among these is the volume "African Peacekeeping" by two well-known researchers, Jonathan Fisher[5] and Nina Wilén,[6] which sees African peacekeeping as an integral part of African politics, a formative activity carried out primarily by Africans (pp. 3-4).

In addition to the Introduction chapter, the volume consists of seven further chapters

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[2] African Peacekeeping. By Jonathan Fisher and Nina Wilén. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 272p. $84.99 cloth, $29.99 paper. doi:10.1017/S1537592722002481.

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[4] Some of the works include: Döring, K. P. W. 2024. African Military Politics in the Sahel. Regional Organizations and International Politics. Cambridge, United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press; János Besenyő 2021. Darfur Peacekeepers. The African Union Peacekeeping Mission In Darfur (AMIS) From The Perspective Of A Hungarian Military Advisor. Paris, L'Harmattan; Oliver Furley, Roy May 2021. Peacekeeping in Africa. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge; Alan Doss 2020. A Peacekeeper in Africa: Learning from UN Interventions in Other People's Wars. Boulder, USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers; Marco Jowell. 2018. Peacekeeping in Africa: Politics, Security and the Failure of Foreign Military Assistance. London: I.B.Tauris

[5] Professor Jonathan Fisher joined IDD in 2011 as an ESRC Postdoctoral Research Fellow shortly after completing his doctorate at the University of Oxford and is currently a Professor of Global Security in the Department, University of Birmingham. His research focuses on the relationships between authoritarianism and (in)security across multiple levels – global, regional, domestic, and "the everyday". He has a particular interest in the role of ideas and legitimacy in authoritarian systems and spaces, and has worked extensively in eastern Africa, where he has focused on the influence of guerrilla heritage on contemporary patterns of governance, conflict and cooperation. Professor Fisher has held a range of leadership positions in the School of Government since 2016 and is currently Head of the International Development Department. He is also an elected Council member of the African Studies Association of the UK and the Development Studies Association.

[6] Nina Wilén is an Associate Professor in Political Science at Lund University and the Director for the Africa Programme at Egmont Institute for International Relations. She is also a Global Fellow at the Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO). Between January 2020 and December 2023, she was the Editor-in-Chief for the academic journal International Peacekeeping. Professor Wilén make research on two main topics: different types of military interventions and role that the military plays in contemporary society. Her research contributions within these two areas have focused on the politics of Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Security Force Assistance (SFA), the domestic effects of troop contribution to peacekeeping operations, and the role gender structures and stereotypes play in the military institutions, with a specific focus on female peacekeepers. She had published extensively on these topics in a variety of different academic journals, including International Affairs, European Journal of International Security, Third World Quarterly, International Peacekeeping and Gender, Work and Organization among others.

based on each other. In the Introduction section, the reader can learn a great deal about the authors' research, the peace operations on the continent (past, present and possible future) and the people involved. This chapter contains a table (pp. 15-16) of the authors' peace operations in the African Union and other African regional organisations. I would have included in this table the Organization of African Unity (OAU) cease-fire missions in Algeria and Morocco,[7] which operated briefly after the 1963/1964 *Sand War*,[8] and the OAU-led mission in Chad (1981-1982).[9] Or at least the authors could have dealt with these missions at the level of a mention. I have no idea why the OAU's involvement in Chad (considered by many to be the first independent peace operation in Africa) was not mentioned, but the Algerian-Moroccan ceasefire mission was probably not included in the book, as was one of the continent's oldest operations, MINURSO in Western Sahara,[10] because they were linked to North Africa. However, the OAU/AU, alongside the UN, is still playing an active role in the unresolved Western Sahara issue (Besenyő et al 2023, pp. 21-24, 31-33, 36, 81-82). However, the authors argue that the North African states are more related to the Middle East than to Africa, and therefore they have not wanted to deal with the peace operations there (p. 6). I disagree with this in several respects, as the North African states are located on the African continent, are member states of the AU and, with the exception of Morocco, are members of the North African Regional Capability (NARC), which is the common military organization of the region. It is also important that this mission has a significant number of African peacekeepers and civilian staff, which alone makes MINURSO's activities worth looking into. It should also be remembered that North African countries (Egypt being a prominent one) are also actively involved in UN and AU peace operations, and their experience should have been included in the book, but only tangentially. It should also be remembered that five countries within the African Union (the so-called Big Five) have a significant influence on peace operations in Africa, as the authors point out (pp. 132-133). However, few people know that three of these countries (Algeria, Egypt and Libya) are countries in the North African region. For this reason alone, it would have been worth including this region in the research. This information could have added much more nuance to the authors' findings on African peacekeeping operations.

On page 20 is a map of Colonial Africa, which shows the situation after the First World War, when the territories of Germany, which had also been colonised on the continent, were divided up between the other powers. I would have preferred an earlier map, where the German colonies are still shown. If only because in the first chapter the historical (colonial) antecedents of peacekeeping were also dealt with by the authors,

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[7] There is no mention of the mission on the official OAU or AU websites, but the peace mission, which was established in 1963 with the active participation and support of Ethiopian and Malian soldiers, played an active role in implementing and monitoring the ceasefire (James 1990, 98). On this basis, it seems to me that this short-lived operation can be regarded as the first truly African peace operation, but there are hardly any valuable sources or references.

[8] The Sand War lasted exactly from 25 September 1963 to 20 February 1964 (Magu 2021, 167).

[9] Terry M. Mays. 2002. *Africa's First Peacekeeping Operation: The OAU in Chad, 1981-1982*, USA, Westport, Praeger Publishers.

[10] The operation is only just mentioned twice in the volume. (pp. 38, 173).

albeit mostly from a British perspective (pp. 48-65), while the French (p. 49, 54-56), German (p. 55), Portuguese (pp. 49, 56), Italian (pp. 54, 56), Belgian or Spanish historical examples and experiences were less or not discussed. More attention should have been paid to this, since, as the authors rightly point out, the colonial past has an impact on the present period and has had a significant influence on African peacekeeping (pp. 30-31). I experienced this myself in 2005 in Darfur, where I served as a logistical advisor in AMIS II. There I saw in practice the obstacles to cooperation between soldiers from countries formerly under British and French influence. For example, the official language of the mission was English, but many African soldiers and officers from Francophone countries did not speak English at all, only French (Besenyő 2021, pp. 146, 165). They were also socialised in a different military culture, which affected their training and their daily tasks. And I am not talking here about being better or worse, they simply did not have a similar background, which was reflected in the mission's activities.[11] It is also in this chapter that the authors have looked at the development of peacekeeping and the specificities of Africa. On the other hand, as a former peacekeeper (I have served in two African peace operations), I was very impressed by the authors' approach of examining African operations and their impact on African/international politics not only in terms of academic/scientific issues (theory) but also on the basis of practical experience (practice). This endeavour can be traced not only here but in the other chapters.

In the second chapter, the reader is mainly introduced to the impact and relationship between politics and peacekeeping. It can be seen that certain regimes (especially authoritarian states) attach particular importance to the development and strengthening of the capacity of the armed forces, for which peacekeeping operations offer a kind of opportunity. This can also be seen from the table of the 10 African countries with the highest number of soldiers and police officers in UN peace operations (pp. 66-67). In this chapter we trace the different stages in the development of African armies. These are illustrated for the reader with different case studies, for example Uganda (pp. 79-87) or Burundi (pp. 87-92). What I miss here is that there is no case study on any of the 10 African countries that send most of their troops and police to UN peace operations. On the other hand, the part on the link between military coups in West African countries and peace operations (pp. 92-95), which will give readers food for thought, is included in this chapter. As the authors explain in the chapter, peace operations provide a good opportunity not only for authoritarian leaders to "cleanse" themselves and their regime, but also for the soldiers themselves, whose training and preparedness can be greatly improved by such operations, and who can even earn more income to provide better living conditions for their families. Moreover, peace operations also provide an opportunity for certain leaders to reward leaders loyal to them with well-paid posts, even if they are unworthy of them. One of the best examples of this is the Ugandan

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[11] Unfortunately, the authors of the book did not deal with the AMIS I-II operation, they mentioned it only tangentially, although the operation accumulated considerable experience, which would have been worth using and presenting (pp. 15, 119, 155).

general Nakibus Lakara, who was removed from the Ugandan army in 2003 for corruption and other crimes, was reinstated and promoted to general in 2011 by Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and even appointed deputy commander of the AMISOM operation in 2015 (p. 84). However, the authors and other researchers indicate that knowledge acquired in peacekeeping operations can also be risky, as many of the planners and executors of military coups have had peacekeeping backgrounds, such as the leader of the military takeover in Niger, General Abdourahmane Tchiani, who participated in several UN and ECOWAS peace operations and who now leads Niger (Levin and Alen, 2023).

In the third chapter, the authors discuss the relationship between African peacekeeping and the international community, with a special focus on "African solutions to African Problems." Although the authors argue that African peacekeeping would be unthinkable without the financial and other support of the international community, the international community has not had nearly the impact on African peacekeeping that many would think (p. 99). On the contrary, as mentioned earlier, African states have on several occasions used/used their experiences/results from African peacekeeping in their international relations to influence certain political processes and in several cases have led to additional financial resources/support, mainly from Western countries (p. 118). In addition to Western powers (USA and European countries) and traditional peacekeeping states (Russia, India), new actors (Turkey, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, China) have emerged in African peacekeeping and are playing an increasingly important role, such as China, whose activities are described in detail in the chapter (pp. 119-126).

The fourth chapter traces the impact of peacekeeping on the identity of African organisations and states at continental and regional level. It can be seen that there are often conflicting interests of the different organisations (UN, AU) and African countries, which are able to assert their interests to the detriment of each other (pp. 133-134). Of particular interest are the sections on Nigeria as the leading country and regional power in ECOWAS (pp. 143-148), Tanzania (pp. 149-153), Rwanda (pp. 153-156) and South Africa (pp. 156-161). In the fifth chapter, the authors present African states which, after a long period of conflict, have participated in various educational programmes (training at foreign military institutes, courses, training, exercises) with the help of peacekeepers and the international community, or have been stabilised through other programmes (Security Sector Reform/SSR) and have themselves become actively involved in other peace operations. In doing so, they were able to rebuild, equip and train their new 'national' armies, which were "forged together in the course of peacekeeping" (pp. 172-178). In addition, participation in peacekeeping brought other economic opportunities for many African countries, which were thus able to rebuild their destroyed infrastructure and societies more easily. Positive examples are the cases of Burundi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and the DRC (pp.184-192). In the next chapter, chapter six, other information on African peace operations, their functioning, background, governance and management structure, financial situation, the issue of African Ownership (pp. 208-

2015) and how the AU cooperates with other international and regional organisations in peacekeeping are presented. The seventh and final chapter concludes.

Despite the shortcomings I have mentioned, the book is definitely a niche book, and I recommend it to all those who are interested, either as researchers or as individuals, in the history of Africa today, international politics, military science, diplomacy and peacekeeping, and how political and military processes work, what are their drivers and how they affect not only the African continent but also other parts of the world. I particularly like the fact that a considerable amount of research has gone into the preparation of this book, as evidenced not only by the bibliography but also by the suggested reading at the end of each chapter. Thus, anyone who, in reading the book, feels like delving deeper into the subject will have access to further valuable publications.

Conflict of Interest

The author is a member of the Editorial Board. The manuscript was handled independently to avoid any conflict of interest.

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Fiasco or Status Quo? The UN Peace Operation in Western Sahara

Review of Conflict and Peace in Western Sahara. The Role of the UN's Peacekeeping Mission (MINURSO). Edited by János Besenyő, R. Joseph Huddleston and Yahia H. Zoubir[1][2]

Gábor Búr[3]

Even crises strongly concerning the world's public opinion fade into everyday life over time. This is much more the case with crises that take place behind God's back, in poor countries with small populations. However, the waning of attention can be dangerous, as in our modern world any local conflict can quickly escalate into a regional, continental or even global conflict. The conflict in Western Sahara is typically such a case, many people would have problems even to find on the map the area called "Africa's last colony". The editors of the opus "*Conflict and Peace in Western Sahara*", János Besenyő, R. Joseph Huddleston and Yahia H. Zoubir intended their work not for them, but for those who already have some understanding of this stuck conflict and would like to deepen their knowledge even more, to enrich it with details unknown to them so far and to receive accurate analyses. The editors recruited an excellent group of authors to achieve this goal, from university lecturers to soldiers who served in the field. The result is an excellent summary work, an extremely powerful and comprehensive analysis of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara. The quintessence of the book is given by a statement formulated by János Besenyő in 2009: "MINURSO was meant to be a testing ground for the effectiveness of UN resolutions in settling disputes between a colonial power and its former colony, that is, between two forces with different political and military weight." (p. 308.) The authors of the volume essentially analyse and interpret this question from different points of view.

The introductory chapter, "Introduction: Peacekeeping Operations in Situations of Conflict: The Case of MINURSO" serves also this purpose, providing the guiding thread of the book: "The MINURSO was set up in 1991 and renewed ever since to carry out two main tasks: the monitoring of the ceasefire between the Saharawi National

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Liberation Movement (Frente Popular para la Liberacion de Saguia el-Halma y de Rio de Oro — POLISARIO) and Morocco and the organization of the referendum that would allow people of Western Sahara (WS) to decide between independence and integration with Morocco." (p. 1.) The overview starts from the 1960s, with the beginning of the decolonization process and gives some theoretical framework of the UN peacekeeping missions ever since. The introduction also shows the complexity of the context in which the MINURSO mission was born and operates, in comparison to other mission where the UN has been or is still involved.

The other 17 chapters of the book, which contains a total of 18 chapters, are divided into four parts. In the four chapters of the first part the history of MINURSO is discussed. Relevant events, the legal aspects of the functioning of the UN mission for the referendum in Western Sahara, the end of the Western Sahara Peace Process and the collapse of the UN ceasefire are discussed. The second part of the book is the most eclectic one, the three chapters are focusing on human rights, with an eloquent title: "MINURSO between a Rock and a Hard Place". (p.99.) Separate chapters received the topics of participation of women in the MINURSO and also the Saharawi archaeological heritage. It will surprise the average reader the number of protection and rehabilitation sites of high cultural heritage value in this desert-dominated country despite of restricted access to sites and logistical difficulties resulting from the political and security situation. Of great value is the unbiased and fair approach of the two authors of the chapter "MINURSO and the Saharawi Archaeological Heritage", discussing with high academic standards the threat to archaeological values, not only from natural environment (sun and wind erosion), and the damages caused by the warring parties, or the consequences of the extraction and quarrying activities on the Moroccan side but they also report about vandalism carried out by MINURSO personnel against important archaeological sites in the Polisario-controlled area. Western Sahara's archaeological record is important for our understanding of past human migrations and adaptations to climatic changes in the Sahara, African prehistory at large. (p. 137.) The third part of the book deals with the military aspects of the mission, from police contingent to integrated logistics support and financial issues. Most of the readers will find those four chapters as the most informative ones. The importance of first-hand information obtained in the field cannot be overemphasized. From problems with food and water supplies demands of the UN to the countries sending soldiers and police officers to the mission, the authors cover essentially all aspects of the Western Sahara crisis. Particularly interesting is the chapter with the title "Military and Police Experiences from Western Sahara: The Case of Hungary" based on János Besenyő's research, during which he conducted interviews with Hungarian policemen and soldiers serving in the Western Sahara, then analysed and evaluated them. Besenyő cannot even deny his military past, as this type of analysis is called "lessons learned" in the ranks of the armed forces. As can be seen from the chapters he wrote, he not only conducted academic research on the region, but also served as a peacekeeper in the MINURSO peacekeeping operation. The chapter on the military contingent written by the two Polish researchers, Błażej Popławski and Cyprian

Aleksander Kozera, is also interesting, especially in light of the fact that Polish peacekeepers also serve in the peace operation, from whom the authors received first-hand information. The fourth part is devoted to the policies of some selected powers in relation to the conflict and MINURSO, namely the USA, China, Russia and France, as well as African states are listed. The former colonial power, Spain, is absent from this circle, and this is only partly justified by the fact that the ambivalent role of the former motherland in the outbreak and preservation of the crisis was thoroughly analysed in the historical review. Considering that Spanish is still an official language in the Sahrawi Republic and is obligatory in the schools run by the Polisario, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic leadership has not severed the connection, in fact, it is trying to strengthen it. The role of Spain in shaping the position of the European Union, which is becoming more and more actively involved in the settlement of the issue, also testifies to that Madrid is still a major player indeed. Due to the nature of the Western Sahara crisis, it is not only important to which powers the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic leadership does turn for political consultations, but also who is supporting Rabat. Despite the fact that the era of "Françafrique", in which Paris exercised informal guardianship over its former overseas possessions, is now over, the inclusion of France in a separate chapter of this book is entirely appropriate as Morocco was backed by France in many cases. (p. 164.) To some extent surprisingly, the fifth member of the Security Council, Great Britain was left out of the series of chapters dedicated to the role of individual powers. The argumentation that the implementation of relevant principles of international law, including self-determination is why this book pays specific attention to the role of States like China, France, Russia, and the United States," whose approaches seem to range from total disinterest to political bias toward a specific party of the conflict" (p. 3.) somewhat limps in light of the fact that the authors refer several times to the five-member UN "Group of Friends" for Western Sahara. i.e. France, Russia, Spain, the United States, and the United Kingdom. (p. 63., p. 68.) Naturally, the role of" non-interventionist" countries, like China and Russia cannot be overlooked. Their involvement in the MINURSO operation went from initial disinterest and lack of a clear position to a more active role to emerge as a "responsible global power." (pp. 7-8.). Not incidentally, we get a very good summary of China's Africa policy in the relevant chapter. China and Russia are among the top ten contributor countries in MINURSO personnel, along with Bangladesh, Egypt, Ghana, Pakistan, Honduras, Malaysia, Brazil and Nepal. (p. 253.) However, this does not explain why in the book China is mentioned almost five times and Russia three times more often than Spain, while Great Britain is barely mentioned, and even the United States occupies a more modest position. With some exaggeration, the authors of the book seem to view this conflict through the prism of the (possible) future. What has been said is confirmed by the fact that the title of the chapter dealing with Russia is "Russia and MINURSO: This Is Not Our Conflict" (p. 262.), and this phrase is repeated in the text (p.272.), and it is even the very end of the chapter (p. 276.) However, we can be grateful to the author for providing an insight into a closed world where the Russians make fun of Irish officers

who have forgotten even their own Celtic language and can only speak in English, in contrast to the polyglot Russians, who naturally negotiate with the locals in Arabic, as in with Chinese people in their mother tongue. The gem of this is one of the quotes:" How could you, being a Russian, immediately understand everything, and I, being an American, did not understand anything of his (Australian) English?" (p. 262.) In addition to such elements that add colour to what has to be said, it is of course much more relevant that the author gives an excellent summary of the Russian (and Chinese) wait-and-see position on the Western Sahara settlement. (p.269.) Among the five-member UN "Group of Friends" for Western Sahara only Washington had seen a significant turn in the relations 2010 between Morocco and Polisario (p. 63.) In 2017 the American administration announced the decrease of its budget contribution to UN peacekeeping missions and declared a new political guideline for such operations. Since MINURSO was among the smaller missions with a limited military and police strength, no fundamental change was expected. The authors of the chapter explain their position in an easy-to-follow way for the readers, how Morocco's role was evaluated during the escalation of global conflicts, and how this affected American decision-makers. The question was raised in Washington whether the long-standing Western Sahara case, where the relation of the opposing parties stalled since 1991 should be considered as a frozen conflict, which requires revision. This really happened and the American position has changed so much that in 2020 former US President Donald Trump proclaimed that the United States recognizes the sovereignty of Morocco over Western Sahara. The key sentence of the book can also be linked to the chapter devoted to the politics of the United States:" …the intransigence of the Moroccan government and the Polisario Front has consistently translated into a purported loss of confidence in the peace process and a failure to negotiate in good faith." (p. 233.) The two authors of the chapter" The United States and MINURSO" point out that" the Trumpian contradiction" still persists, Washington" continues to support the renewal of MINURSO—the Mission of the United Nations for the Referendum in Western Sahara—while diplomatically supporting Morocco's opposition to any referendum in the territory and directly supporting its military presence therein." (p. 244.) However, it is true for all parties involved in the conflict that the" self-defeating role" they play to this day prevents the creation of a tangible result, the resolution of the conflict. So, the" Western Sahara stalemate" lives on. The prelast chapter:" The Approach of the African States towards MINURSO" provides an excellent summary how the concerned African countries and the African Union are trying to shape and articulate a more synchronised voice. We still have to wait for a positive outcome, so the solution of African problems within the continent still belongs to the category of desires and noble goals. As African countries provide a good deal of UN peacekeeping personnel, the question of" troop value" which the author raises, is a sensitive, yet an extremely important aspect. Humans in military and police uniforms from different corners of the continent and even the world have their own socialization, cultural, religious, etc. backgrounds, with all its consequences. The title of the last chapter is the most telling:" MINURSO: A Mission for Maintaining the

Status Quo?" Although those who have read this far have already met most of the actors and circumstances in the previous chapters, they will not find boring this excellent summary operating with new points of view. Another strength of this chapter is the presentation of the impact of the conflict on its narrower and wider regional environment.

It is not an easy task to write about an attempt to solve a crisis that has been going on for an extremely long time and has not been resolved to this day. Considering that the chapters often have two authors, it is a great virtue of the book that, despite the many contributors, a unified work was created. It is not only an important academic work, but the first comprehensive scientific work on the mission, which has been in operation for more than 30 years. At the same time a good compass for diplomats, politicians, soldiers and other professionals dealing with the crisis, and it can also be recommended to a wider readership interested in the topic.

Conflict of Interest

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Book review: "Food security for African smallholder farmers"

Review of Food security for African smallholder farmers. Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security. Edited by Mupambwa, Hupenyu Allan, Adornis Dakarai Nciizah, Patrick Nyambo, Binganidzo Muchara and Ndakalimwe Naftal Gabriel[1][2]

Szilvia Veress Juhászné[3]

"*Food Security for African Smallholder Farmers*" is an invaluable resource for anyone interested in understanding and addressing the complex challenges facing smallholder farmers in Africa. Written with both expertise and empathy, this comprehensive guide offers a thorough examination of the issues surrounding food security in the context of African agriculture. The authors skillfully navigate through the multifaceted dimensions of food security, delving into topics such as agricultural productivity, climate change adaptation, market access, and policy frameworks. What sets this book apart is its emphasis on the experiences and perspectives of smallholder farmers themselves, giving voice to those who are often marginalized in discussions about food security.

One of the book's greatest strengths lies in its practicality. Rather than simply analyzing problems, the authors provide actionable strategies and solutions for improving food security at the grassroots level. From innovative farming techniques to community-based initiatives, readers will find a wealth of ideas that can be implemented to enhance the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and ensure sustainable food production. Furthermore, the book is highly accessible, written in clear and engaging prose that makes complex concepts easy to grasp. Whether you're a seasoned agricultural expert or a concerned citizen eager to make a difference, "*Food Security for African Smallholder Farmers*" offers insights that will inform, inspire, and empower.

The book's 24 chapters, in six parts, provide a comprehensive picture of the continent's food production challenges, supported by case studies, and make recommendations for stabilizing food security. The first part is divided into nine chapters detailing the links between soil quality and agricultural yields, with a special focus on the importance of fertilization for soil productivity. It provides concrete examples of the challenges of growing cereals, maize, beans and tobacco on degraded soils of poor quality and suggests solutions to improve soil productivity. In view of the high population growth that is a feature of the continent as a whole, the chapters also discuss the need for and possibilities of introducing sustainable intensification and precision

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farming. In addition to the agronomic and economic aspects, the authors describe the social situation of farmers and other challenges arising from farmers' attitudes. In this context, they call for the development of holistic research plans.

The second part presents the management of water resources and the characteristics of various water management systems. Through the specifics of integrated water resources management in Olushandja, Namibia, we get an idea of the possibilities of self-sufficient farmers regarding sustainable water management in agriculture. The authors dedicate a separate chapter to the role of aquaculture in food security, as well as the challenges of the sector, and then formulate proposals for development and stabilization. It analyzes in detail the possible effects of stronger policies, the establishment of stronger public institutions, and the support of the private and corporate sectors on the sector and, at the same time, on food security.

The third part deals with challenges related to climate change and their effects on food security. Chapter 14 presents in detail the problems caused by climate change, then other problems that occur as a result of solving the problems, and ultimately the cycle that greatly increases food insecurity. Availability, accessibility, usability and stability, described as the pillars of food security, are all at risk due to the increasing effects of climate change. The lack of accessibility and stability basically determines the development of market prices. The chapter explains the connections in a way that is easy to understand, and formulates suggestions for mitigating the negative effects of climate change. The authors devote an entire chapter to the presentation of Africa-specific versions of climate-smart farming methods. Related to the topic, the importance of medicinal plants in aquaculture is discussed in a separate chapter, as well as recommendations are made on the possibilities of using medicinal plants in aquaculture.

In the following chapters, the authors discuss in detail the exposure of smallholder subsistence farmers to climate change. The main reason for vulnerability is that farmers are not prepared to mitigate risks from climate change - e.g. severe droughts, devastating storms, floods. The authors use concrete examples to illustrate the risks of not using irrigation technology for crop production in Zimbabwe, for example, where natural rainfall is unpredictable. The chapters make various recommendations on the negative impacts of climate change on food security.

The authors devote a special chapter to stressing the importance of conservation agriculture and the use of indigenous crops. The link between soil degradation and the increase in food insecurity through the reduction of crop yields is detailed.

Part 4-5-6 focus on African farmers' knowledge, skills, best practices and opportunities for improvement. The issue of gender inequality in land tenure relations, its causes and consequences are discussed in detail. The authors seek to explore from all possible angles the links between agricultural development opportunities and increasing levels of food security, and to make recommendations taking into account the specificities of each region. The existence of so-called holistic farming systems is discussed in detail. Holistic farming systems are a way of maximizing productivity by optimizing economic and financial indicators, the aim being to recycle and reuse all materials. Biogas production,

for example, can be of particular importance, as it helps to recycle organic waste of all kinds, offers sustainable energy production and helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition to sustainable agricultural production, various alternatives for use as nutritious food are being researched across Africa. In this regard, one chapter of the book deals in detail with the possibility of mushroom cultivation in Namibia, and presents the efforts made to popularize mushroom cultivation and use. Low-budget mushroom cultivation, in addition to being an activity that generates income for food security stability and production, also offers solutions in the fields of cleaning, environmental management, medicine and biotechnology. The key conditions for the development of cultivation in Namibia are given. In order to popularize consumption and demonstrate the effects of cultivation on food security, workshops and events are organized in the region for farmers and institutions. The authors deal in detail with the current situation and future possibilities of aquaculture in Namibia. Based on its natural features, with its 1,572 km long coastline, Namibia provides excellent foundations for aquaculture to become the dominant sector of the country. Although the currently developing sector shows slow growth, it is a welcome fact that the country's government supports the developments. Environmental factors (such as weather anomalies resulting from climate change), as well as financial and infrastructural characteristics represent the challenge for the development of the sector, which challenges can be bridged by the diversification of the economy and various technological developments. Chapter 22 presents women's land ownership rights and their characteristics. It is typical throughout Africa that women's land ownership and land inheritance rights are unclear. In some regions it is not regulated, in other areas the legal regulations allow women to own land, but the implementation of the rules does not work in practice. Patriarchal hegemony prevails in several regions, but this significantly contributes to the development of women's farming situation in a negative direction. Given the fact that women in many countries in Africa are engaged in smallholder farming and that smallholder farmers determine the level of food security, the regulation of land tenure issues is imperative and requires immediate action. Inequality between the sexes in relation to land ownership makes it impossible for the farmer, for example, to receive various subsidies, which leads to the minimization of investment opportunities. The authors recommend education, basic legal training, legislative reforms, and the organization of community-based land management programs in relation to women's land ownership.

In conclusion, this book is not just a scholarly treatise; it's a call to action. By illuminating the challenges faced by African smallholder farmers and presenting practical solutions, it serves as a roadmap for building a more equitable and food-secure future for all. I highly recommend it to anyone passionate about agriculture, development, and social justice.

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Smith, D. L., & Claytor, R. P. (2018). An acute bout of aerobic exercise reduces movement time in a Fitts' task. PloS One, 13(12), Article e0210195. https:/doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0210195

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