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Dear Readers//Dear Fellow Researchers,

The JCEEAS (Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies) scientific journal has arrived at its 3rd number of the 5th volume. Due to several outstanding studies and reviews throughout the already not so short history of the journal, its standard has constantly evolved and reached a peak that shows quality for the scientific and the average reader as well. I am proud to present for our reader community the latest edition of our scientific magazine, which – just as before – aims at reaching the highest possible level of research in Africa and other related topics. It gives me great pleasure to present this issue as well because the events unfolding in the Sahel-belt and in certain parts of Africa are relevant to today's researching community, and in a way this journal is able to contribute to the recent scientific research in these themes.

The issue begins with the research of Maurício Waldman, who in his essay tries to comprehend the phenomenon of Pan-Africanism. According to the author, the Africanist scientific community is ready to get a better understanding of the term, which is full of biased interpretations. Pan-Africanism is also a relevant issue, and for its thorough research the scientist needs to use differentiated methods and find the social, political, geographical and cultural roots of the concept. This article thus serves for the improvement of geopolitical knowledge in the field of Africanism.

The second article is written by Attila Tokai, and it concerns the Ogaden war as the cornerstone of Cold War détente politics. The author describes the main causes for the Somali conflict and tries to comprehend its most important ramifications. Along with taking into consideration the Cold War politics, it endeavours to capture the true reasons of the politics of the Horn of Africa and by researching this theme the author aims at giving a more thorough picture of the area at hand.

In the third text Bahlbi Malk gives an introduction in law and society, regarding the ethnicity and social integration in Africa. The author argues that the ethnic differences and conflicts are not rooted in social tensions, rather they are the consequences of politically driven naturalization: they are institutionalized. Malk states that the pre-given term of ethnicity should be abandoned and multidisciplinary research should be given to better understand the phenomenon.

The fourth article contributed by Nikoletta Evelin Zsiga is aiming at giving thorough research on the detention systems of Ethiopia and Kenya. According to historical facts, the colonization had its effects on the two countries: the Italian-ruled Ethiopia and the British-ruled Kenya both had to build detention centres to withhold the revolting nationals against their colonizing power. The author is trying to examine these facilities: what were the motives why they were built, what was the fate of the internees and so on.

In the fifth article, Gyula Vörös and Viktor Szulcsányi delve into the depths of cyber threats in the Sahel region. The authors aim at interpreting the current cyber situation in the countries like Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, which are recently very vulnerable to informatic terrorist attacks, and thus their cyber environment has become an important theme to deal with. The researchers try to give a

comprehensive picture on the cybersecurity situation of the aforementioned areas along with describing the security situation of this region.

In the sixth paper, Adam Opeyemi Abass is considering the outcome of the French counterterrorism operation in Mali. Along with describing the main causes for the unsuccessfulness of the French counterterrorism effort, this article endeavours to give a solution to the ineffectiveness of the fight against the Malian jihadist network, and why these elements thrive despite the efforts of the counterterrorism movements.

The seventh research is concentrating on Turkey's experience in the Libyan civil war. Sándor Bence Ács aims with his study to explore the roots of the role of Ankara in this conflict as well as with its relations to other countries, how these connections evolved or dissolved. He also tries to give a comprehensive approach on the facts of what strategic benefits did the country receive in this conflict. The role of Turkey is thus considerably described in the conflict by the author.

The eighth article by Abraham Ename Minko tries to comprehend the relation between political fragility and the proliferation of terrorist organizations in the Sahel area. The author argues that the frequency of coup d'états in a certain country can enhance the resilience and proliferation of extremist groups in that area. The research also finds a way to consider the influence of the global powers like the US and France to what extent they contribute to the security of the Sahel countries.

The ninth paper by Derrick Kamau Njambi and Andrea Tick describes the impacts of an ERP System on corporate structure and culture, namely on the Marginpar corporation. The impact on ERP System is examined in this article according to its effects on the flower managing company, Marginpar. Interviews, surveys and so on are conducted to give a more thorough understanding of the company and the phenomenon as well.

In the tenth research, Sunday Chukwuemeka Gold tries to interpret the global influence of the African diaspora. In the article, cultural, economic and social elements are concerned as well, and as the main argument the historical background and sorrow of this 400-year-old-rooted community is discussed. In his paper, Gold aims at giving a full description of several sides of this diaspora, and along with its characteristics, the people's inner pain is given consideration.

In the eleventh and last article, Abdilahi Ismail Abdilahi examines the development of Somali national language and script. The author endeavours to start from the beginning of the Somali language and he tries to describe most of the influences that modified the language and script. His main goal is to give a full understanding of how this beautiful language came to being and what challenges arose during its formation period.

The last three works are reviews given by Richárd Schneider, János Besenyő and Willem du Plessis. Schneider reviews a book on countering violent extremism in Kenya, Besenyő examines the fate of Spanish soldiers serving in the army of Churchill after the Spanish Civil War and du Plessis considers the theme in his review of antisemitism in South Africa from 1948 on. All three works are outstanding research, which give an appropriate ending to the issue of the JCEEAS journal.

Finally, I would like to conclude by stating that this issue has become something special. With all the authors, giving their best and the themes, all relevant according to the recent Africanist research this issue is hoped to become a success. I would like to express my thanks to the contributing

researchers and academics, and to the editors as well. It is my hope that the interesting themes of this journal will draw the attention of the readers, whether they are official researchers or just average readers of African security politics and history. I would like to wish all our followers a meaningful reading, and I would like to extend my wish as well that the issue will serve as a useful collection of articles and reviews for the scientific community and the average Africa-interested readers.

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Pan-Africanism: Geopolitics, Political Realism and State Governance[1]

Maurício Waldman[2]

Abstract:

Pan-Africanism is a set of ideas with a central focus on the notion of cultural and historical unity across the continent, serving as a paradigm for the political unity of Africans. Being a paramount concept in the political evolution of the continent, Pan-Africanism encompasses the anti-colonialist struggles, the decolonization era, and the current global situation. This text adopts an argumentative approach, questioning whether the African political scenario has put the seductive notion of the continent's political unity to its toughest tests. African unity has faced both exogenous obstacles (particularly the interference of external powers) and endogenous determinants, rooted in Africa's pre-colonial times. Essentially, this paper highlights the gap between the maximalist tendency led by Kwame Nkrumah, which underlines the "kingdom of the political", in contrast to the minimalist trend that emphasizes the "politics of kingdoms", pivotal to understanding the OAU history. Furthermore, the paper assesses the African states' performance in terms of what political realism has imposed, like the nation-state concept and the borders' inviolability, increased social vulnerability, global strategic alignments, inter-ethnic conflicts, political fragmentation, irredentism, lack of political will, the action of terrorist organizations, and Islamic supremacism, issues that call into question the foundations of the pan-Africanist ideal.

Keywords:
Pan-Africanism; International relations; geopolitics; Organization of African Unity; African history.

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Introduction

The topic of Pan-Africanism and its intricate connection with independent African countries' interstate interactions is not just challenging but also absolutely significant in the field of international relations in the post-decolonization era. This discussion presents a complex web of historical, political, cultural, geographical, and sociological factors that demand a comprehensive reflection on particular realities.

Therefore, the statehood and governance in the pan-Africanist ideas scenario go beyond the framework of an isolated theme to become a paramount aspect of understanding the continent's political expectations. The issue provides clues for understanding the internal tendencies of Pan-Africanism, the tensions between unity and political diversity, and the discrepancies that oppose African national statehood to continental solidarity.

Considering these problematics, an attentive and objective analysis of the state's role is undoubtedly necessary for contemporary African studies. It becomes a vital source to question common-sense narratives and to encourage a differentiated vision of Pan-Africanism performance, highlighting the logicality of engagement of this in terms of its concrete reach.

Thus, biased conceptions, often consecrated by exhaustive repetition, normalizing political notions that incorporate unrealistic propositions, must be reassessed and revised. For instance, the concept of one African super-state integrating all postcolonial African nations, on the one hand, or the idea that African countries are inherently supportive, on the other hand, certainly demands a revaluation. Therefore, upholding rigorous academic analysis standards is crucial, with the methodological exemption playing a critical role in approaching these conceptualizations.

This text prioritizes a discussion of international relations, exploring the interactions among countries and the dynamics that shape continental African politics. However, in several moments, we go beyond this approach, embodying distinctive information supported by the social sciences field and, particularly, the premises of geographical expertise.

The importance of geographical scontribution is first and foremost made explicit by the geographical nature of states and all power architectures, which structure spatial materiality to support political authorities' actions at all levels and scales in the ineluctable relations maintained with geographic space (MELLO, 1999; RATZEL, 1969 and 1914; MAULL, 1959).

Furthermore, the focus on geopolitics and political geography is the geographical nature of the state and the doctrine of a matrix relationship between the facts of geography and the universe of politics. This proposition includes the indispensable link between space and the exercise of power, which is a determinant for understanding territorial management and the spatial dynamics of the state (CLAVAL, 1979).

Space also refers to the capacity of objects, forms, and human actions incorporated into geographic space to revive, induce, and maintain processes and dynamics that

structure (and restructure) the inhabited space. Socio-spatial formations are constructional, an unequally accumulated time, brothering spatial objects and human actions, and as a historical construction, they constantly aggregate new meanings and functions (SANTOS, 1998, 1988, 1978).

The variables under consideration are of paramount importance in the forthcoming analysis. This study is centered on the context of decolonization that spanned nearly all of Africa. It is characterized by the emergence of entirely new state structures, which were tasked with establishing and fortifying national identities that were hitherto unprecedented. These entities also found themselves in a complex interaction with fundamental tenets of Pan-Africanism, particularly the aspiration to forge a political unity encompassing the entire African continent (WALDMAN, 2013).

Immediately, the unique characteristics that have existed in the diverse African spatial frameworks since time immemorial would present a significant challenge to the unitary ideal that was established in the early days of the pan-African movement. This potential clash, coupled with a myriad of geopolitical disruptions, has played a pivotal role in shaping the turbulent landscape that is now a defining feature of many parts of Africa.

Kingdom of the Politics Versus Politics of the Kingdoms

The discussion of Pan-Africanism as an objective political fact is essentially centered on the movement for African decolonization. In 1960, 17 new sovereign states became part of the continent's political geography, considered the *Year of Africa* due to the flurry of auto-determination, a process that extended throughout the next decades until the 1990s.

Although it has achieved its primary goal, eliminating direct colonial command on the continent, it would be appropriate to emphasize that the independence movement faced several contradictions in the same way as in other contexts of the former colonial empires.

Therefore, the decolonization process in Africa was not a uniform or a linear journey. Instead, it was a complex and diverse series of events, each reality experiencing unique challenges. On the continent, "there were setbacks, comings and goings, sudden rebirths of empires that no longer existed, and the patterns of liberation varied greatly between the different empires" (LOHBAUER, 2008: 117).

In short, by unevenly representing unique moments in the continent's history, decolonization took on multiple meanings, prescribing choices and imperatives that were not always in harmony. The abolition of direct domination, the cornerstone of decolonization, changed the political contract of the emerging nation-states. Administration, now exercised by new political actors, obviously Indigenous, marked a significant shift in power dynamics.

However, as such, this metamorphosis of power did not necessarily strengthen the administrative machine or benefit the local population. Not surprisingly, independence did not mean any real gain for many social groups because of the state apparatus's limited operational capacity. Moreover, the newly emancipated African countries

became easy prey to the confrontations that characterized international relations in the post-independence period.

From a backdrop of disputes, border litigation, regional disagreements over resource and tax allocation, and disruptions of all kinds, like civil wars and coups, ended up being recomposed in the heat of radical rivalries, while projects of regional and continental domination developing behind the scenes (Apud LOHBAUER, 2008: 128-129 and 135).

Coherently, the iconic year of 1960 also revealed conflicts that became the premonitory stage for sharp clashes dividing the continent throughout the coming decades. In the former Belgian Congo, severe political upheavals sparked the Congo Crisis (1960-1965), a pivotal event that stigmatized the African *annus mirabilis* of 1960. The conflict triggered the *first civil war in independent Africa*, *the first deployment of European soldiers to a continent on the brink of independence*, and *the first coup d'état to overthrow an elected head of state in what public perception perceived as a newly liberated Africa*.

This turbulent sequence of events, followed by many others in different parts of Africa, was one of the first signs that national self-determination would not solve colonialism's dilemmas and that Africa's journey towards national self-determination might be much more embroiled than it first imagined.

Therefore, we must accept the verdict that the international panorama is a complex plot that meets elements that interfere with pan-Africanist ideals are present. In this spectrum, Africa constituted fertile ground for neocolonialism, a form of indirect control and economic exploitation by former colonial powers or other powerful nations that plunged the continent into harsh trials.

In particular, the nature of Western investments and technologies, accompanied by economic growth models developed outside the continent, consistently satisfying foreign interests, played a crucial role. Above all, such premises led to the formalization of the African nations as dependent economies, exporters of raw ore, timber, agricultural and livestock commodities to the affluent countries of the Western Hemisphere, which obtained the bulk of the profits through so-called economically unequal exchanges (ASANTE et CHANAIWA, 2010: 884; LOHBAUER, 2008: 128).

Thus, the economic sphere, also because it constitutes the driving force of modern society, could hardly fail to impact the African scenario. This statement is even more so when we know that Africa is a source of raw materials and primary products that are indispensable for keeping the economies of central countries functioning and, by extension, maintaining the global economic system.

Next, concerning the nature of Africa's relationship with foreign governments and the kind of progress offered to multilateral relations on a continental level, the economic interface is essential for elucidating incompleteness of Pan-Africanism and on the threshold of this assumption, the inevitable repercussions regarding existing forms of integration (NDOMO, 2009).

In the thematic line followed by this text, we must again consider the inseparability of the pan-African ideal from the movements committed in the 19th century to

recovering the dignity and promoting the emancipation of the black diaspora1. Resolutely, overseas Afro-communities and the African continent form two poles in a symbiosis that ratifies Pan-Africanism as an umbrella concept.

This pan-African unity is rooted in a notion of community of origin that proposes a Gemeinschaft (community), re-schematized, united, and supportive, destined to set the tone for a common destiny. We must stress that Pan-Africanism was a doctrine established in the early XX Century as a political and cultural movement. Therefore, the pan-African ideal proposes Africa and the Black Diaspora as two trunks of the same tree (ASANTE et CHANAIWA, 2010: 884).

However, we must remember that the classic definitions of *Gemeinschaft* do not exclude concrete interaction with the *Gesellschaft* concept, that is, social relations based on impersonal ties related to society or non-communitarian organizations. Indeed, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* include elements of each other, are not watertight, and, on the contrary, cohabitate in social materiality.

Therefore, although pan-African original ideas highlight a political and cultural path, this assertion does not necessarily omit a relation to the world of economics. Thus, in what could be a big dilemma interposed to the post-independence African theater, even the most superficial of assessments outlines the blatant omission of the economic as a programmatic reference.

Moreover, the role of politics was a dominant theme in the pan-African imaginary, and the economic commandments were merely ancillary to the political and cultural guidelines central to pan-Africanist literature. The debates in the mid-1960s, which saw an eminent political platform dismissing the economy as a priority concern, were a clear manifestation of this. Consequently, the question of the economy will become a divisive theme, permeating in differentiated modes in the two currents of leadership in the African continental politics theater, thereby influencing their direction and focus.

Leftist, radical, or maximalist, and the right-wing, moderate, or minimalist factions opposed each other, differing based on different interpretations of the importance and meaning of African unity. This debate became prominent in the late 1950s. At that time, invested with the enormous prestige that came to him as the first independent head of state in Black Africa, Kwame Nkrumah, leader of Ghana independent, or the *Osagyefo*2, emerged as a continental reference, his ideas carrying significant weight in the discourse on African unity.

The Ghanaian leader's paradigmatic thinking is expressed in a famous slogan that would soon become the hallmark of his programmatic agenda: "*Seek first the political kingdom, and all else will follow.*" Nkrumah explicitly privileged the political domain as a vehicle for African unity. With political sovereignty, Africans would make possible the desired transformations and the emergence of new social and economic contracts, such as equitable land distribution and fair labor practices, understood as epiphenomenal manifestations of the latest status of political emancipation.

Working to put this precept into practice, Nkrumah embarked on bold integration projects encapsulated in the motto: Africa must unite. This iconic pan-African call is a

testament to Nkrumah's vision and determination. The Ghanaian leader championed the idea of a United States of Africa (incidentally, a concept first launched by the Afro-Jamaican leader Marcus Garvey) and fervently emblazoned it in his speeches. Nkrumah, an advocate of unconditional African unity, played a pivotal initiative in the formation of the union between Ghana and Guinea-Conakry (1958), a proposal that later expanded with the establishment of the Union of African States (Federation of Ghana, Guinea-Conakry, and Mali), in force from 1961 to 1963.

These experiences were conceived as steps towards a supranational government, erasing the borders of the newly independent African countries. At the same time, Nkrumah supported the organization of the Conference of Independent States (held in Accra in April 1958) no more than a year after the country's independence.

This initial impulse gave rise to the All-African People's Conference (Accra, 1958), the Guinea-Liberia Summit (Sanniquelli, July 1959), the Second Conference of Independent African States (Monrovia, August 1959), and the Addis Ababa Conference (June 1960). These decisive summits, in which Nkrumah played a key role, contributed to the foundation for the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963, instilling hope and optimism for the future of Africa.

All these conferences, beyond the political integration or political unity of Africa in terms of economic integration, strongly recommended the creation of a pan-African common market covering the whole continent. Reinforcing this motion, in 1958 was created the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA or ECA-UN), a significant international initiative that promoted African integration. The state of the art was certainly conducive to defending the slogans put forward by those seeking integration, particularly the endorsement of a comprehensive continental geo-economic standpoint:

“Calling for the elimination of customs barriers and other obstacles to trade between African States, as well as for the conclusion of multilateral payment agreements with a view to developing economic exchanges and striving for the creation of a common market” (ASANTE et CHANAIWA, 2010: 875).

However, preaching the precedence of the “political kingdom,” a paradigm of Nkrumah’s ardent pan-African rhetoric, had little concrete impact on the realization of continental integration. In this exact sense, the preponderance given by Kwame Nkrumah to the political sphere proved to be erroneous, ending up being the target of the more complex and implacable reality checks (MAZRUI, 2010: 125; FAGE et TORDOFF, 2010: 516-549). In the words of his critics, the slogan coined by Osagyefo *obscured a seminal distinction taught by good philosophy: that between a necessary condition and a sufficient condition* (MAZRUI, 2010).

Undoubtedly, political sovereignty is a necessary condition for satisfying the essential aspirations of colonized peoples. At the level of colonial oppression, there is no way to object to the priority of the “conquest of the political realm.” The African tour de force in obtaining political sovereignty was justified as a necessary and appropriate reaction. Like all populations assailed by colonialist domination, the peoples of Africa reacted to

the challenges posed by Western lords with what seemed to them to be the most appropriate and adaptive response.

Thus, even though the modern world is based on economic objectivity, the 'kingdom of economics' was not reflected in the ideas governing Africans' political self-projection and the inflections that marked the pan-Africanist movement. The immediate need to obtain political citizenship was pressing, making the kingdom of politics gain enormous prestige as a 'strong currency' in the pan-African political programs.

This was particularly true for the first-generation African leaders who were sympathetic to the Nkrumah ideas, such as Ahmed Sékou Touré (Guinea-Conakry) and Modibo Keïta (Mali), whose influence were significant. Besides, the overlapping of the project of a continental common market with the movement for political unification aroused fears in the conservative African head-state field, materializing opposition to the maximalist proposal, a resistance tempered by a substantial collection of untimeliness.

In this scenario, consider Mali (former French Sudan) and Senegal embarked on a pioneering experiment in interstate integration. In a brief but crucial period, from January 1959 to August 1960, both nations formed the Mali Federation, an experience that happened even before Kwame Nkrumah's initiatives. This bold step foreshadowed the potential obstacles faced by future interstate integration models across the continent (MAYALL, 1975: 2601).

At this moment, the French Upper Volta (Today Burkina Faso) and Dahomey (later the Republic of Benin) also manifested desires to participate in the Mali Federation. Interestingly, it is worth noting that due to political pressures from France and the Ivory Coast, which opposed the Federation (although for different reasons), the Upper Volta and Dahomey withdrew their candidatures before the official inauguration of the union (As we may perceive, even in the initial moments of Pan-Africanism, the former western powers remain influent).

Mali and Senegal were ruled by powerful and charismatic figures, Mobido Keïta and Léopold Sedar Senghor. With their opposing political tendencies (progressive and conservative), these leaders demonstrated no inclination to share or give up their power. Their governments' political philosophies, one radical and the other gradualist, were not conducive to a harmonious union. They were also not immune to the contradictions that had long existed in the region's history, both before and during colonization, including the African political-geographical circumstantial momentum already marked by intense polarization.

Then, the nascent union failed, and following the sudden and hostile separation from Senegal (little affected by the unfortunate experience), Mali forcibly reassessed its geopolitical strategy. The closure of the border with Senegal and the loss of access to the port of Dakar prompted Mali to seek new alliances. Mobido Keïta moved closer to the Ivory Coast, a decision technically prompted by the Mali geographical imperative as a landlocked country (such as the previous union with Senegal), and actively sought participation in the Union of African States, a regional organization formed by Guinea-

Conakry, Mali, and Ghana, with a more significant legacy than the Mali Federation, yet brief and likewise unsuccessful (1958-1963).

From a broader perspective, the obstacles to African integration arose from the fragility of most new sovereign states, whose attention was monopolized by internal dysfunctions. Several tasks inherent to governance itself taunted the new countries in a spectrum that included the consolidation of new national identities, the strengthening of the parties that emerged as holders of independent state powers, political instability, and the daily possibility of *coup d'états* hatched in the barracks; issues related to security, critical during the Cold War years; demands imposed by poverty and intrusions of the former colonial powers.

En résumé, considering the omnipresent priorities, tensions, and scuffles in the newly independent countries, engaging in a pan-African policy beyond the borders of the new States or simply implementing pan-Africanist resolutions in national spaces presented unquestionable difficulties. In this way, African integration faced barriers within the political forces that came to hold control of the State apparatus. Much more than being concerned with diluting power within a continental political framework, the new elites were more concerned with strengthening and consolidating the governance of the dominant group within the specific power space of the recently independent countries than actually engaging in the continental endeavor (WALDMAN, 2020a; NTALAJA, 2012; BADI, 2002 and 2001).

As for the external political sphere, another element inhibiting integration was the sharp independence struggle. This struggle, which was particularly intense in several parts of Africa, required intensifying the confrontation with colonialism and support for national liberation movements, a priority objective of the moment. Added to this was the inertial component of the State as a legal-institutional entity. Repeating a recurring trend in integration processes, the African State resisted giving up its authority, guiding objections to the demands of the continental association. Observer the following quote:

"Nowhere in Africa was there a willingness to sacrifice national interests on the altar of integration. African States did not agree to liberalize trade or share industries unless there was a conflict between regional integration objectives and national imperatives, whether it was security, prestige, or economic advantages" (ASANTE et CHANAIWA, 2010: 881).

Another complicating factor for the integration agenda was entangled in the dictates of an "African version" of the Cold War, polarizing two emerging rival blocs - Casablanca and Monrovia - that diverged on a wide range of purposes, adding further layers of disagreements to the situation. The agenda of tensions included relations established with great powers, the diplomatic plan in general, and economic models. In this regard, ideological guidelines regarding the directives of African integration rapidly and nervously gave rise to explicit sticking points (DÖPCKE, 1999: 90-91; MAYALL, 1975).

Hence, Ghana, Libya, Guinea-Conakry, Mali, Egypt, Morocco, and Algeria formed the Casablanca group with a maximalist orientation and progressive stance. At this time,

Algeria, still subjugated by French colonial rule, was represented by the Provisional Government of the Republic of Algeria (PGRA), openly left-wing, while Morocco was a conservative kingdom.

Nonetheless, Morocco played a crucial role in supporting the Algerian insurgence against France, providing arms and money to the National Liberation Front (NLF). More significantly, Morocco served as a strategic rear base for the NLF, allowing it to set up training camps and logistic sanctuaries.

Programmatically, the Casablanca bloc subscribed to African unity as a continental unitary project inspired by the United States of Africa, a proposal tirelessly invoked by Nkrumah's fervent rhetoric. The group's political action lines had extensive repercussions, both in public opinion on the continent and abroad, endorsed by engaged media worldwide, by the Soviet Union, and the former Eastern European countries.

In turn, the Monrovia coalition, inspired by conservative and minimalist ideology, was aligned with the pro-Western positions, particularly of the United States and France. This bloc resulted from the alliance of the Union Africaine et Malgache (former French-speaking colonies whose indigenous elites aligned with France) with other moderate states such as Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.

While advocating the pan-African ideal, the Monrovia Bloc did not do so at the expense of the sovereignty of young African nation-states. Their stance, in direct opposition to the Casablanca group, promoted cooperation between African states, *focusing on cultural and economic ties rather than state issues*3. This proposition is evident from the bloc's original provisions, which heralded without mincing words: "The unity we must achieve at this time is not the political integration of sovereign African states, but the unity of aspirations and action from the point of view of solidarity and African identity" (M'BOKOLO, 2012: 633).

However, beyond the fundamental programmatic disagreements, there were profound differences of opinion about the nature and how to guide the international relations of the new African states with the former colonial powers. These differences led to inescapable unconformities in the internal plane of continental politics, underscoring egregious splits. We must take the case of the two main international issues of the period: the fight for Algeria's independence and the Congo Crisis.

For example, the Algerian question case presented contradictions for the Monrovia Group due to previously bloc-established agreements with France. As partners in the freedom of Africa, the countries of the Monrovia Group supported the political agenda of the PGRA. However, they hesitated to endorse any intervention by the United Nations in the Algerian Crisis. In the case of the Congo Crisis, the Monrovia Block proposed a round table discussion that would bring together rival Congolese factions. In doing so, the group demonstrated a conciliatory attitude towards the pro-Western breakaway militias in Katanga, who were under Moïse Tshombe's command with the ostentatious support of the Belgian mining companies.

At the same time, while the Monrovia bloc states expressed support for the Mauritanian independence, the Casablanca group (along with PGRA leaders) positioned itself in favor of the controversial Moroccan claim for Mauritania4. This decision was not a programmatic stance but rather a geopolitical maneuver. It is essential to acknowledge that the inclusion of Morocco, a country widely conservative within the Casablanca radical group, involved a strategic exchange of political support: "In exchange for tacit support for Moroccan irredentism by the group, this state sided with the most radical countries in the Congo Crisis" (DÖPKE, 1999: 90).

From 1957 to 1963, a time-lapse marked by Ghana's independence and the creation of the OAU, frictions emerged that challenged the dominant discourse on African unity, tensions with a blatant impact on Continental politics. The atmosphere of the Cold War, with its polarizing effects, not only heightened the potential for these measures to disrupt governance frameworks but also exacerbated the effect of inter-state disagreements. Coupled with global polarization, the clashes between maximalism and minimalism also legitimized proposals for conditional African integration, *which proposed African unity as a fact a posteriori rather than a priori* (BADI, 2001: 63-64).

In this scenario, marked by serious threats to the pan-African ideal, the only viable solution, far removed from maximalist propositions, would be to recognize and emphasize the sovereignty of the states that have emerged from the recompositing of the political structures created by colonialism. This new horizon of expectations was undoubtedly a direct result of the growing isolation of maximalist theses and the resolute rejection of the postulate that the new African states should sacrifice their sovereignty on the altar of African integration.

After several clashes between the two main pan-African tendencies, a contextualized desire for integration, reflecting aspirations that were substantially different from the original proposals, began to set the tone for continental dynamics, guaranteeing what now seemed to be of paramount importance: *the political sovereignty of African states*, a concept that supported the consolidation of distinctive state apparatuses, by the famous international jurisprudence principle of *uti possidetis juris*, according to which countries that effectively occupy a given territory have the right to it.

This new organizing axis of Pan-Africanism, adopted as a permanent clause by the Organization of African Unity, *subscribed to the imperative idea that anything is better than changing borders* (DUROSELLE, 2000: 78-79). As a result, a conservative consensus that supported this logic opposed any changes to the demarcation lines. After all, borders were a defining marker of political space for the new African governing elites. In turn, the norms of international relations supported conservatism on the issue of borders, which recognized the new states as actors in African political cartography and legitimate actors in the global arena.

The revision of the original pan-African repertoire altered the concrete as well as the symbolic level of continental politics, marking profound mutations in the focus and animation of the Pan-African ideal, which was increasingly divorced from the condition of a seductive Black and African *Weltanschauung*. It becomes the object of resignification

into a project (or mere program of action) of states endowed with a rarefied normative capacity, supported by an institutional *modus faciendi* pervade by economic demands averse to radical political adventures.

The rapid mobilization of Kwame Nkrumah, Sékou Touré, and Modibo Keïta to stem the bleeding of African integration, with the decisive support of Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia, culminated in a summit of independent African states in Addis Ababa in 1963. This summit's main objective was to end the discord that had erupted on the continent. However, this organizational moment, while underlining the historical primacy of the unity of the continent, could not hide the incompleteness of the initial pan-African proposals.

The fact that the historic meeting for creating the OAU took place in Addis Ababa does not allow for the dilution of spatial symbolic logic in formal and anodyne historicism. Although the Ethiopian capital has the inescapable prestige of embodying Africa's anti-imperialist resistance, the city also hosts the Abyssinian monarchy, one of the oldest in the world, leading an old traditional empire in an ocean of young new republics recently founded. We may not forget that the OAU summit took place far from Accra, the capital of Ghana, which, at the dawn of continental self-determination, positioned itself as an emblematic beacon of the pan-African dream.

Accordingly, the rigorous republican pan-African primacy now relied on the support of the ancient Abyssinian State, led by a monarchy with a long and biblical Solomonic lineage. In this line of topological revision of the pan-African agenda, it is clear that the formula of the "*United* States of Africa" was recomposed into a "*Union* of African States," a new approach that implied an explicit acceptance of the factual irrevocability that political sovereignty alone was not enough.

Thereby, by a *diktat* based on a premeditated lameness, *in extremis* founded on an agenda *aimed at unifying, but not uniting*, Pan-Africanism seemed to plunge into an ersatz impulse, biasedly confirming the preaching of the Roman philosopher Seneca, who sentenced *Non est ad astra mollis e terris via*: The path from Earth to the stars is not easy (Furious Hercules, v. 437).

We know the power of words. They bring us closer to knowledge, project us into the world of ideas, and give color to reality. They animate and stimulate the will of peoples, groups, and civilizations. On this path of understanding, Pan-Africanism, as a comprehensive and affirmative identity concept, raises the inquiry of how this continental project, outlining a continental *Gemeinschaft* and foreshadowing a new and seminal political horizon, remains incomplete and unrealized.

The evaluation of the practical program of Pan-Africanism and the tremendous difficulties that pervade it today is, therefore, necessary, even if it remains an open page, because of what it is possible to list in the flow of a history in which we are attentive beholders.

A Unity Founded on What?

This text, which critically examines the pan-African trajectory from the perspective of effectiveness, security, good governance, and institutional stability, brings to the forefront the big dilemma of the pan-African political playbook: *the challenge of establishing a genuine unity for the continent*.

This impasse has implications for redefining and reconnecting the black world, encompassing Africa and the multi-diversified Afro-descendant diaspora. It underscores the need for veritable unification, a fundamental aspect related to the recurrent call to achieve unity among the people and countries of the African world (MBENGE, 2013).

Although the idea of continental unity was, from the beginning of the pan-Africanist trajectory, the mobilizing touchstone of the different national liberation movements, the evident recurrences of particularities intertwined with the internal realities of the new states, the old ethnic and regional identities of the continent, the expansionist volition that erupted in various parts of Africa, and in parallel, the destabilizing action of the global powers, per se or intertwined with political diversions in force in the African space, imposed the revision of the original pan-Africanist protocols.

It was in this way that the emergence of the OAU, which by definition embodied a proposal that met the concern of resolving excruciating conflicts that threatened to spiral out of control, adopted the inviolability of borders inherited from extinct colonial empires as an enthroned principle of continental status, which over the decades following the *magister annus* of 1963, in addition to ensuring a certain level of juridic civility, would also be the basis for the constitution of Regional Economic Communities (REC), that in minimalist discourses were canonized as a fundamental pillar of the continental integration (WALDMAN, 2020b, NDOMO, 2009; FERNANDES, 2009; CARVALHO, 2007).

Thereafter, despite numerous borders drawn by rulers and compasses, these lines have bestowed legitimacy and stability on the young African republics. Their remarkable resilience in the face of intense centrifugal tendencies such as separatism, ethnic conflicts, irredentism, and demarcation disputes, as well as their acceptance of this principle, is a testament to their strength.

It is important to note that, despite the typical portrayal of Africa as a mosaic of states comprising hostile tribes, no tribal state emerged on the political map of the continent. Disputes with ethnic components only exceptionally contested the recognized borders. The political map of Africa, home to a large majority of multi-ethnic countries, remains virtually unchanged from what it was decades ago, in stark contrast, for instance, to the European political geography that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet system.

However, the disturbing point is that the current geopolitical scenario in Africa raises serious concerns for any observer, even in the most superficial analyses, regarding the brutality of the forces that fracture the continent.

In this way, pan-African unity was undermined by a potpourri of motivations, among them the attachment to authoritarian models, the patronage-based vocation of political leaders, the economic underperform (in many cases magnetized by a neo-colonialist

raubwirtshaft model), intense ethno-regional radicalization, weak state legitimacy, and predilection of the governing elite to vertical relations over horizontal ones, including those that always typified traditional communities throughout the continent (WALDMAN, 2013).

From an eminently geospatial perspective, the tendency to disaggregate the African state structure is evident in a wide range of spatial contradictions and fragmenting entropies. These issues indicate that the political map of the continent, supported by the political institutional imaginary proposed by the nation-state concept, is under severe scrutiny.

The lines that divide Africa conceal contentious issues and insurgent dynamics that constantly reshuffle and modify borders and realities, creating a convulsed and ever-changing landscape. Is appropriate to argue that a new turbulent and disruptive cartography has undermined the very core of state governance on the continent, as we intend to affirm from the following scores:

1. Contemporary Africa has been repeatedly affected by terrorist movements5, carried out by fundamentalist Islamist activists primarily organized as non-state actors. Experts describe them based on umbrella concepts like Islamist terrorism, radical Islamic terrorism, radical Islamic fundamentalism, or Jihadism.

Terrorist actions have become a widespread concern in the whole continent. According to the Global Terrorism Index, in 2023, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for almost 59 percent of all international fatalities linked to terrorist attacks. Eight of the fifteen countries listed in the ranking of those most affected by terrorist actions are African continent nations: Burkina Faso, Mali, Somalia, Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mozambique (GTI, 2024).

Militant groups like Al-Shabaab in African Horn (allegiant to the Islamist organization al-Qaeda), Boko Haram (self-identified with ISIS), active in Nigeria, Niger, Mali, Chad, and Cameroon, and the Insurgency of Cabo Delgado in Mozambique (also claiming links with ISIS), cause drastic disturbs in the national and continental order. The scale of this phenomenon has changed the epicenter of global terrorism, which has shifted from the Middle East to the Sahel Region6. Terrorist activities have increased significantly,

> "*…with deaths rising nearly tenfold since 2019. In 2024, the Sahel accounted for 51 percent of all terrorism deaths, while overall conflict deaths in the region exceeded 25,000 for the first time since the inception of the Index. Of these, 3,885 were attributed to terrorism. Terrorism deaths here are now ten times higher than in 2019. The Sahel remains the global epicenter of terrorism, accounting for over half of all terrorism-related deaths in 2024 with the number of countries affected increasing. Five of the ten countries most impacted by terrorism are in this region…*" (GTI, 2025: 4).

This process sparked overwhelming civil wars, devastating the regional economies, undermining civil society, promoting *coups d'états*, paving the way to organized crime

expansion, prompting more violence, deepening instability, and jeopardizing the state governance in Sahelian countries. For instance, the Burkina Faso central government had only controlled about 60 percent of its territory as of 2022, with further losses in the year since, with the jihadist groups filling the political vacuum (GTI, 2024: 15).

In the past, Sub-Saharan Africa experienced continuous *razzias* of the Middle Eastern slave traders, a tragedy only less severe than the aggressive Western slave trade that began in the 16th century. Today, the action of Islamic extremism is a source of disarray and instability that certainly may provoke or induce even stronger cleavages between the two great Africa's historic-cultural *Landschaft*: the Septentrional Muslim populations and of the Indian coast (both Arabized to a greater or lesser extent), and the Black Africa proper, the fulcrum lands of Africanity7.

Therefore, based on the recognition of two great civilizational traditions of the continent, the Africanity and Arabic-Islamic space, and given the exacerbation of the activity of extremist Islamic movements, the context seems to agree with the thesis of the clash of civilizations. This is a context with a tremendous civilizational fault line that crosses the entire continent from east to west, strongly identified with the countries that intercalate the Saharan and Sahelian realities, as well as the Horn of Africa (HUNTINGTON, 1997).

Furthermore, the outbreak of Islamic terrorist movements, which act openly in the space of African states and blur the borders consensually accepted since the OAU founding, expose, in the crudest way possible, the dangerous failure of state institutions, as well as multilateral organizations, in protecting the societies e nations they claim to represent.

Thereupon, Africa's institutional political geography acquired a spectral personality, while effective control of the territory changed in favor of forces that brought with them the ruin of African civil societies.

2. Expansionist actions implemented not by European powers but by independent African nations (rightly described as imperialist in manifold studies) also ruined continental integration. Two pro-annexation conflicts are exceptionally emblematic: the Western Sahara and Somalia cases.

Since 1975, Western Sahara has been a scene of a hard confrontation between two leading opponents: the Polisario Front (acronym for Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro, two regions of the Western Sahara), a local nationalist organization defending the independence of former Spanish Sahara, and the Kingdom of Morocco, which claims the annexation of this territory.

Under the decline of Spanish colonial authority, Moroccan nationalists organized the "Green March" on 6 November 1975, a government-sponsored mobilization involving 350,000 people and 20,000 soldiers. They demanded the "reintegration" of Western Sahara into the "Moroccan fatherland," indeed an internationally contested claim8.

Despite that, the Polisario Front proclaimed the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) on 17 February 1976, reinforcing opposition to the Moroccan project and internationalizing the conflict. The polarization of conservative and progressive fields

and East-West antagonism significantly influenced the Western Sahara conflict. This influence is particularly evident in the explicit support of Algeria and Libya for SADR and the encouragement of Morocco by France, Saudi Arabia, and the United States.

Even though Morocco has established control over most of Western Sahara's land and resources, the political-military standoff continued. In 1991, the United Nations facilitated a ceasefire between both parties. However, this truce did not bring peace nor open a real possibility of a political solution, highlighting the tortuous nature of the conflict (BESENYÖ, 2021a and 2010b; KALICKA-MIKOŁAJCZYK, 2020).

Western Sahara remains divided, with Morocco controlling roughly 75% of the total territory and the remaining 25% constituting the so-called Free Zone under the SADR government, which maintains its symbolic capital in the town of Bir Lahlou, near the border with Mauritania. A 2,700 km line of fortifications built by Morocco, forming the Moroccan Western Sahara Wall, Moroccan Sand Wall, or Berm, is exemplary proof of a not solved thorny dispute.

On the pan-African level, the OAU's recognition of SADR motivated Morocco's withdrawal from the organization in 1984, a position reiterated in 2002, when the African Union (AU) also recognized the SADR authority as the sole and legitimate representative of the territory and its people in the continental spectrum. Per contra, demonstrating internal hesitation about the subject, the Kingdom of Morocco joined in 2017 to AU, one of several ambivalent decisions that characterize the OAU/AU political dealings (BESENYÖ, HUDDLESTON et ZOUBIR, 2022).

As a final result, SADR has become exclusively a de jure state and does not enjoy the status of a de facto nation-state: "When Spain left Western Sahara, the inhabitants wanted independence, but Morocco and Mauritania invaded their land, so they were colonized again. Today, *Western Sahara is the last colony in the world with unresolved problems and is close to starting a possible new war*. It is a challenge to the world to find a workable solution for the situation" (BESENYÖ, 2010a: 213, *our emphasis*).

In addition to the Western Sahara case, the provocative issue of Somali irredentism is worth mentioning. In the introductory clause of its Somalian national program, there is a unification clause putting all Somali groups under a single state jurisdiction. The Republic of Somalia resulted from the merger of two former European possessions in 1960, Italian Somalia and British Somalia, becoming a unified state, one of the rare mono-ethnic countries on the continent9.

From the Somalian unification, five spaces should be part of "Greater Somalia": the British and Italian Somalia (original territory of the republic), the Ogaden (or Ethiopian Somalia), a chunk of the former French Somaliland (now Djibouti) and the north-eastern province of Kenya. This proposal is evident in Somalia's national flag, adopted in 1954, which features a five-pointed star in the center, the Star of Unity, evoking the five areas of compact Somali settlement in the Horn of Africa, also known as the Somali Peninsula.

However, Somali nationalism's ambition to unite all clans in a Greater Somalia shaped a project that would sooner or later put it on a collision course with neighboring countries, primarily Ethiopia, a country influential on the Horn of Africa. The hostilities

induced the Ogaden War (1977-1978), in which Ethiopia defeated Somalia, and regional African political antagonisms were again abducted by the East-West conflict, with Ethiopia sponsored by the USSR and Cuba and Somalia by the USA.

As a harbinger of the increasing precariousness of the state apparatus in Africa, it is worth noting that after the defeat in Ogaden, Somalia faced a divisive civil war (1981-present) and fragmented in at least two new proto-state apparatuses, Puntland and Somaliland, each representing different Somali clans.

Until today, the central government in Mogadishu holds only part of the Somalian republic's original space, maintained at the cost of the endless struggle against local warlords and radical Islamic groups.

3. Centrifugal drives have frayed the post-decolonization state-territorial framework, even in mono-ethnic states (how analyzed in the aforementioned Somalian case). The ethnic, regional, and religious problems that seemed to have attenuated between the 1990*s* and mid-2000 have experienced a strong revival, giving rise to several secessionist movements. While the definition of separatist movements may be controversial, it is clear that the political map of Africa is observing the advocacy for new nation-state identities, authentically a balkanization in advance.

A non-exhaustive list of secessionist movements includes Kabylia in Algeria, Cabinda in Angola, Ambazonia in Cameroon, and at least six ethnic-regional movements in Ethiopia, such as Oromia, Ogaden, Tigray, Afar, Amhara, and Sidama. The list continues with Western Togoland (Ghana), Cirenaica and Tripoli (Libya), Azawad (Mali), Biafra and Oduduwa-Yoruba (in Nigeria), Casamance (Senegal), Darfur and Eastern Sudan (in the Republic of Sudan), Zanzibar (Tanzania), and a heterogeneous array of independentist activism in South Africa: Zulu, Venda, Cape Republic movement (or Capexit), and the Pro-Africaner Volkstaat Free State (or Boerestaat, White South-Africans homeland proposal).

This secessionist political upsurge is taking place despite centralization trends and the national identities associated with the framework of the post-colonial countries. Even in Nigeria, a country that maintained its unity at the cost of a terrible civil war (1967-1970), separatist movements have re-emerged among ethnic groups such as the Yoruba and the Igbo (in this case, demanding the revival of the Republic of Biafra).

Political tensions fueled by religious divisions, particularly between Muslim and Christian or Animist communities, are other disrupting factors. In Sudan, since independence in 1956, the distrusting relationship between the central government of Khartoum (Arabic-Muslim) and the southern ethnic groups (mainly Christian) has led to devastating conflicts: The First (1955-1972) and Second Sudanese Civil Wars (1983-2005). As a result, Southern Sudan became an independent state in 2011.

However, instability and conflicts with ethno-regional groups continued in the remaining Republic of Sudan. Khartoum once again repressed peripheral communities, triggering the Darfur War (2003-2020), marked by unprecedented humanitarian tragedy and brutal genocidal actions (BESENYŐ, 2021b).

In the Darfur War, the local non-Arab population was the target of a systematic ethnic cleansing perpetrated by Sudanese government forces and irregular militias known as the *Janjaweed*10. Although largely ignored by the world media, these criminal actions may only be labeled as genocidal. The Sudanese army and Janjaweed units "burned and destroyed hundreds of villages, causing the deaths of tens of thousands of citizens, displaced millions of people, and assaulted and raped thousands of women and girls" (BESENYŐ, 2021b: 41).

It is important to note that the context that tends to make the Sudanese state unworkable is not exclusive to that country. At a broader level, the virulence of disruptive conflicts is shaking and undermining African governance systems to such an extent that Sudanese reality may not repeated only in specific countries but in large continental areas dominated by endless wars.

4. In this cadence of turbulent spatial vortexes and geopolitical disruptions, some countries escape this fate and present themselves as pivotal countries in the political continental space, no longer referenced by any integrationist proposition nor backing an inter-regional economic substantivity.

Therefore, a select group of countries' pivotal nations fills gaps in the face of political continental weaknesses, expressing a possible order in a continent shaken by striking contradictions. The actions of these states end up replacing or supplanting the continent's multilateral bodies.

From this point of view, it is worth commenting on a decisive concept: director, pivotal, or governing state. Roughly speaking, the definition of Director State includes a broad institutional equation with factors such as the capacity of a sovereign state to influence in an organizational, political, ideological, economic, military, and technological way or by the partial combination of all these values, a given regional geographical spectrum with which it structurally interacts and is inserted (WALDMAN, 2013).

We face a group formed by countries with visible tendencies towards self-projection in circumscribed spaces on the continent. Analytically, these regional powers, besides proving the well-known assessment about the non-existence of a leading state on the scale of Africa as a whole, define the structure of political-economic and security, circumscribing concrete actions in regional spaces (ALMEIDA, 2011).

From this perspective, the following Governing States are paradigmatic cases of countries embedded in African spaces in which they stand out as political, cultural, or economic poles:

- Morocco and Algeria in the Maghreb;
- Egypt, brokering the Arab world, North Africa, and the Black African countries;
- Senegal (fundamentally the capital, Dakar metropolis), in West Africa;
- Nigeria, in the Guinean Gulf coast and its hinterland;
- Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda in Central and Eastern Africa;
- Ethiopia, in the Horn of Africa;

• Angola and South Africa, in the central-southern plexus of the continent.

For those who follow, even minimally, the news related to Africa, the growing prominence of this select group of nations is evident. At the same time, it becomes difficult to perceive any support other than those given by the national egoism that directs the protagonism of these nations in a profoundly disunited and lacerated continental scenario where Pan-Africanism increasingly becomes just a memory.

Conclusions

The set of four causalities lines previously commented on, added to the whole discussion of this text, pave two fundamental objective dysfunctions orders in the African political field:

• First, the concrete difficulty of the pan-Africanist movement in implementing a unitary project that prematurely had to give way to the interests that were nested in the nascent state apparatuses seeking its perpetuation;

• Second, the hurdles are also due to the difficulty these new states (or most) had in minimally maintaining their institutional mandates in the economics, security, and political normative capacity.

Of course, regardless of the enormous appeal that the pan-Africanist ideal has aroused throughout Africa and in the overseas diaspora, many obstacles have arisen from a structural weakness typical of any pan-nationalism (pan-Germanism, pan-Arabism, pan-Slavism, pan-Turkism, and the like) in terms of materializing concepts and ideas in the multiple interfaces of concrete reality.

In general, pan-nationalisms (including Pan-Africanism) do not cope well with specificities inherent in projects with a continental scale, not to mention the difficulties of political consensus, because these identity constructions end up hijacked by a given national, political, or social segment, which is generally the one that leads the unification.

In the case of Pan-Africanism, the potential difficulties of a continental-scope project are because all sorts of African territorial specificities intertwine with different social materialities and ethnic, cultural, and religious loyalties, each of which is associated with larger or smaller fractions of the geographic space, reinforcing resistance ahead of any pan-nationalism.

It is imperative to consider that space tends to override ideologies and utopias, especially when they seek to ignore the spatial dimension in its unequal synthesis of specific social times. With its fixed and fluxes networks, space is invested with resilience and directional potential, resisting adjustments with projects and actions detached from its determinations.

In this sense, dealing with the differentiated cadence of the networks and systems that support the specific physiognomies of space becomes mandatory. These can be changed

and revised, but only if the precondition in establishing a dialogue with these determinations is on the table.

Nkrumah's trajectory may exemplify these considerations. As we know, Osagyefo governed the country for only nine years (1957-1969), being overthrown from power by a paralyzing entropy articulating external pressures with anti-Nkrumah groups within the Ghanaian space.

Various forces contrary to his regime, including respected clan chieftaincies, such as the traditional authority of the powerful Ashanti royalty, derailed Nkrumah's regime. In other words, Ghana's internal dynamics dismantled Osagyefo's continental project in his political backyard proper.

In an African prospect, the question about Continental Unity remains difficult because even the victorious old proposal of the politics of kingdoms was, in turn, self-paralyzed by its inability to demonstrate genuine operational capacity.

The current global political *zeitgeist* further problematizes the volitions related to African unity. The dysfunctionality of the allegedly respected multilateral bodies and forums, on a scale that extends from international forums to African local and regional entities, clearly shows contemporary organizations' loss of referential prestige.

The dehydration of state governance and internal geopolitical misdirection in Africa, as well as the insolvency that has characterized pan-African projects, both maximalist and minimalist, not to mention permanent intercurrences of ancient foreign powers and actors (Russia, China, USA, France, Spain, United Kingdom), as well new state protagonists (Iran, Saudi Arabia, Israel, India, Turkey, United Arab Emirates), non-statal actors (Jihadists organizations, global entities, NGOs), and economic agents (finances, mining, agricultural companies), have reached a point where the pan-African odyssey appears imprisoned in a *cul-de-sac*.

From time immemorial, non-Africans have defined Africa, often in less-than-complementary terms. In this context, Pan-Africanism emerged as a bold initiative to fill a significant identity void. The questions it raises about the continent's unity remain not only relevant but also crucial, resonating with us more strongly than ever.

However, the difficulties now posed by an endeavor in this direction make it challenging to anticipate any direction or protagonism the pan-Africanist ideal may take.

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declare that they have no financial interest in 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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NOTES

1. In this context, the Afro-diaspora has always been a generous supporter of pan-African activism. The movement's first conference (London, 1900), convened by the Afro-Caribbean activist Henry Silvester Williams, a Trinidad-born lawyer born in Trinidad, brought together 37 delegates, mainly from the United States, England, and the West Indies.

2. An honorary title popularized after the victory that elected Nkrumah Prime Minister of the Republic of Ghana. Loosely translated from the Twi language, spoken by the Akan, an ethnic group that inhabits the central and southern regions of Ghana, it means "Victorious Leader," "Savior," "Liberator," or "Redeemer."

3. Among the defenders of culture as a first-hand strategy for African integration was Léopold Senghor, for whom cultural Pan-Africanism should precede political Pan-Africanism (FERNANDES, 2009: 88).

4. Since 1956, Morocco has taken its first steps as an independent nation and has pursued an ambitious policy of territorial expansion. In addition to the whole of Mauritania, the Kingdom of Morocco demanded the incorporation of large parts of Saharan Algeria (about one-fifth of the country), northern Mali, all the Castellan colonies of Spanish West Africa (Africa Occidental Española, AOE, made up of Western Sahara and Sidi Ifni), the Spanish Plazas de Soberania and the cities of Ceuta and Melilla, demands justified by the principle of so-called "historical Morocco" and anti-colonial struggles. This geopolitical ideology sowed confusion and resentment because it ignored the opinions of people of the demanded areas and jeopardized the stability of the new African states, including denying Morocco's proper geographical and historical specificities (DE DALMASES Y DE OLABARRÍA, 2022; BROADBENT, 2010).

5. Defining terrorism is a controversial question, often subject to polysemic views and bias. Thus, there is no single internationally accepted definition of what constitutes terrorism, and therefore, thematic scientific literature abounds with competing definitions and typologies. Regardless, the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), the most comprehensive report on terrorist events in the world, published by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), takes a comprehensive approach. It defines a terrorist act as "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a state and non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation." (GTD 2018). This concept determines that terrorism is not only physical attacks but also includes the psychological impact perpetrated on societies, providing a foundation for understanding terrorism for terrorism studies and security (Apud GTD 2018).

6. The toponym Sahel comes from the Arabic *Sahil* (ساحل), which means border or frontier. It forms a 500–700-kilometer strip between the Atlantic Ocean and the Red Sea and extends across the entire African continent. From an orographic and biogeographical point of view, the Sahel is a natural biome between the drier Sahara to the north and the more humid savannas to the south. As the "beach of the Sahara," the Sahelian countries blend influences from the Islamic world from the north with Indigenous African cultures.

7. The long odyssey of humanity in African space, spanning millennia, favored vigorous historical and cultural exchanges, paving the way, especially the south of the Sahara, to a complex sedimentation of common civilizational traits, which anthropology and sociology devoted to the continent define as Africanity, central matrix to the unity idea for the continent. The concept refers to the cultural, sociological, geographical, and historical interrelationship between hundreds of ethnic groups, encompassing all Sub-Saharan populations, based on common cultural standards.

8. According to the International Court of Justice, the Moroccan claim concerning a shared history with Western Sahara "was insufficient to prove that there had ever been *de facto* Moroccan authority over the territory." Based on the evidence presented, the Court decided that as there was "no proof that Morocco had ever collected taxes on the territory, there was nothing to prove Moroccan authority" (BESENYÖ, 2009: 213).

9. Mono-ethnic countries are uncommon on the continent, resulting from its multi-millennial cultural evolution. Only Somalia, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, and the Comoros archipelago are home to an ethnically homogeneous national community.

10. *Janjaweed* is a generic term for irregular militias operating in Darfur who present themselves as Arabs, although they are usually people of mixed Arab or Arabized indigenous with African ancestry.

Ogaden War as the Cornerstone of Cold War Détente Politics[1]

Attila Tokai[2]

Abstract:

Horn of Africa still faces serious regional conflicts and needs a detailed historical analysis regarding the Cold War era. Historical research shows that despite the era of détente; new Soviet geopolitical successes were demonstrated. This study examines reasons for Siad Barre's destabilizing efforts to liberate all Somalis and establish "Greater Somalia". It also tries to find answer how the Soviet Union, which had favoured Somalia previously, switched to the new socialist government in Ethiopia, and why Washington became an ally of Somalia. Due to the massive large-scale military operation aided by the Soviet Union and Cuba, the Somali army was totally defeated. Subsequently, the attack has worsened the country's foreign relations with other states, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has remained divided in the case. In the present study the author attempts to capture the main points of Ogaden conflict by exploring different aspects of foreign interventions in Cold War geopolitical playground, how these factors have led to the fall of détente politics.

Keywords:
Horn of Africa; Ethiopia; Greater Somalia; détente; Cold War history.

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Introduction

The issue of Ogaden war has not received enough attention to investigate the geopolitical and regional security risk issues. This was a brief but costly Cold War conflict in 1977-78 fought by Ethiopia and Somalia. At the heart of it, three important past legacies can be found: 1. European colonial rule, 2. Somali irredentism 3. Superpowers' intervention. This research aims to make a modest contribution to the discourse on the realignment of Cold War superpowers during the 1977 Ogaden War through selected academic articles, theses, chapters in volumes, dissertations and online media reports. A lot of political scientists have theorized the possible factors that led to the fall of détente. The conflict is well documented in the work of Fred Halliday (1977), who discusses U.S. policy changes, while David D. Laitin (1976, 1977) deals with the Somalian revolutionary and military rule. In his dissertation Samuel Makinda (1985) narrates how superpowers' intervention has decided the outcomes of war. The extant literature that dwells on violent conflicts of Ogaden include the publications of Joseph K. Nkaissery (1997) and Donna R. Jackson (2010), showing the connection between this regional war and the fall of superpowers' diplomatic efforts. From the late 1960s to the late 1970s, Cold War was characterised by a period known as 'détente' to reduce tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The question of détente was viewed as an important factor as a result of change in U.S.-Soviet relations to avoid a Cold War military confrontation. Has the Vietnam War made Washington to improve inter-state relations? Why has been the Ogaden war a focus point in Cold War politics? What could have been the reaction of the regional powers, and what more challenges have remained to solve in the present?

By the end of the 1970s, the developing spirit of détente began to fade away. Given the fact, that the Ogaden War was just the beginning of a series of bloody conflicts, I cannot undertake in-depth research, only the period between the Somali invasion and the withdrawal on 8 March 1978 will be the scope, in order to contribute to a better understanding of social and political problems. The first part starts with a geopolitical overview; the second chapter provides a historical summary to comprehensively explore the causes of turbulent relations. It is followed by a review of American and Soviet foreign policy strategies that focuses on the intensification of Cold War dynamics. The fifth part goes through the military events, while the last one presents the superpowers' intervention.

Geopolitical Context of the Horn of Africa

The East-African region commonly mentioned as Horn of Africa. It covers an area of 2,033,283 km^2 east of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. At the time of Ogaden War the Horn consisted of five independent countries: Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, Sudan

and Uganda.[3] The picture is further complicated, as relations between local tribes here have been conflictual and turbulent. Another important aspect is that the region remains one of the poorest and most conflict-ridden corners of the continent with droughts, floods, tribal wars and famines (Nkaissery, 1997, p. 5; Mariam 1964, pp. 189-190).

Ethiopia has an area of approximately 1,251,282 km^2, it is stretched to the Red Sea in the north and to Sudan in the west, southwards to Kenya, south-east to Somalia and north to Djibouti. The environment varies from desert and savannah in the lowlands to rain forest and grasslands in the highlands. The population could be divided into four larger ethnic groups: Amhara-Tigre, Oromo, Sidamo and Somali people. Christianity, Islam and numerous animist religions are also practised (Wood 1983, p. 510). The territory of Ogaden can be estimated around 200,000 km^2 in size, it consists mostly of barren plain to the Somalian border. Mostly Somalis build up its population, with many clans and sub-clans, who deal with manual labour and agriculture. Moreover, the road network in some areas does not exist, thus movement by motorized vehicles is significantly hindered during the rainy season (Nkaissery 1997, p. 6). Much of the population belongs to the Cushitic, Semitic or Oromo tribes, with more than 50 different languages. The remainer speak Nilo-Saharan languages, they make up roughly 2% of the population (Marsai, 2020, pp. 881-882). Ethiopia's only significant railway line crosses the region, it connects Addis Abeba with the port of Djibouti, which was both used for personal and cargo transportation as the main gateway to the global trade networks (Hughes, 2019). Ethiopia's modern history dates from the emergence of Emperor Theodore in 1855, whose successor, Menelik II had several merits, as he consolidated the centralised state, built the new capital Addis Ababa ("New Flower") and began creating a modern government apparatus. In 1896 the invading Italian army was defeated at Adowa, that ended the on-going colonial attempts (Robinson - Yamazaki, 1986, p. 328). Even though the Ethiopian Highlands basically avoided permanent occupation, tensions can be traced back to the period of colonization, and by conquering the lower areas, the country has participated in colonization by subjugating the Oromos and the Somalis (Marsai, 2020, p. 13.)

Emperor Haile Selassie (ruled 1930-1974) remained an old-fashioned autocrat, but he has made great efforts to modernize his country, by launching modern education and established university in Addis Abeba. A long-term drought continued and by 1973 famine had threatened the lives of nomads, who had to relocate their cattle into Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya, and Sudan, seeking shelter from starvation. By the end of 1973 about 300,000 peasants of Tigray and Welo regions have died. In 1974 Haile Selassie's imperial regime collapsed,[4] and a military junta (Derg) took power (Robinson - Yamazaki, 1986, p.328; Abate 1993, pp. 79, 87; Keller 1993, p.76).

[3] The Horn of Africa region overlapps the Middle East and the Indian Ocean, controls the Bab el Mandeb Straits and dominates a part of the Gulf of Aden (Schwab, 1978, p. 6).

[4] The Ethiopian revolution, born from the mutiny of the military personnel stationed in Neghele and Asmara to denounce the poor living conditions and the low pay, turned into a coup d'état (Mosca, 2015, p. 52).

Africa's easternmost country, Somalia has a land area of 637,540 km^2, and consists mainly of plains and high lands, faces the Arabian Peninsula to the north, bounded by Djibouti to the northeast, while to the western and southern by Ethiopia and Kenya (Samatar, 1992b, p. 59). The territory is largely desert or semi-desert, and drought threatens 12 months of the year. 60 percent of Somalia is savannah, which is partly used for grazing. Less than two percent of the country's territory can be cultivated (Kiss, Besenyő and Resperger 2014, p. 10). Somalia's demographic data can only be estimated. According to the census held in 1975 the population was 3.2 million. From an ethnic, linguistic, and religious point of view, Somalia is the most homogeneous country in Africa: 85 percent Somali, 15 percent Bantu, Arab, Persian and Pakistani (Kiss, Besenyő and Resperger 2014, p. 26). The territory could not satisfy the high food demands of the locals, many Somali nomads crossed into the Ogaden with their herds of cattle, sheep, goats and camels in intensive search of water or grazing ground. The population is centred around Harghessa and Mogadishu, this dualism can be traced back to separate colonial administration by Britain and Italy. Somalia has two permanent rivers, the Webi Shabelle and the Webi Jubba (Mariam 1964, pp. 189-193; Kiss, Besenyő and Resperger 2014, p. 13).

Brief History of Somali Nationalism

A historical overview of Somali nationalism will be presented, with its ups and downs, to analyse the core reasons how this people has been living here since centuries. In African context Somali people are unique, as they form a homogenous population, speak one language, have single faith. Their grazing grounds were colonised in the 19th century by the European powers (Britain and Italy) and the Ethiopian Empire. Consequently, they are inevitably affected by the problems arising in the region, thus these tribes have always shown an unwillingness to serve any foreign power (Samatar 1992b, pp. 5-8).

First stage of organised Somali Arab political activity appeared in the 16th century, as the medieval state of Zeila emerged, that was characterized by a trade outlet of important materials, including coffee, gold and myrrh exporting to the Middle East, China, and India. Ahmad Guray's attempt to gain control over Ethiopia has failed through a Portuguese expedition led by Pedro da Gama, - the son of Vasco da Gama, who was looking for the land of Prester John a Christian monarch in European legends -, arrived from the sea and the joint Ethiopian-Portuguese army has defeated the Muslim invaders (Samatar 1992b, pp. 5-8). In 1885 the British Protectorate was established, later French Somaliland was also created, and Italians grabbed Eritrea and the southern Somalian coast. In the mountainous interior region Ethiopia remained independent. In 1897 agreement was signed with France and Britain regarding the exact boundaries. With Italy the so-called „cartographic agreement" ensured the border between Ethiopia and Italian Somalia, which was drawn by the Ethiopian Emperor himself (Sheik-Abdi 1977, p. 658; Paul 1977, p. 3).

Second stage of Somali self-awareness became visible as Sayyid Mohammed Hassan variously engaged the Brits, Ethiopians and Italians. From 1920 Haji Farah Omar carried out further political activities, which can be easily explained as „Somali proto-nationalism." To explain the dynamics of Somali nationalism, it is necessary to consider both external and internal factors. In 1935 Mussolini launched his attack, thus Ogaden fell under the Somalian province of the newly formed Italian East Africa, where a further increase in nationalist claims have developed. However, in 1941 the whole region came under British military administration, conversely it has contributed to the irredentist claim of Greater Somalia. In 1943 the Somali Youth Club was created, which changed its name to Somali Youth League (SYL) and adopted the goals of unifying all Somali-speaking territories and opposing clannishness (Sheik-Abdi 1977, p. 660; Mariam 1964, p. 207).

Independence was achieved in two steps. In 1960 British Somaliland became independent on 26 June 1960, then five days later the former Italian-Somalia. The two areas were united under the name of the Republic of Somalia (Kiss, Besenyő and Resperger 2014, p. 39). The Somalis have long pursued an irredentist policy towards the Ogaden province of Ethiopia by claiming that the area is populated by nomadic Somalis, since Somalia stressed the unity of its people in terms of religion, language and ethnicity (Schwab, 1978, p. 10). Obviously, as the „Pan-Somali attitude" was declared, the neighbouring countries had big fear, with only limited external support to counterbalance it. On Somalia's national flag - a five-pointed white star on a sea of light blue - each one represents a different Somalian territory, being the Ogaden one of them (Laitin 1977a, p. 450). Mogadishu dictated its territorial claim to every African and Non-Aligned countries, but OAU and UN were both strongly committed to preserve the borders of newly independent states. By late 1964 Jomo Kenyatta and Haile Selassie signed a mutual defence agreement against the possible Somali destabilization, which was renewed in 1979 and in 1989 (Sheik-Abdi 1977, p. 661).

Fourth stage began on October 21, 1969, when General Muhammad Siad Barre seized power in a coup.[5] Initially, a comprehensive nation-wide education campaign started, eliminating 'tribalism', introducing a new script. Somali has become the only official language, as a real political symbol of a nation-state (Laitin 1977b, p. 11). It is important to emphasize, that until the mid-1970s the regime enjoyed popular support. Not only the national economy has experienced intense revitalisation, but military assistance has been also provided under the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Moscow. The Somali army has become the best-equipped in Africa: 23,000-man, about 250 T-34, T-54 and T-55 tanks completed with more than 300 armoured personnel carriers ready to fight for Siad Barre's irredentist goals (Ofcansky 1992, pp. 183-184).

American Foreign Policy

Military instalments have always been one of the most direct indicators of strategic influence improving military capacity in Cold War competition. The situation has become even more complex between 1974 to 1976, when the resulting security vacuum has led to emerging superpower involvement. According to Brezhnev's views the conflicts of the Third World were not part of détente policy (Makinda 1985, p. 127). Considering the geopolitical and environmental factors, Ethiopia has had scheduled as an important strategic hub, where the crossroads of Africa, Europe and Asia join. Developments were already underway: mass independence of African nations in 1960 and the establishment of the Organization of African Union (OAU), further justified Washington's economic and military role (Yordanov 2012, p. 98). The British military mission was withdrawn in 1952; thus the US took it over as the new patron.

On 23 May 1953 two agreements were signed: *Defence Installations* as a 25-year lease on the Kagnew radio station to monitor Soviet signals linking the region with Australia, thousands of kilometres separated, besides that providing a high frequency transmitter for diplomatic communication system (Halliday, 1977, pp. 10-11). Asmara was selected because of its position near to the Equator, which means low radio interference. The base's main function was to transmit, relay and receive every communication from US diplomatic missions and military units around Africa as well as to relay messages to the Indian Ocean and even the Far East. The personnel tried to achieve friendly relations with the locals; 30 volunteers gave lectures at Asmara University and other schools or worked with the villagers on agricultural development projects. This was how the United States was able to build an increasingly positive image of itself in Ethiopia (Howe, 1970).

According to the *Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement*, the US provided 5 million dollars to equip and train three 6,000-member military divisions under the supervision of a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) which arrived in 1953. In 1960 a fourth division was also trained, thus the number of soldiers was around 40.000. The circumstances were greatly facilitated by the fact that the resulting political instability further increased the susceptibility of locals. In response to the 1960 coup against Haile Selassie and the fears from the newly independent Somalia, Ethiopia has also contributed to the security and sent 3000 soldiers to the UN mission to Belgian Congo (Halliday, 1977, p. 11). As a determined American ally, Haile Selassie tried to use diplomacy, as he mediated between Morocco and Algeria in 1963, and he sent aid to Mobutu against Communist threat.[6]

His greatest diplomatic achievement happened in 1963, as the headquarters of OAU was placed to Addis Abeba. The emperor also maintained a close relationship with the US ally Israel, which provided counter-insurgency training against the Eritreans. (Makinda 1985, p. 73). As an important impetus, the US Embassy suggested land reform,

[6] A longstanding ally of the United States, Ethiopia relied heavily on American arms, equipment, and funding (Fiorelli, 2024, p. 32).

legal modernisation, decentralisation. In the early 1970s the Kagnew Base began to be of less importance, due to the developments of satellite communication, thus an uninhabited Indian Ocean Island of Diego Garcia was intended to replace it. The number of personnel working on Kagnew reached its peak in 1971 with 3000, were less and less, only 35 in 1976 (Halliday, 1977, p. 13).

The first sign of cooling in diplomatic relations happened in May 1973 when Haile Selassie visited Nixon, and his request for new jets and M-60 tanks were refused. To make matters worse, the famine of 1972-1973, led to the overthrow of the emperor in 1974. The US tried to reduce its visibility, working only with local allies, Iran and Saudi Arabia.[7] By 1976, Sudan started getting American military assistance, and expelled all Soviet advisers. Kenya's relations with Washington had been promising, since its independence. Surprisingly, in 1975 the United States received a request for cooperation from Somalia, that it was ready to expel the Soviets (Makinda 1985, pp. 14-17, 108, 121-122).

In November 1977 the Somalis expelled all Soviet advisers[8]. However, it should be emphasized that meanwhile in Ethiopia the controlling of the Derg fell into the hands of Mengistu Haile Mariam, his policy opened the way for closer ties with Moscow. This was compounded by a further deterioration in public security in the Horn. In February 1977 the new Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance told the Senate committee that as a result of human rights violation, American military aid to Ethiopia, Argentina and Uruguay would be reduced from October 1977. On 23 April the Derg ordered all US installations in the country to leave, except the Embassy and the Aid Office. Radio Addis Abeba has criticised Carter's decision about the withdrawal of aid (Halliday, 1977, pp. 18-20).

Soviet Foreign Policy

Soviet presence in the Red Sea dates back to the 1950s, when Khrushchev established relations with Egypt. Nasser allowed the use of military facilities, but with his death in 1970, Moscow lost one of its greatest friends. Moreover, Somalia approached a number of Western countries for military assistance, but nobody wanted to be identified with its multi-irredentist goal (Makinda 1985, pp. 14-17, 81-86). On 11 September 1960 the diplomatic relations started with Moscow. Ali Shermarke Somali Prime Minister claimed that his country was taking the socialist path and signed agreements on the establishment of two hospitals and a secondary school, construction of a printing plant in Mogadishu, and installation of a radio station and the deep-sea port at Berbera.

Moreover, left-wing military juntas led by Siad Barre in Somalia and in Sudan by Ga'afar Nimeiry emerged and adopted a much more aggressive strategy than before,

[7] As ideological differences between the United States and Ethiopia grew, both sides became increasingly hostile toward one another and believed that their interests were bound to conflict (Fiorelli, 2024, p. 32).
[8] Somalia's fighting force relied on Soviet weapons, funding, and training. At the start of the war, more than 4,000 Soviet military and technical advisors were stationed in Somalia (Fiorelli, 2024, p. 32).

parallel with Muammar Gaddafi's rise to power in 1969 (Yordanov 2012, pp. 67-69, 118). Next to these, Anwar Sadat, signed a Treaty of Friendship with the USSR in March 1971, but he expelled all Soviet personnel in July 1972. This step has also determined Egypt's policy to the United States for aid (Makinda 1985, pp. 81-85). Following the 1973 Arab Israeli war, Moscow was gradually excluded from the Middle Eastern peace process. In 1974 Soviet President Podgorny visited Somalia for signing a Friendship Treaty, thus Mogadishu believed the future Soviet support would be done for her territorial claims, but it was misunderstood. Somalia under Saudi and Iranian influence joined the Arab League in 1974 as the first non-Arabic state (David 1979, pp. 72-76). All these factors showed that the Soviets moved with caution in reacting to the Ethiopian revolution. The hesitation of the USSR stemmed from its ties to Somalia and doubts about Provisional Military Administrative Council's announcement that Ethiopia was now Socialist, thus wasn't Moscow quick to respond to Ethiopian request for military aid (Katz, 1990, p. 85). In April 1976, the Council adopted a program for national democratic revolution, thus the relation with the Soviets improved. It should be stressed, that the new government's delegation visited Moscow in July, where the Soviets praised the Ethiopian revolution, and promised help in various fields (Katz, 1990, p. 86). The Derg emphasised to establish Socialism on 12 September 1976, thus Ethiopia signed a military contract with the USSR. As Moscow moved closer to the Derg, it simultaneously distanced itself from the Eritrean liberation struggle (Makinda 1985, p. 111). On May 6, 1977, Mengistu reached a series of agreements with Moscow which culminated in the signing of the Treaty of Friendship in November 1978.[9] The Ethiopian revolution had more Marxist character than the "classless nomads" of Somalia. Moreover, Ethiopia's central location and position as host the headquarters of the Organisation of African Unity (OUA), made it more valuable for Moscow (Oberndorfer, 1978). From the end of November 1977 through February 1978, Moscow airlifted 12-15.000 Cuban troops to Ethiopia, including three combat brigades and delivered up to one billion USD in weapons and equipment. The Carter Administration, especially Zbigniew Brzezinski saw a crisis of Soviet influence expanding from the Horn of Africa to the Arabian peninsula (Rodman, 1994, p. 158).

From Fall of 1977 the number of Soviet advisors in Ethiopia increased dramatically, the combined number of experts from the Socialist countries had reached more than 7000.[10] In some parts of the government bureaucracy, such as water supplies, energy and transport, Soviets, East Germans, Bulgarians and Cubans were carrying out most of the work. Meanwhile suitable Ethiopian personnel were being trained in the Soviet Union or Eastern European countries. The priority of the advisers in Addis Abeba was

[9] On May 6, 1977, Mengistu Haile Mariam publicly signed two friendship pacts with the Soviet Union and privately signed a military aid pact estimated at $400 million, which was more than the total amount of aid that the United States had provided to Ethiopia in the last three decades (Fiorelli, 2024, p. 34).

[10] The Soviet Union also initiated a massive airlift to Ethiopia, transferring dozens of fighter jets and helicopters, 500 tanks, more than a thousand surface-to-airmissiles, as well as small arms, mortars, rockets, and artillery guns (Fiorelli, 2024, p. 35).

the construction of a Marxist-Leninist party that could lead the revolution in the future (Westad, 2005, pp. 279-280).

In this context, Somalis feared that a Soviet-backed Ethiopia would pose a greater threat. In contrary, Soviets hoped that both countries would subordinate themselves under a "progressive" socialist federation including Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti and South Yemen. The idea was proposed by Fidel Castro in March 1977, as he brought together these countries' leaders in an all-night summit session in Aden, but the plan became a failure. Soviet President Nikolai Podgorny tried the same at the next month, but also unsuccessfully (Oberndorfer, 1978). When the Ogaden War started, Soviet reaction labelled the Somalis as aggressors in August 1977, thus they cut off all supplies, which led to the expelling over 1500 Soviet military advisers from the country (David 1979, pp. 74-79).

Somali Destabilization Efforts

At the heart of turbulent geopolitical relations, Somalia took advantage of foreign policy opportunity provided by the fall of Emperor Haile Selassie, that resulted uncertain and chaotic conditions. Mogadishu started supporting local guerrilla movements operating in Ogaden. (Kiss, Besenyő and Resperger 2014, p. 43). The process that led to the uprising started in early 1975, when the Somali state reorganized the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF).[11] In 1976 the extension of insurgents' attacks happened throughout Haraghe, Bale and Sidamo, left over both Christian Amhara settlers and Oromo peasants dead and properties destroyed. *(*Tareke 2000, pp. 639-647*).*

For the end 1976 the rebels dominated Ethiopia's eastern territory (Ogaden) and the Bale-Sidamo lowlands. By targeting communication lines, bridges, sabotaging the economy, the Somalis managed to destabilize the whole region and turning it into a chaotic battlefield. The best example of this, is the guerilla warfare with „hit-and-run" tactics, that also highlighted the inability of the local Ethiopian military leadership to completely break away from traditional warfare. The intensity of terrorist attacks has been demonstrated by the fact that on June 1977 the guerillas blew up the rail link between Addis Abeba and Djibouti, which normally carried over 40 percent of Ethiopia's exports. On July 13, 1977, the regular Somali forces (about 5000 soldiers) crossed the border and launched attacks on different targets. The undoubted manifestation of territorial ambitions was a reflection of the tactics used by armoured infantry, intensive artillery and the surprise factor (Tareke 2000, pp. 639-647).

By autumn, 35,000 regular and 15,000 irregular soldiers were fighting in the area. The Somali armoured troops were much stronger then the Ethiopian army with 250 T-34 and T-55 tanks (Kiss, Besenyő and Resperger 2014, p. 43). They penetrated 700 km into Ogaden, seizing around 350.000 km^2. The situation was too serious for the local military units, as they could only hold their ground at Dire Dawa, and the Ethiopian

[11] The Ogaden region had already been at the centre of a clash between the two states in 1964 over the regulation of the border. The Organisation for African Unity (OAU) was called to express its opinion on the dispute, which warned the two nations to respect the territorial integrity (Mosca, 2015, p. 58).

government was helpless. The instability in the Ogaden Region has had negative social and economic consequences at national level (Tareke 2000, pp. 639-647).

For these reasons between 13th and 16th July 1977 motorized battalion had slipped through the front by night, and appeared to have taken the region under Somali control, with the exception of Dire Dawa, Harar and Jijiga. In mid-August 1977 they tried to capture Dire Dawa, a tank unit was able to press through, while the air traffic control was destroyed. In retaliation, the Ethiopian air-force could annihilate tanks, flying from the Debre Zeit air base. The Somalis were defeated at Dire Dawa, because of weak coordination of infantry, tanks and aviation (Tareke 2000, pp. 639-647). The Somali soldiers looted shops and bars, but the local residents received them with great elation. As they moved deeper, their overstretched lines became more vulnerable. It was easier to defend the mountainous terrain against a mechanized army, and coordination of war plans were never adequate. Mogadishu was primarily focused on getting foreign military aid, burning the bridge with the Eastern Bloc without getting aid from the West (Tareke 2000, pp. 647-662).

Ultimately, the outcome of the conflict was decided by the Soviet Union by leaving Somalia alone and starting to support Ethiopia, as its government was communist-minded. The reorganized Ethiopian army had 50,000 troops in the Ogaden region, reinforced by Soviet-supplied artillery, tanks, 11,000 Cuban troops, and 1,500 Soviet advisers. Its ability to remain effective was demonstrated (Kiss, Besenyő and Resperger 2014, pp. 43-44). Moscow continued to provide political guidance and massive military aid (aircraft, tanks, artillery guns, air defence weapons) to Ethiopia, and the arrival of two South Yemeni armoured battalions considerably boosted the firepower. As the situation became increasingly unfavourable, getting arms have become of primary importance for Siad Barre. Conservative Muslim regimes, like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran and Pakistan could have been possible partners. All these factors were even more pronounced with the aid to Ethiopia was consisted of 1000 military advisers and Cuban troops around 18.000. In January the Supreme Military Strategic Comitee (SMSC) composed of Ethiopian, Soviet and Cuban officers was set up led by General Vasilii Petrov (Tareke 2000, pp. 654-662).

Following this, in the highly coordinated two-stage comprehensive campaign, the Ethiopian and Cuban military alliance has beaten the enemy at Jijiga, pushed towards to the northeast, bypassed the Marda Pass area and has attacked the Somali forces in the rear. The scale of the counterattack was further illustrated by the fact that 3,000 Somali soldiers died in the battle. Within a week, Ethiopia managed to regain its major cities (Kiss, Besenyő and Resperger 2014, pp. 44-45). By 8, March Somalis could not hold for long, and Siad Barre announced the withdrawal. On 16-17, March most of Ogaden was liberated. Signalling it, six days later Addis Abeba declared the official end of the war (Tareke 2000, pp. 654-662). The adventure was disastrous for Somalia: the army lost 8,000 men, one third of its personnel, two thirds of the armoured forces and half of its air force (Kiss, Besenyő and Resperger 2014, p. 45).

Figure 1: Ogaden region of Ethiopia. Source: https://defenceindepth.co/2019/02/19/the-battle-for-the-horn-of-africa-a-retrospective/

Superpowers' Intervention

African policy remained a backwater for Nixon and Kissinger, who have never conceptualized how the continent fits into the concept of détente. While popular narratives hold that the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan ended this era, many historians claim that the intervention in Ogaden buried the spirit of détente (Wilkins, 2020). President Carter took office in 1977. After Vietnam and Watergate, he emphasized disarmament and human rights. His plan was to conclude a new SALT agreement and wanted to view all Third World issues through the prism of Cold War. Ogaden can rightfully be called his first foreign policy crisis (Jackson, 2010, p. 28). His administration inherited it as one of many postponed decisions, thus there was growing disenchantment with Ethiopia and a growing temptation to place a U.S. bet on Somalia (Obernhofer, 1978).

To fully comprehend the inner workings, one must look on Cyrus Vance's and Zbigniew Brzezinski's main ideological differences, that would have influenced the US foreign policy. According to Brzezinski's rather pessimistic outlook, the Soviets were pursuing a strategy of indirect expansionism, but Vance dealt with the problems in local regional context. Brzezinski had 3 major policy objectives: a.) An emphasis on human rights with the promotion of American democracy b.) Improvement of the US' strategic position by using the Sino-American relations c.) Regain the friendship of the Third World (Yordanov 2012, p. 262). For all these reasons, there was no specific definition or clear vision for the meaning of détente, Brezhnev never had the idea that Soviet military activism in Africa would undermine SALT II. That should also be stressed, that Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance told on a Senate hearing three weeks after Mengistu had taken power, that he had removed Ethiopia, Argentina and Uruguay from the list of aid recipients in case of human rights violations, indicating that Carter was not

satisfied. This aid cut has been seized upon by some conservatives as evidence that Carter's human rights policy drove Ethiopia into Moscow's arms (Wilkins, 2020).

Despite the ongoing political tensions, Carter was unable reconciliating his rhetoric on human rights with the emphasis on Cold War imperatives, which led to confusion. The US informed Ethiopia in April 1977 about the reduce of MAAG personnel and the closure of Kagnew Base. The Derg responded on 23 April 1977 by asking Washington to close it down within 4 days and gave marching order to its personnel. On 27 April, all arms supplies were suspended, forcing Addis Abeba to turn to Moscow for weapons. The USSR gave significantly higher rate of military aid as the Soviets did before, as the paragraph shows:

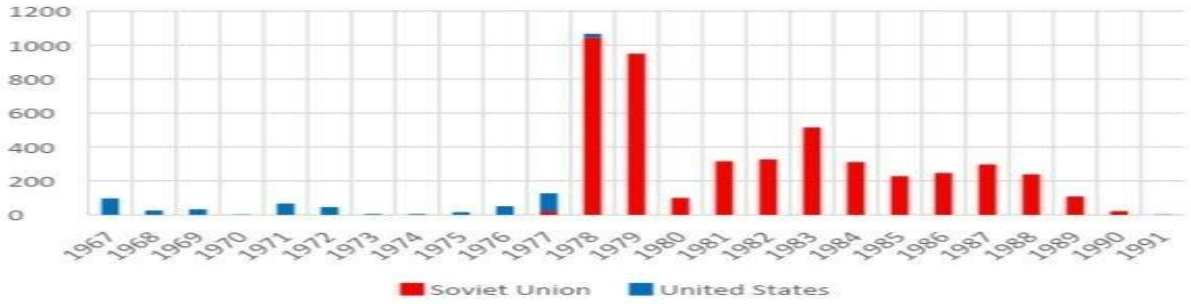

Figure 2: Cold War Foreign Military Aid to Ethiopia in Millions of U.S. Dollars
Source: https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/9/3/to-the-last-bullet-the-cold-wars-last-gasps-and-enduring-impact-in-the-horn-of-africa

Meanwhile the US sought to gain support for Siad Barre's government without a military presence with its foreign policy, although Carter's first statements were contradictionary. Siad Barre viewed these developments as an opportunity to achieve his irredentist claims, but he misinterpreted the way of military support. Barre felt confident that even if the Soviets abandoned him after the invasion, the US would quickly step in (Makinda 1985, pp. 134-138). As the paragraph shows Washington gave much lesser military aid as Moscow did before:

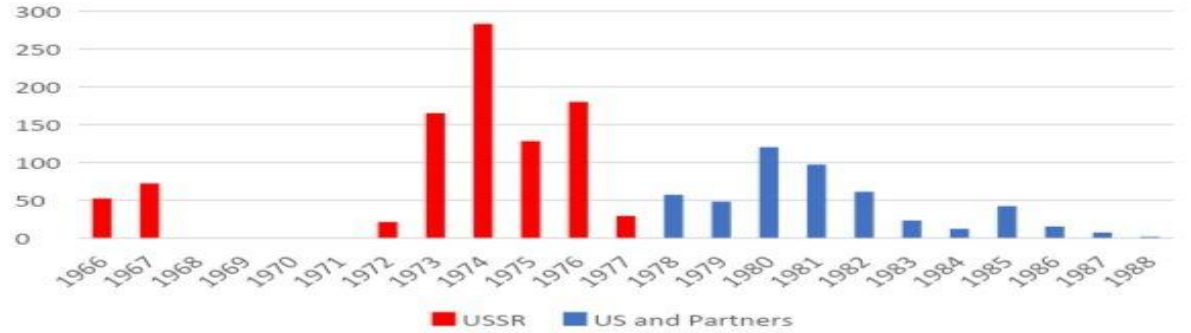

Figure 3: Cold War Foreign Military Aid to Somalia in Millions of U.S. Dollars.
Source: https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/9/3/to-the-last-bullet-the-cold-wars-last-gasps-and-enduring-impact-in-the-horn-of-africa

It is important to note, that the international political scene of the Horn began to exhibit angry protests from neighbouring Kenya, as emerging regional powers like Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt started supporting Somalia with weapons (Halliday 1977, p. 21). During this period, the Horn became a scene for the confrontation of two ideologies of Cold War, as the US actively promoted democratic values, on the other hand the USSR spread Socialist ideology. No attempts had been made to normalize the inter-state relations. As the US lost Ethiopia after 25 years of domination, its policy became focusing on the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. The Somali invasion violated Article 3 of the Charter of OAU - and its 1964 Cairo Resolution which sanctifies the African frontiers established during the colonial era.

Following these developments, on 13 November 1977, Siad Barre expelled all Soviet and Cuban diplomats and military advisers, and closed Berbera base, thus Carter recognised Siad's search for external support. He believed in regionalist geopolitics, with the doctrine that outside powers should not get involved in local conflicts. On November 15, the State Department spokesman announced: despite the aggressive intervention there would be no change in the Carter administration's policy of refusing arms to Mogadishu (Jackson 2010, p. 29). The first Cuban troops arrived in December 1977. In January 1978 Moscow proposed a joint mediation regarding the conflict, but Brzezinski had cancelled it (Makinda 1985, pp. 145-149). Siad Barre called on the US to *'fulfil its moral responsibility'*, as he received only '*words, just words from the West'* instead of material aid, even after expelling the Soviets.

Through its normalization efforts, the US has planned to cooperate with powerful regional allies like Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Sudan. Brzezinski believed that the best US response would be a military option with providing extra support to Somalia through proxies. Vance on the other hand felt that the conflict could not be interpreted only in East-West terms, thus military support for Somalia would show an example to other African states that the colonial-inherited borders could be changeable. Therefore, the US should encourage key African countries to solve this problem only within the OAU (Jackson 2010, pp. 29-30).

In this situation Carter used his diplomacy to seek support for Somalia without getting involved in the conflict. Communiques were sent to various Latin American countries to influence Cuba, like to the Mexican President Jose Lopez Portillo. On January 25, 1978, Carter sent a letter directly to Brezhnev to seek support of a negotiated solution and to recall both Soviet and Cuban military. The State Department sent a telegram to Fidel Castro via the US Embassy in Cuba requested that the Havanna government also support the peace initiatives. In addition, Siad Barre attempted to show the conflict in geopolitical terms to change Carter's mind, but the president maintained his position (Jackson 2010, pp. 30-31).

American allies, like Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Sudan provided only a few weapons to Somalia, Egypt gave some of their old Soviet arms. However, none of these countries wanted actively intervene in the military conflict. In response to this, Kenya, the only American ally in the Horn refused to side with Somalia. In contrary, in

February 1978, Nairobi forced down an Egyptian cargo plane overflying its airspace. Following Somalia's defeat, Carter's attention turned to the Red Sea region, focusing on Egyptian Israeli peace process that culminated in the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1978 (Makinda 1985, pp. 158-161).

Conclusion

The study has examined the role of Ogaden conflict in the period of détente, through selected publications. In the mid-1970s, after a promising series of agreements, détente began to fall apart. Because the geopolitical stakes were high, first this prompted the superpowers to seek a peaceful solution to the problems to prevent potential spillovers. On the other hand, there have been many mines on the road which could have jeopardised the positive outcome. Despite the common political efforts, mainly ideological differences, geostrategic and military interests explain why the idea of détente has collapsed. Soviet advisors and military flew directly from Mogadishu to Addis Ababa, while Washington has withdrawn support from Ethiopia and realigned their strategic interests with Somalia. The military conflict resulted Ethiopian victory and led to the end of détente. On the other hand, both Barre and Mengistu have manipulated the superpowers' rivalry to boost their local power, which signalled the fragile nature of détente. As argued in this paper, Soviet military intervention was in line with Brezhnev's view, that détente did not rule out East-West competition. On the one hand Soviet interventionism may have to blame, on the other, local assessments played an important role in shaping Moscow's responses to key developments.

However, the Carter Administration experienced many local and external criticism, it was highly accused of lacking the political will to act in the region. It remains unclear, how the outcome of Ogaden conflict could have been represented in American political debates. If it had been perceived to be of more importance to the US at that time, he would have played a more active role, as he could have been contributed to the solving of the conflict more peacefully.

There is no doubt that several sub-problems require further research regarding the role of the president and his advisors. Through analysing various approaches, it can be clearly ensured, that obvious correlation exists between Carter's policy and the rollback of Communist influence. On the other hand, his policy was a failure, because of his inability to sell the new approach of Cold War to wider American public.

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

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Law and Society: Ethnicity and Social Integration Through Norm Contestation[1]

Bahlbi Malk[2]

Abstract:

Growing ethnic tensions, ethnic-based violence, and societal polarization are some of the current problems that contemporary communities around the globe are facing. However, while ethnicity has been weaponized to serve as a basis for political mobilization or counter-mobilization, neither ethnic difference nor ethnicity is the cause of tensions or violence as they have been portrayed to be. Ethnic-related violence is the consequence of politically driven naturalization and reification of ethnicity, the institutionalization of ethnic divisions, the ethnicization and racialization of social/group relations, and the ethnification of territories, cultures, and societies. Therefore, departing from the naturalists' tendency of group relation dichotomization where ethnicity and race are perceived as distinct, pre-given, instinctual, tangible, bounded, static, and ancestrally linked singularity, this article argues that they should be conceptualized in relational, intersectional, processual, dynamic and multidimensional terms where "multiple diversity governance" and multi-level social integration is possible.

Keywords:

Ethnification; ethnic conflict; norm contestation; de-ethnification; multiple governance; multiple integration.

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Introduction

To understand societies and human affairs, it's critically important to understand and interpret the relevant meanings of the beliefs, values, cultures, and perceptions that shape motivations, actions, and behaviours thereby harmonising societal peaceful coexistence. Therefore, to understand the nature, origin, and formation of ethnicity, several theorists including primordialists, instrumentalists and constructivists have developed different interpretative approaches. Although each of these theories has made a substantial contribution to our understanding of the social phenomenon, the overreliance on a single either-or approach has reduced their interpretive, prescriptive, and predictive capacity to static, simplistic, and reductionistic interpretation of the origin and nature of ethnicity and identity formation. Hence, this essay investigates the practicality of these theories in terms of grasping the complexity, multiplicity, and fluidity of ethnic identity formation and in identifying the origin and cause (s) of ethnic conflicts and failures of social/system integration. To that end, this article is derived from and inspired by Joseph Marko's (2019) writings in "Law and Sociology: the constructivist and interpretative turn" in the book Human and minority rights protection by multiple diversity governance, where he explicitly demonstrates the multidimensional, extrinsic, intertwined and complex dynamics of identity formation and the multiply constructed identities across different, sometimes overlapping categorization in contrast to naturalists' misconceptions of identity formation as inherently natural and static with the tendency of categorizing individuals and communities within one or other cultures (Marko, 2019: 138-177).The claim of linguistic, cultural, religious, and genealogical homogeneity often creates the dichotomization of group relations into a social configuration of antagonistic "us" vs "them" positions which practically lay a foundation for ideologies of racism, fascism and ethnonationalism. Because creating national homogeneity and hierarchy was/is fascists' core ideological and philosophical belief. Therefore, by deconstructing the naturalist fallacies and ideological paradoxes, it is expected to offer an alternative approach and strategic framework for the de-ethnification of cultural and territorial divisions providing social and system integration through a law under the multidimensionality and multifunctionality of law whereby norms, and their underlying values are permanently contested by those affected by it.

1.1 Theoretical interpretations of ethnicity and identity

When it comes to the origin, nature, formation, and transformation of ethnicity, there is tremendous empirical evidence that suggest that ethnicity and ethnic identity are socially constructed categorization shaped by intrinsic and extrinsic actions, which tend to be fluid, dynamic, and constantly evolving. However, the primordial theory disregards cultural and historical processes and other social elements that shape or influence ethnic groups and identities and treat the identity formation as a natural and static phenomenon. Primordialists perceive ethnicity as inherently ascribed at birth, pre-given, fixed with spiritual affinity, and distinct socio-cultural boundaries. They argue

that the depth of ethnic sentiment, emotional and natural attachment, and "longing not to belong to any other group" naturally triggers conflicts (Geertz, 1973: 259-260). Therefore, the claim of ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, and genealogical dichotomies often creates the "us" vs "them" categorization leading to war and ethnic massacres. The magnitude and depravity of many of the unspeakable historical atrocities perpetrated in ethnic-related wars like those in Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have been described in many ways but interpreting it as inevitable and irreconcilable phenomena driven by natural divisions is the worst way to characterize it. Therefore, the ideologies of contemporary racism, ethnonationalism and political function of exclusion/inclusion are believed to have been based on the primodialists' assumption of common biological descent and priori cultural commonality with perceived shared origin of descent, kinship and/ or belief to form a homogeneous grouping (Marko, 2019: 139). From primordialists perspective, ethnic differences and the transgression of boundaries by outside subcultures who don't belong are the root causes of violent conflicts and thereby they promote the notion of good fences make good friends (Marko, 2019: 139). Hence, for primordialist theorists, "peaceful coexistence is only possible through separation of territories or people in the form of cessation and/or…institutional segregation in culture-preserving sectors…" leading to what Max Weber describe as "social closure" where dichotomization of group relations and monopolization of resources are executed by denying chances to a different group of outsiders that it defines different, inferior and ineligible (Murphy, 1988: 88). Be that as it may, cessation, separation of territories or building fences don't necessarily guarantee peaceful equilibrium as primordialists asserts; because there is sufficient evidence that suggest the volatility of naturalization and reification of ethnicity is not necessarily confined within a designated border. The naturalist ethnic entrepreneurs are often inclined to claim "moral obligation" to provide political, material, and moral support to their co-ethnic groups that are beyond their territorial boundaries which Huntington refers to as "kin country syndrome" (Huntington, 1993: 35) where neighbouring countries or transnational ethnic groups with perceived biological ties, shared cultures, and identities involved in cross-border interventions in supporting and organizing political movements around ethnic identities. For instance, in the early 1990s, the Zaghawa ethnic group in Sudan cooperated with the Zaghawa from Chad to overthrow dictator Hissene Habré who was from the Gorane ethnic group, and replaced him with a Zaghawan President, Idriss Deby. However, as Idris Deby of Chad attempted to reciprocate the favour by supporting and mobilizing the Zaghawan ethnic group in Darfur against the central government in Sudan, the same ethnic group was subjected to genocide. Again, this is not to imply that ethnic homogeneity or heterogeneity is the cause of national and transnational conflicts but to demonstrate that the impact of ethnification remains neither in the privacy of the homes nor within the distance of designated ethno-territorial boundaries and not even national borders.

In a de-ethnified socio-political environment, it may be argued that the existence of shared ethnicity, kinship, language, religion, and culture within or across borders may make it easier to facilitate the possibility of communal cooperation and hospitality, but there is no evidence to suggest that inter-and-intra-ethnic similarities or differences alone can ensure racial/ethnic harmony or cause conflict and unrest. Primordialists fail to answer why conflicts among ethnically and/or religiously homogeneous societies occur, and why many heterogeneous societies peacefully coexist. Because ethnic similarities and peaceful coexistence are not positively or negatively correlated. However, there is a statistically significant correlation between ethnic polarisation and the likelihood of civil war (Montalvo & Reynal-Querol, 2005: 802). The primordialists' simplistic and reductionist approach to ethnicity and conflict does not explain the chaos, conflict, and massacres among the ethnically, religiously, and culturally homogeneous Somalis population and the Tutsi and Hutu ethnic groups of Rwanda. Ethnicity hasn't been the main driver of ethnic strife per se. Conflict is frequently sparked by the actions—or lack thereof—of political elites and/or ethnic entrepreneurs. As Young puts it, ethnic entrepreneurs "codify and standardize a language, equipping it with a written form, create an ethno-centred historical narrative, populated with internal heroes and external villains, and build a literary tradition" (Young, 2003: 14). Political elites and ethnic entrepreneurs frequently play negative roles in polarising societies by escalating fear, grievances, ethnic rivalry, and competition as they work to mobilize their ethnic groups or clans to obtain or maintain certain political privileges, power, and resources at the expense of other ethnic groups.

The other two theories are what Marko termed constructivist-instrumentalist and constructivist-structuralist. The constructivist-instrumentalist argues that ethnicity is a mentally constructed false belief and superstition which is often deliberately manipulated and abused by sociopolitical, economic, and cultural elites as a strategic instrument to achieve personal and political goals (Marko, 2019: 139). However, be it in academic research or policy intervention programs, any attempt to solve ethnic-related conflicts or tensions are often expected to begin with the fundamental understanding, identification and /or acknowledgment of existence of a problem(s) worth solving. Therefore, the constructivist-instrumentalist attempt to paint ethnicity as a false belief and non-existent entity would make it practically impossible to solve ethnic conflict and reconcile deeply divided societies. The constructivist-structuralist, on the other hand, argues that ethnic identity is a fluid social process that is constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed through historical, political, and economic influences and social interactions (Wimmer, 2008: 986-996). Joseph Marko (2019) draws his interpretative analysis on the conceptualization of constructivist-structuralist approach, which departs from the liberal-communitarian, individualistic-liberal and nationalist theories that wrongly assume that individual behaviour is structurally embedded in the culture of an a priori given identities and pre-political community. The constructivist-structuralist approach acknowledges the existence or presence of deeply rooted ethnic divisions that resembles a neo-primordial dichotomization of ethnic categories, which is

the case in Bosnia Herzegovina, Rwanda and Ethiopia, but it underscores the interconnected, intertwined, and sometimes overlapping individual and social identity formation through social learning and socialization process as cognitive and normative construction of social categories. As individuals and grouping can belong to multiple categorizations at the same time, personal and social identity formation should not be conceptualized as mutually excluding each other. In short, identities are formed and reformed through interactions and social relations and there is nothing natural, exclusive, or priori given or dichotomy between individual and collective identities. Hence, it is not appropriate to think of the development of personal and social identities as mutually exclusive. Identity can no longer be interpreted as a singular and exclusive individuality. Because identities are frequently built across various, occasionally overlapping, or opposing categories. As Marko alluded, ethnicity does not have an objective meaning relating to language, religion, or culture in general; rather, it is a structural code with a political function of inclusion/exclusion in the transformation of categories into grouping (Marko, 2019: 147-149). Instead, it represents the politically driven process of social closure of grouping that transforms society from complementization (Eidheim, 1996) (we-and-they) of social configuration into dichotomization (us vs. them) of group relations (Marko, 2019: 147). Instead, it stands for the politically motivated process of social closure of grouping and dichotomization into a social configuration of an adversarial us vs. them stand.

Therefore, unlike the claims of common possession of religion, language, or culture on the assumption of common biological origin or descent and/ or groupness, the interplay between individual and social identity formation is constituted by three basic processes and empirically tested assumptions (Monroe, Hankin, & Vechten, 2000: 434) where, firstly, social groupings including gender, race, ethnicity or nationality are socially constructed categories with a sociopolitical function of inclusion and exclusion. Secondly, in line with social role theory (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), social identity is based on the individual's situated self-regulation to gender role standards and social regulations to others by identification of oneself from the socially constructed belief and stereotypical expectations. In gender-based social roles and behaviours, individuals are expected to perform specific roles, and behave in certain ways, largely because the socially defined expectations influence behaviours and enables men and women to develop specific personality traits and skills out of the socially defined categorization (Egly & Wood, 2012: 458-469). Third is a reference group where identity is formed through comparison and self-stereotyping. This aligns with social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954; Tajfel, 1978), which conceptualizes that people evaluate their own social and personal worth and self-mage by evaluating how they stack up against others, embodying the tendency of self-identification through self-stereotyping to attain in-group membership favouritism (ethnic, gender, racial, religious identities) and outgroup discrimination against others. Political parties, communities (ethnic, social, racial, sexual orientation, and so on), fraternities, sororities, gangs, sports clubs, etc. can be examples of in-groups and out-groups that people can belong to or exclude from. Depending on

the open-mindedness or close-mindedness of a group, the in-group vs outgroup identity formation may create a dichotomous identity with less or no room for peaceful inter-group cooperation leading to the likelihood of social and political closure. As a result, the lack of contact, social interaction and exposure between groupings may help polarize images and group exclusiveness creating fear of others. Therefore, the need for system integration cannot be simply explained by reducing the intersubjective level of the social integration mechanism because groups as social entities not only have an internal structure, that is social stratification and internal status hierarchies, but they are also part of the larger societal structures of intergroup relations (Marko, 2019: 143).

Therefore, whether through commonalities of religion, race, culture, ethnicity, geography, interests, politics, or activities, others, or not, social identity formation and social organizations are formed through standardized categorization, informal networks, and/or community or "bounded group" (Marko, 2019: 175). Be it normative/voluntary, coerced or utilitarian organizations, governments and institutions often give abstract and yet standardized ethnic categorization and collective agency to people sometimes without fully understanding the heterogeneity of groups. For instance, in the US, the term "Hispanic" was coined by the US Census Bureau without taking into account the population's internal linguistic and cultural diversity, which has served as a launching pad for racist, nationalist, and primordialist notion of race and ethnicity (Yang, 2000: 10-11). As the ethnification and racialization of groups has led to racism and structural discrimination, Professor Marko emphasizes on the need for legislatures and judges to avoid ethnifying and racializing social relations and prevent ethnification and racialization by anti-discrimination laws. Moreover, while people engage in routine membership interactions to form an informal network (opportunity structure, not ethnic group) for the purposes of gaining material, spiritual, and financial advantages, others create formal, goal-oriented associations, such as civic organizations, to safeguard, preserve, and nurture minority cultures. Last, but not least is a community or "bounded group". According to Max Weber, whether it is communal or associative in character, a society is referred to as "open" to outsiders if the system does not deny participation to anyone who wishes to join. Conversely, a social relationship will be "closed" against outsiders if the participation of certain persons is excluded, limited, or subjected to conditions (Weber, 1978: 43-44). Therefore, depending on whether it's a community with strong and exclusive membership or inclusive with a strong sense of affinity, the formation and institutionalization of a community can create peaceful cooperation or aggressive confrontation. An exclusive community/social organization that is "bounded" together by shared language, culture, territory, values, passion, experience, interests, and goals can lead to social closure of grouping, which is often a foundation for the process of ethnification and polarization of society. Unlike the primordial assumption that groups are formed based on pre-given and culturally-determined similarities, Marko argues that "culture difference is not the cause for group formation" but an effect that is socially or politically constructed as possible symbolic boundaries in relation to others (Marko, 2019: 146).A real consequence of the

ethnification and polarization of societies leads to the formation of a deeply divided society, which is a strong sign of total failure of social and system integration. The societal polarization borne out of ethnification of territories, cultures, and institutions is what Marko refers to as "Ethnic-midas" where each and everything is seen and measured through an ethnic lens. Hence, ethnic conflicts are not caused by ethnicity per se, but they are the consequence of ethnification and polarization of society. However, ethnification and conflict are bidirectional elements that can mutually reinforce each other. As much as ethnification contributes to conflict, conflict and violence may also trigger widespread ethnification (Kuran, 1998: 625). The Ethiopian case of ethno-territorial federation that politicalized ethnic identity, ethnicized and naturalized cultures, territories and institutions is a typical contemporary example. The demarcation of ethno-territorial boundaries and the naturalization of ethnicity have triggered conflicts across the country. Furthermore, as conflicts get intensified, it's feeding into the ethnification process, which is radicalizing and drifting the society apart, which is facilitating the possibility of state disintegration.

2. Ethiopia's Transition from Forced Ethnic Homogenization to Ethnic Federalism: Ethnification of Territory and Politicization of Ethnicity

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, mostly through coerced assimilationism, Ethiopia acquired its current geographic configuration. Emperors Menelik II launched a trident assimilation programme built around a repressive land-tenure system, the adoption and spread of the Amharic as an official language and Orthodox Christianity as a state religion linked with the imperial court to firmly establish his rule over the conquered ethnicities and territories (Pausewang, 2005; Ismail, 2023). Under the assimilationist Abyssinian project, the Oromo, Somali, Afar, Sidama, Wolaita, and a host of other self-governing indigenous people were absorbed into the empire. So, the country was built on a primordialistic myth of collective ancestry with Amharanized common national identity through which minority ethnic groups were either suppressed or incorporated into the dominant "superior" ethnic group to form an elusively "homogeneous" nation-state (Pausewang, 2005: 278).The forced ethnical assimilation and religious conversion of minority groups gave the Amhara a political prominence and numerical dominance over others leading to what Tocqueville (2003) described as "Tyranny of the majority"(Tocqueville, Bevan, & Kramnick, 2003).

To provide the Amharic court culture, the illusion of legitimacy as rulers and "chosen people", the Amhara ethnic group even goes further to assert the mythology of "true Israel" and the Solomonic descent of the Ethiopian monarchs (Tocqueville, Bevan, & Kramnick, 2003). Consequently, other ethnic groups had to embrace the linguistic, cultural, and religious practices of the subjugators in order to participate in any socioeconomic, political, and religious life of the newly formed empire of the "superior". While the subjugators enforce the conversion and identity-switching on a naturalist basis, from the subjugated perspective, ethnic identification with the

"superior" ethnicity has some degree of instrumentalism with some expected rewards. Subsequently, various Abyssinian rulers of the Amhara ethnic groups used claims of "God-given" (chosen) racial, cultural, and religious superiority over other ethnolinguistic groups to justify and legitimize their assimilationist project. However, as the Amhara ethnic group has multiple and overlapping identities with malleable and constantly fluctuating boundaries and varied descents, the claim of pre-given internally homogeneous Amahara ethnic identity was built on a faux narrative. On the claim of ethnic homogeneity, Tully (1995) eloquently states:

> "…. *cultures are not internally homogeneous. They are continuously contested, imagined and reimagined, transformed and negotiated, both by their members and through their interaction with others. The identity of any culture is thus aspectival rather than essential: like many complex human phenomena, such as language and games, its identity and meaning changes as different aspects of it come into view as it is approached from different paths. Cultural diversity is a tangled labyrinth of intertwining cultural differences and similarities, not a panopticon of fixed, independent and incommensurable world views in which we are either prisoners or cosmopolitan spectators in the central tower…*" (Tully, 1995: 119).

The Amhara ethnic group, like many other ethnic groups, has intermarried with and integrated into other groups within and across boundaries evolving to encompass multiple layers of identities in which an individual can claim more than one identity. However, to conceal their multiplicity and magnify the sense of ethnoreligious "purity" and oneness, Muslims of the same ethnic groups, for instance, were omitted from the categorization of Amharan identity (Pausewang, 2005: 277). Ethiopia's forced homogenization, formation of radicalized form of monolithic national identity and suppression / otherization of heterogeneous groups had infused deep-sited grievances and resentments among diverse groups. In this case, it's not only the political elites but also the Ethiopian state itself was the biggest entrepreneur of ethnic identity. The peasants' revolution against the feudal empire that began in the 1940s, grew and spread across the country after the collapse of the feudal imperial rule in 1974 were a by-product of ethnification and naturalization of ethnic identity. The ethnonationalist movements including the Tigrayan Liberation Front (TPLF), Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), Afar Liberation Front (ALF), Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) and Ogadeni National Liberation Front (ONLF) among others emerged and formed in various parts of the nation to fight the mono-nationalist (unitary) governments that excluded the political voice of many ethnic minorities and majorities through the pursuit of exclusive nation-building techniques by ignoring the existence of multi-level and cross-cutting ethnic diversity. Be that as it may, it's worth noting that the ethnic conflicts were not caused by cultural diversity or ethnic differences per se, but they were consequences and manifestations of political failures where the suppressed,

marginalized, and peripheralized ethnic groups were endeavouring to forge a new constitutional arrangement and compel their inclusion in the state or to change the state through some form of self-determination (Habtu, 2003: 12-13). So, the coerced incorporation of ethnic groups and shredding of their original ethnic identities gave birth to what Michael Mann describe as "state subverting nationalism" (Mann, 2012: 730-732), which involves the emergence and/or coalesce of ethnic-based group mobilization and protracted fight against the dominant ethnic group. In 1991, the ethnonationalist rebels defeated the highly centralized authoritarianism socialist regime, the Dergue, and created a relatively new federal experiment in Africa that is based on ethnolinguistic settlement patterns to achieve a fundamental redefinition of the Ethiopian nation-state. Hence, in 1995 Ethiopia formally adopted Yugoslavia's and the USSR's ethno-federalism model that enabled the ethnicization of territory and politicization of ethnicity with some degree of autonomy and unconditional constitutional right to self-determination up to secession from the federation.

Ethiopia has 84 ethnic groups, but initially, the ethno-federalism was organized around the nine dominant ethnic groups (Oromo, Tigray, Amhara, Afar, Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR), Gambella and Harari) each with significant variation in size (Melesse 2021). As regional resource allocation and political representation at the centre is determined by the ethnical numerical sizes, each region endeavours to inflate its own. Because the manual census is susceptible to manipulation, the outcome is frequently decided by the persons doing the counting. Although Ethiopia has more than 80 ethnic groups each with intersecting and multiple identities, the Ethiopian government introduced a simplistic and reductionist system of ethnic-federalism in which ethnolinguistic grouping and territorial demarcations took place not on the principle of constitutional equality, but on the ground of ethnic homogenization through separation. As the federal constitution grants every ethnic group that shares the same ethnolinguistic identity and culture the right to vote on the creation of a new state, should the group's governing council request it, there is a growing demand to establish more ethno-regional states. For instance, after a protracted struggle for self-determination, the Sidama people have recently voted in a referendum for statehood and achieved it, making it the tenth ethno-regional state in Ethiopia. As mentioned above, each ethno-territorial regions receive the allocation of political power and economic resources relative to their sizes with autonomous rights to design its own regional constitution, establish its own regional army, set its own working languages, choose its own language of instruction in primary schools, elect its own president, parliament and government. As a result, each regional constitution has separate power base, and parallel institutions with different degrees of nativist elements that guarantee rights to exclude non-member ethnic groups from holding public office or work in civil service unless they speak the language (s) spoken in the ethnically demarcated regional governments (Melesse 2021).

For instance, while Article 2 of the Benishangul-Gumuz constitution acknowledges the presence of other ethnic groups within the region, it explicitly asserts that the

regional state belongs to the "native" ethnic groups of Berta, Gumuz, Moa, Shinasha, and Komo, which triggers "settler vs. native" ethnopolitical dichotomy (Constitution of the regional state of Benishangul/Gumuz). Consequently, the ethnification, naturalization, and institutionalization of ethnic and territorial divisions have empowered some ethnic groups while disempowering others within their territorial jurisdiction, which created many "non-native" minorities within majorities and many "non-native" majorities within minorities. In a society of ethnic-midas where the populations are forced to prioritize their ethnicity over justice, equality, and humanity, neither minorities within the majority nor the majority within minority regions are protected. Now that ethnicity has become an integral part of the politico-economic livelihoods and psychosocial mindset of the society, understanding and possibly resolving the phenomenon requires more than a single theoretical interpretation. This is because, ethnicities in Ethiopia, like any other ethnicities, is a socially constructed, deconstructed, or reconstructed entities across history (constructivism) with instrumentalist tendencies and primordialist beliefs/claims to pursue the homogenization of culture, people and territory along the cultural, linguistic, religious and political lines. The antagonism and the mutually destructive campaign of political exclusion between previously dominant and dominated ethnic groups align with status reversal theory, which contends that the more intense the historical struggle between the dominant and minority populations, the more likely the majority will face a heightened exclusion once the roles are reversed (Mylonas, 2013: 93).The role has been reversed and the former dominant ruling class-the Amhara ethnic group, has been targeted and excluded almost in every newly formed ethno-territorial jurisdictional grid.

The ethnicized state administrative structures have ignited inter/intra-ethnic wranglings, competition over land/power/resources, reinforced group identities, nurtured ethnic mobilization, hindered inter/intra group interaction, fuelled and deepened communal and/or ethnic tensions/conflicts within regions and across the country with strong ambition for separation by secession. Therefore, the ethnicization of territories and state institutions and the politicization of ethnicity have fostered violence between minority and majority ethnic groups (state subverting nationalism), but it is also pushing the country towards the potential secession of many ethnic groups (contraction) or disintegration of the empire (dissolution). If history tells us anything, without de-ethnification of cultural and territorial divisions, there is ample evidence to suggest that Ethiopia, Africa's second populous country is likely to face Yugoslavia's and USSR's fate. However, the depoliticization of ethnicity and de-ethnicization of societal dissections cannot be achieved by naturalizing territorial and cultural divisions based on a predefined assumption of cultural commonality (Marko, 2019) or by pursuing the homogenizing nation-state modelling which mono-nationalist elites suppress diversity in the name of national "oneness" at the expense of others. Marko argues that it is crucial to stop the reification, dichotomization, and naturalisation of cultural and territorial possession in order to de-ethnify these societal divisions. We can overcome the civic/ethnic and social dichotomies only by deconstructing the naturalist fallacies.

However, the ethnification phenomenon is not limited to ancestrally linked "ethnified" collectivises with claims of ethnolinguistic, cultural, religious, and geographical distinctiveness and historical grievances that endeavour to capitalize on ethnic attachment for mobilizing individuals and/or groups into collective action and for collective claims, including access to power and resources. As I will demonstrate in the subsequent case of the Canadian model of multiculturalism, such phenomenon may occur even in pluralist nations that profess to accommodate diversity and endorse multicultural policies.

2.1 The Case of Canadian Multiculturalism: Safe for Ethnicity and yet Safe from Ethnicity

The societal ethnification phenomenon is not necessarily limited to nation-states in which political and/or numerically dominant groups attempt to enforce the homogenization of territory and people by suppressing and excluding minorities. This is because the naturalization of ethnicity and the "denial of fully-fledged participation in the economy and polity to an immigrant collectivist which had adopted the land into which it has migrated as its homeland can also result in the ethnification of society (Oommen, 2008: 27). Canada is a case in point. Ever since Canada introduced the race-neutral admissions criteria in immigration policy in 1967 against the formerly exclusive intake that favoured Europeans, and the adoption of multiculturalism in the early 1970s, it has been lauded as a success story of multiculturalism. Because the country has championed welcoming diverse minorities and created space for them to preserve and celebrate some aspects of their culture and traditions while engaging in the mainstream of Canadian life without culturally or structurally assimilating into it. While the phrase "Canadian values" is frequently used to describe the uniform racial, cultural, and religious characteristics of individuals of European descent, the term "multiculturalism" continues to be the focal point of the discursive racialization of non-European individuals who are perceived as not adhering to these Canadian values (Hansen, 2014:73-88). Like the primordialists or naturalist theorists who perceive ethnicity as static, instinctual, permanent and ancestrally linked singularity in which their shared distinctiveness exclude them from others, the Canadian version of naturalization of difference, policy of fostering ethnic primordiality and framing ethnicity "around fixed and uniform categories that not only determined how all members should think and act but also ignored the multidimensional nature of people's identities" (Fleras, 2017: 118). The Canadian policy of multiculturalism endorses the symbols of ethnic differences solely at personal or private levels and it can be tolerated only as long as it remains personal and private; however, at public domain, it only endorses a "pretend pluralism" (Fleras, 2017: 139). Therefore, as Fleras' research findings show, under an official Canadian Multiculturalism policy, ethnicity is rendered tolerable as long as:

> " *…(1) people identify only with the symbols of their difference; (2) this identification is restricted to the personal and private rather than the public realm;*

> *(3) this affiliation does not violate the laws of the land, interfere with the rights of others, or contravene core Canadian values and constitutional principles, and (4) ethnicity is deployed to bolster people's sense of belonging to Canada rather than for erecting inward-looking communities. Put bluntly, then, Canada's official Multiculturalism does not exist to "celebrate" ethnicity. More to the point, official Multiculturalism is concerned with neutering ethnicity as a framework for living together with what's left of our differences. Or to put it more finely, under Multiculturalism, all Canadians can belong to, and identify with, Canada through their ethnicity…*" (Fleras, 2017: 139-140).

To depoliticize ethnicity under the multiculturalism brand, the core Canadian institutions have established "a governance model that makes Canada safe from ethnicity, yet safe for ethnicity" [emphasis in the original] (Fleras, 2017: 140). The naturalization and reification of ethnicity, the dichotomization of private vs. public and its exclusion of ethnicity from the public realm can only facilitate segregation by territorial separation as in the case of preserving indigenous peoples in reservations, because of the misconception of "their alleged inability to form one social and political community with the majority because of their 'entirely different' culture" (Marko, 1998: 379). Or it can foster an environment of detached coexistence as in the cases of growing ethno-social enclaves throughout the country. For instance, there are more than 371 ethnic neighbourhoods in Toronto "with relatively high concentrations (30 percent or more) of a single ethnicity" in a limited territorial concentration and self-segregation by minorities themselves leading to ethno-tension and violence (Fleras, 2012: 47). Also, if we look at the ethnic Somalis in Ottawa, there are disturbing signs of institutional and policy failures of integration and inclusion. Between 2001 and 2006, the Somali population in Ottawa/Gatineau areas has grown to 8,040 (Statistics Canada, 2006). However, more than 35% of them are territorially concentrated largely in Alta Vista and Gloucester-Southgate areas (Charmarkeh & Grandena, 2012: 411). Although the Somali migrant population makes0.7% of the Ottawa population, reports show that 60% of youth incarcerations in the Ottawa Juvenile Delinquency Center are of Muslim faith and within this 60% youth population of Muslim faith, 90% are Somali speaking (Somalia Center for Youth, Women and Community Development, 2003, cited in Kenny, 2008: 9). These are signs of failure of multiple integration processes (ethno-social, economic, political, legal) where upward social mobility is practically difficult, downward social assimilation (territorial and ethnic enclaves), frustration, and substance abuse become rampant. In 2015, nearly 5 million (14.5%) Canadians lived in poverty out of which racialized migrants and indigenous groups were the majority (Statistics Canada, 2021). While integration deferral keeps migrants in poverty, it costs the Canadian government between 72 to 82 billion dollars per year (Plante, 2020: 9) (which is the cost of health care, crime, social services, emergency shelter, and so on.) which makes it the most expensive social problem in the country.

Accommodation of diversity, dignified coexistence, and successful integration should involve the adjustment of existing laws and policies to facilitate the participation of immigrants in economic, social, and political life, which would give immigrants an opportunity to integrate into mainstream society successfully, but also more or less secure the opportunity for upward social mobility. It is therefore possible to provide for integration through law by acknowledging the inseparable identity/diversity/equality/participation nexus and, as a result, the multidimensionality and multifunctionality of law in a norm-generating cycle where norms and their underlying values are constantly contested at various territorial levels and within various functional contexts (Marko, 2019: 174). As a result, the integration strategies can only be implemented in societies that are genuinely and explicitly multicultural, without any dominant ethnic group(s), and with some clearly established psychological preconditions, including "…widespread acceptance of the value to a society of cultural diversity (the presence of a positive 'multicultural ideology'); relatively low levels of prejudice (minimal ethnocentrism, racism, and discrimination); positive mutual attitudes among cultural groups (no specific intergroup hatred); and sense of attachment to, or identification with, the larger society by all groups" (Berry, 1997: 11).However, de-ethnicification of cultural and territorial divisions cannot be achieved by depoliticization attempts when culture and ethnicity are avoided from the public realm.

While cultural assimilation is a rejection of diversity which involves unlearning the previous language(s) and culture(s) of their origin to acquire new cultural capital and social skills to accommodate the values, norms, and practices of their host community, structural assimilation (Gordon, 1964) is a multi-level and multi-directional social integration system, which is not a one-way process of identification with the host's fundamental institutions, norms, values, and social practices, but it involves mutual adaptation and accommodation (Marko, 2019: 153). Integration policies demand that migrants embrace the norms and customs of the majority group, whereas accommodation policies demand that the majority accept customs that are different from those that constitute the culture of the majority. During the integration process, immigrants always make the most adjustments, but the concept of accommodation indicates that the host community also makes changes to its laws and institutions to enable their inclusion (Banting, 2022). Unless being part of the law of the land means that diverse groups have the rights to contest the "Canada's legal system [which] is based on the English and French „traditional legal norms (Department of Justice, 2021) to generate a normative concept of legal pluralism, a law of the land that excludes stakeholders who live on the land is a "pretend pluralism". This is not to downplay, discount, or undervalue the Canadian hospitality and multiculturalism policy per se, but it's worth noting that governing a diverse society without understanding the meanings and inclusion of the norms, values, and beliefs of the governed remains to be an illusion of multiculturalism.

Without critical contestation of the legal norms and adjustment of existing laws to secure structural assimilation or integration of multi-ethnic and multi-faith migrants into

the socio-economic and political life of Canada, the Canadian multiculturalism policy can only secure a detached coexistence and asymmetrical power relations. Because "respecting diversity not only requires equal opportunities in terms of redistribution of material resources to overcome socioeconomic disadvantages" (Marko, 2019: 167), but also proactive and permanent constatations of norms and laws to facilitate integration by law. The "accommodation of diversity without a structural change in power relations as a transformative dimension of law will not bring 'full and effective equality'" and successful integration (Marko, 2019: 167). Multiculturalism, from a sociological standpoint, is the presence of people from various racial and ethnic backgrounds, but ideologically, it is a collection of generally agreeable beliefs and principles that promotes the appreciation of Canada's cultural variety (Dewing, 2013: 1). When it comes to policy, multiculturalism is the formal management of diversity through federal, provincial, territorial, and local activities (Dewing, 2013). However, a genuine multiculturalism in pluralist society should not be limited just to mere acknowledgement of ethno-racial and religious existence, management and celebration of cultural differences and foods, but it should entail harmonization of the law, changing the law and regulations themselves to accommodate the distinctive needs and aspirations of the majorities and minorities, rather than simply ensuring the non-discriminatory execution of the law in a diverse society (Banting, 2022: 185).Therefore, the concept of multiculturalism requires the contestation of abstract norms and the static conceptualization of legal dogmas that declare the alleged shared values of the majority population are non-negotiable. As Marko underlines, "laws are process-driven not only by different ideas, interests, identities, and emotions but also by the permanent norm contestation of principles and goals" (Marko, 2019: 172) where the principle of the quod omnes tangit (all must consent to whatever has an impact on them) what affects all must be approved by all (Weiner, 2020: 197)encouraging the participation of all stakeholders and those diverse national groups affected by the laws inter se. According to Wiener (2020), norm contestation is:

> "…*the practice that brings out the tension between socially constituted soft institutions (norms) on the one hand and formally stipulated hard institutions (law, political organizations) on the other. Unlike 'hard' institutions which are constitutionally set to represent the internal boundaries of formal political space, soft institutions emerge through social interactions that often criss-cross these boundaries*…" (Weiner, 2020: 197).

Hence, if multiculturalism is not applied in the legal and social system, diversity would encounter a variety of phenomena including "the tension between diversity (of norms, political opinions, cultural patterns of behaviour, etc.)" (Weiner, 2020: 198) that makes life uneasy for most immigrants and the Canadian society. It is not uncommon to see the cultural perceptions of right and wrong get immigrants into trouble with the law, largely because their behaviours and actions are usually measured by the Canadian

mainstream notion of 'acceptable' norms are deviant from the conventional "Canadian norms". Ethnification and racialization are two faces of the same coin, because "[r]acialization is the socio-political process that attributes social significance to 'race' by giving meaning to physical [and behavioural] characteristics. Therefore, the actions and behaviours of 'racialized' people are defined in relation to a dominant (White) norm" (Mooten, 2021: 16). Instead of focusing on whether they have violated the 'acceptable' conventional rules, it's imperative to understand and consider the distinct and intrinsic multi-cultural meanings behind their actions and allow access to practices of norm contestation, norm validation, and contested compliance without limiting the norm-ownership or moral validity to the host side (Weiner, 2020: 61). When a person is subjected to state law, it would be meaningful for the state to understand, interpret and be inclusive of the subjects' norms. Therefore, from pluralism and diversity perspectives, the law would be validated when diverse norms are contested as opposed to expectations of ethnic groups to blend in and be blind norm-follower to a given order as a reflection of unequal power relations.

3. Conclusion

The primary goal of this paper is to highlight the reductionist interpretation of the complex, dynamic, multidimensional, and overlapping identity formation, and debunk the simplistic explanation of ethnic conflicts and thereby provide a basis for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to social and system integration strategies in multicultural and ethnically divided societies. In this short essay, I have attempted to demonstrate that ethnicity is not the driver of inter/intra-ethnic conflicts as many scholars assert. Ethnic conflict is a by-product of politically-driven ethnification, naturalization, and reification of ethnicity and territorial boundaries which leads to dichotomization, peripheralization, marginalization, tension, antagonism, and conflict which are typical characteristics of deeply polarized societies and strong signs of total failure of social and system integration. Thus, a state is the biggest contributors to the ethnification of identity. Besides, the suppression of ethnic identities under the guise of creating a "race-neutral", unitary and /or homogeneous nation-states tends to invisibilize the political voices of minorities and conceals the asymmetrical power relations and institutional arrangements which plays negative roles in polarising societies by intensifying grievances, rivalry, competition, and ethno-social enclaves. Considering the potential threat of naturalization and reification of ethnic identities and the ethnification of territorial boundaries pose on a peaceful societal equilibrium, the de-ethnification of cultural and territorial divisions and the complementization process (inclusive-we and you) should begin by deconstructing the ethnic primordial fallacies and ideological paradoxes that create ethnic, cultural, social, and political dichotomies (us vs. them) leading to conflict (s). Therefore, social and system integration would be effective if the system avoids complete ethno-social closures of group boundaries where class, ethnicity, and cultural groups crosscut each other, mutually interact, recognize, communicate, and create a collective sense of solidarity while allowing to keep dual

and/or multiple identities. Acceptance and acknowledgment of ethno-racial and religious diversity are starting place for recognition of the presence of dual and/or multiple social and personal identities but does not guarantee stability, dignified coexistence, and successful integration without contestation and harmonization of the laws, static legal dogmas, norms and regulations that affect all stakeholders to accommodate the distinctive needs and aspirations of the majorities and minorities. Hence, it is recommended to employ multiple integration approaches that recognize the multidimensionality of the integration process, which includes a negotiated and participatory process of mutual recognition, adaptation, and accommodation.

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Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

Bahlbi is a researcher and international development practitioner specializing in migration, community development, capacity building, governance, and post-conflict recovery. In the last 16 years, he has worked within and between the worlds of research, policy design, and evaluation on issues related to humanitarian, political, logistical, and methodological challenges confronting post-war governance and peacebuilding processes in Africa. Prior to joining CPRD, Bahlbi has worked with a broad spectrum of policy, development, and humanitarian organizations in the Global North and South, including UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, and Red Cross in the areas of forced migration, governance, human security, emergency response, advocacy, and project management. He earned his undergraduate degree in Sociology and Social Anthropology from the University of Asmara. He did his postgraduate studies in international development and post-war recovery studies at Dalhousie University and the University of York. He is a former OCIC's Board of Editors team leader (Ontario Council of International Cooperation) and former Executive Member of the International Council of African Study Group (ASG). Bahlbi is a member of the Canadian Association for International Development Professionals (CAIDP) and the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution (CICR).

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Comparative Analysis of the Ethiopian and Kenyan Detention Systems[1]

Nikoletta Evelin Zsiga[2]

Abstract:

Colonialism brought extensive suffering to Africans. One of its manifestations was the operation of concentration camps and detention camps in Italian-occupied Ethiopia and British-controlled Kenya. In both colonies, European powers faced resistance: in Ethiopia, an assassination attempt targeted the Italians, while in Kenya, the Mau Mau movement –primarily composed of Kikuyu people – revolted against British rule. To suppress these resistance efforts, concentration camps and detention facilities were established, where thousands of Africans lost their lives. This paper seeks to answer, among other questions, the following: What conflicts led to establishing concentration camps in the colonies under discussion, and what purpose did they serve? The comparative analysis focuses on the conditions in the camps, the treatment of internees, and the resulting mortality figures.

Keywords:
Ethiopia; Kenya; concentration camps; detention camp; violence; colonial era.

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Introduction

The concept of concentration camps is very often associated with Nazi death camps, but the Germans had already established these types of camps long before. Indeed, concentration camps were not a new phenomenon. However, Nazi Germany was not the first to use these facilities. A concentration camp is not synonymous with a death camp. In the former, people were detained and subjected to forced labour, starvation, and torture, among other things. In the latter, the aim was to exterminate detainees as quickly and efficiently as possible (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2025).

The first isolation camp in the United States was established in 1838 for the Cherokee Indians, but it functioned more as a reservation. The very first concentration camp (from the word 'reconcentracio', meaning to re-concentrate) is associated with the Second War of Independence in Cuba (1895–1898), during which Spanish colonialists confined civilians in concentration camps. The purpose and consequence were similar for the camps established then and used since isolation and surveillance, crowding people together, and poor conditions, leading to mass deaths (Pap, 2013, 235–236).

In the 20th century, the institution of concentration camps emerged in various African colonies, including British-controlled territories in South Africa, German Southwest Africa, but also in Ethiopia, which was invaded by the Italians, and Kenya, colonized by the British, both of which constitute the focus of this research.

This paper will give a historical overview of the colonial activities of the British and Italians in the areas under study and then briefly describe how the conflict between the colonizers and the Africans escalated into the establishment of concentration camps. After that, attention will turn to a comparison of concentration camps. First, I use the individualising comparative study to highlight the specificities of the two cases, thus examining the correlation between the retributive aspects (concentration camps) of German and British colonialism. Therefore, I am mainly comparing the research results of secondary sources – for which the findings of experts on African history are indispensable – and adding my own ideas. In my work, I employ the deductive method. This involves developing a set of criteria based on the existing literature, which enables me to make comparisons. By using these criteria, I can either confirm or reject the research questions I formulate and provide answers to them.

My goal is to create a concise summary that will examine the connections between the discussed cases, thereby contributing to comparative genocide research and research in Africa.

The comparative analysis will be carried out by asking the following research questions: (1) Who were the victims, and approximately how many Africans were interned by the colonialists? (2) How long were they in operation, and what were the reasons and objectives of the concentration camps? (3) What were the conditions, how many people died, and how were these 'facilities' liquidated? I examine the comparison from four perspectives: human factors, political and economic influences, the infrastructures built in the concentration camp system.

Historical background

Ethiopia

During the 20th century, European colonial powers succeeded in seizing nearly all territories across Africa, with Ethiopia standing as exception. Alongside the British and the French, the Italians also sought to claim the region, leading to a conflict between Ethiopia and Italy at the end of the 19th century. However, Ethiopian Emperor Menelik II decisively defeated the Italian forces. Capitalizing on this victory, Menelik initiated a policy of "preventive colonization," significantly expanding the territory of Abyssinia. Consequently, Ethiopia became the only African nation to engage in colonization within the continent, while Italy remains the only European colonial power to have suffered defeat at the hands of an African state (Búr, 2011, p. 22).

Following World War I, Italy once again attempted to occupy Ethiopia. However, lacking adequate military readiness at the time, it proposed a friendship treaty in 1928, aiming to secure greater influence over the region. By the 1930s, as the effects of the global economic crisis began to be felt, arguments in favour of an Ethiopian invasion gained momentum in Italy. The annexation was driven by multiple factors: Mussolini sought to enhance his prestige, requiring a decisive military victory to bolster support for his government. Additionally, the expansion of Italian "living space" became a significant objective, accompanied by the era's prevailing rhetoric of a "civilizing mission" (Campbell, 2017, p. 18).

Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia made efforts to modernize the country, but its military development lagged significantly behind that of European nations. As a result, Ethiopia, once a powerful and expansionist state, became a relatively easy target for Italy. In 1934, Italy prepared for the invasion of Ethiopia by building up its forces in Eritrea and Italian Somaliland. However, a **casus belli** was still lacking, and Italy struggled to find a pretext for attacking Ethiopia, which was also a member of the League of Nations. By late 1934, the Italians finally found the opportunity they had been waiting for: a shooting broke out at an Italian military outpost on Ethiopian territory, resulting in the death of thirty Italian colonial soldiers. The Italians claimed the incident occurred in Italian Somaliland and demanded compensation and an apology, but Mussolini's primary goal was to provoke Haile Selassie. The Ethiopian emperor brought the matter before the League of Nations, which imposed sanctions on arms imports for both nations. However, these measures disproportionately harmed Ethiopia. Ultimately, in the name of preserving European peace, the major powers chose to step aside, both France and Britain declared their neutrality. This inaction cleared the way for Italy to launch its invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 (Campbell, 2017, pp. 18–21).

The Italian invasion of Ethiopia (also known as the Second Italo-Abyssinian War) was ultimately successful in 1936, resulting in the deaths of approximately 250,000–300,000 Ethiopians, including men, women, and children. To achieve victory, Italy deployed mustard gas, despite its use as a chemical weapon being prohibited by the 1925 Geneva Protocol. Additionally, Ethiopian prisoners of war were executed on Mussolini's orders, a clear violation of the Geneva Conventions, to which Italy was a signatory. King Victor

Emmanuel III adopted the title "Emperor of Ethiopia," and Rodolfo Graziani was appointed as Viceroy. Ethiopia was subsequently incorporated into the Italian colonial empire as part of Italian East Africa (1936–1941). This marked the zenith of European colonial expansion in Africa, leaving Liberia as the only African nation that was never colonized by European powers (Campbell, 2017, pp. 25–45, Búr, 2011, p. 46, Fage & Tordoff, 2004, p. 331, Grotius, 2025).

During the first year of the Italian occupation, Rodolfo Graziani sought to bolster his popularity by reintroducing almsgiving, emulating the Ethiopian emperor's tradition of distributing money while residing in the capital, Addis Ababa. On February 19, 1937 (Yekatit 12 in the Ethiopian calendar), Ethiopian resistance fighters carried out an assassination attempt on Graziani (Campbell, 2017, p. 47, Sáska, 2015, p. 25). Yekatit 12 is the Ethiopian calendar equivalent of February 19, hence the events became known as the Graziani or Yekatit 12 massacre (Forgacs, 2016, p. 306).

During the assassination attempt, the attackers threw several hand grenades at Italian officials gathered in the Gennete-Li'ul Palace. The likely aim was to cripple the Italian high command while simultaneously encouraging the civilian population to rise up in rebellion. At the time of the attack, approximately 3,000 Ethiopians were present in the palace courtyard. However, the attempt was unsuccessful, as no Italians were killed. Although Graziani was hospitalized, he recovered and continued to serve as Viceroy thereafter (Campbell, 2017, pp. 47–48, Sáska, 2015, p. 25).

Kenya

Kenya is an East African country characterized by significant ethnic diversity. The five largest ethnic groups are the Kikuyu (17%), Luhya (14%), Kalenjin (13%), Luo (10.7%), and Kamba (9.8%). Most of the population, 85.5%, identifies as Christian, while linguistically, English and Swahili are the dominant languages (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019, p 12, CIA, 2025).

By the 1890s, the British and the Germans had delineated their respective spheres of influence in East Africa, formalizing these arrangements through treaties. According to one such agreement, Germany recognized British colonial supremacy in Uganda and Zanzibar in exchange for concessions in other territories. In 1894, Britain declared Uganda, along with the region between Uganda and the coast – Kenya – a protectorate. The British East Africa Protectorate was subsequently declared a Crown Colony in 1920, officially becoming Kenya Colony (Fage & Tordoff, 2004, p. 317, Sík, 1964, p. 209).

In Kenya, as in South Africa, most of the land was owned by European settlers, while indigenous populations were forced into reservations. The colonizers employed a "divide and rule" strategy, creating separate reservations for ethnic groups such as the Kikuyu, Maasai, and Luo. Africans were not allowed to own land outside the designated areas; they could only lease land from European landowners, for which they were required to provide labour in return. Each adult member of the family had to work at

least 180 days annually for the settler in exchange for the land lease.[3] The British imposed taxes on the indigenous population, requiring them to pay both a hut tax and a poll tax, which together equalled approximately two months' worth of an African worker's wages. As a result, many indigenous people were forced to migrate in search of employment. In response, the colonial government introduced a law in 1920 requiring any man leaving the reservation to carry a pass (*kipande*), which included his name, fingerprint, ethnic group, employment history, and the signature of his current employer. This pass was often kept in a small metal box and worn around the neck, earning the nickname "*mbugni*," or goat bell. Failure to carry this pass would result in a fine or imprisonment. To adapt to the new economic conditions, some Africans managed to undercut the settlers by offering surplus produce, such as maize, at lower prices than those set by the settlers. In response, the British implemented further economically oppressive measures, including banning the cultivation of the most profitable crops, such as tea, coffee, and sisal, and setting fixed prices for maize sales (Sík, 1964, p. 209, Elkins, 2005, pp. 15–16).

European colonization particularly affected the Kikuyu, as they relied on agriculture for their livelihood. Due to the settlers' encroachment, they lost more than 60,000 hectares of land. The shrinking of Kikuyu farmland led to a decline in soil fertility, as too many indigenous people were crowded into areas relative to their size. In addition to the economic hardship, the loss of land had significant social consequences. For a Kikuyu to become an adult, he had to own land: the man needed land to pay the bridewealth for his wife, while the woman would use the produce grown on the land to feed her family. As a result, a Kikuyu without land could no longer be considered a Kikuyu (Elkins, 2005, pp. 12–14).

The colony was governed through indirect rule, which relied on the leadership role of tribal chiefs. However, among the Kikuyu, there were no tribal chiefs, only elders and clan leaders who governed through councils. As such, the tribal chiefs were illegitimate constructs of colonial governance. The introduction of the "chieftaincy" contributed to internal conflict, as these chiefs participated in colonial oppression while also being corrupt and opportunistic (loyal chiefs were rewarded with larger landholdings) (Elkins, 2005, pp. 18–19).

In the 1920s, a political organization called the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) was established to oppose colonial rule. Its secretary was Johnstone Kenyatta (later known as Jomo Kenyatta). However, the British authorities reacted negatively to the KCA, labelling it as dangerous and subversive, and banned the organization at the onset of World War II. In 1944, it was reestablished under the name Kenya African Union (KAU) (Elkins, 2005, pp. 20–24, Anderson, 2005, p. 12, Rosberg & Nottingham, 1966, pp. 98–99).

World War II further exacerbated the existing issues of land disputes and economic oppression, collectively creating the conditions that gave rise to the movement known

[3] In 1925, Africans had to work "only" 180 days, but by 1945 this had risen to 240-270 days among Kikuyu tenants. (Furedi, 2016, p. 216)

as Mau Mau, which the colonial authorities regarded as an unified entity. However, there was significant disagreement within the leadership, comprising members of KAU and other groups, regarding how to address the plight of Africans. From the moderate wing of the movement emerged a radical faction that advocated for violent methods and encouraged armed resistance among the Africans. Despite being outlawed by the colonial government, the number of Mau Mau resisters continued to grow. The Africans committed several acts of violence against settlers, prompting the governor to sign the Emergency Order on October 20, 1952, which marked the beginning of the colonial crackdown and the eventual suppression of the Mau Mau movement (Elkins, 2005, pp. 22–37).

Comparison of Detention Camps

The British had previously established camps for both the Boers and Africans, and the Italian colonizers also regarded these institutions as a well-proven policy. Deportation was a widespread practice in Italian colonies, particularly in Libya, even before the rise of fascism, and it was codified in the laws of 1926 and 1931. The primary objectives were to clear certain territories and isolate rebels. In eastern Libya, between 1930 and 1933, approximately 50% of the population was interned in sixteen camps. The conditions within these camps were universally appalling, leading to a mortality rate of up to 40% (Campbell, 2017, p. 33).

The duration of the camps differed between the two colonies. In Ethiopia, smaller prisoner camps operated for varying periods—some for weeks, others for months—while certain prisoners were detained for years and were only released upon the liberation in 1941 (Campbell, 2017, p. 225). In the case of Kenya, although releases were continuous, camps were still operating in 1959 to detain "hard-line" rebels, and the camp system was finally dismantled in 1960 (Elkins, 2005, p. 149, p. 159).

The number of detainees also varied between the two cases; however, both shared the characteristic that the colonizers deported Africans suspected of being connected to the uprisings and used the rebellion as a pretext to punish the colonial African population. According to one source, the number of detainees held in Addis Ababa was estimated at around 12,000 individuals. These Africans were first sent to various prisons, detention camps, or other holding centres, after which they were transferred to one of the concentration camps or, in some cases, executed. The detainees were first registered and then divided into two groups: those to be executed and those to be imprisoned. Any individual suspected of participating in the assassination attempt or having any connection to it was added to the group designated for execution, along with those listed on the death register, such as nobles, priests, and educated Ethiopians. In all other cases, imprisonment awaited the individual (Campbell, 2017, p. 224, p. 317).

Three major concentration camps were established for Ethiopians. The largest penal institution was in Akaki, on the outskirts of Addis Ababa, at the site of a former radio station. Akaki often served as a transit camp for many prisoners. From there, detainees faced two possible fates: execution or transfer to one of the two other camps, either in

Danane (a concentration camp near Mogadishu in Italian Somaliland) or on Nocra Island (a penal camp). Following the assassination attempt, approximately 3,000 prisoners were held in Akaki under appalling conditions in tents, cells, and barracks. Many prisoners designated for transport did not survive the journey. For instance, of the 1,100 prisoners transported to Danane, many died during the four-week trip due to disease or harsh conditions, such as extreme heat and heavy rains. However, Nocra was considered the worst of the camps. On the island, temperatures could reach approximately 50°C with 90% humidity, and prisoners also had to endure a lack of drinking water (Campbell, 2017, pp. 231–234).

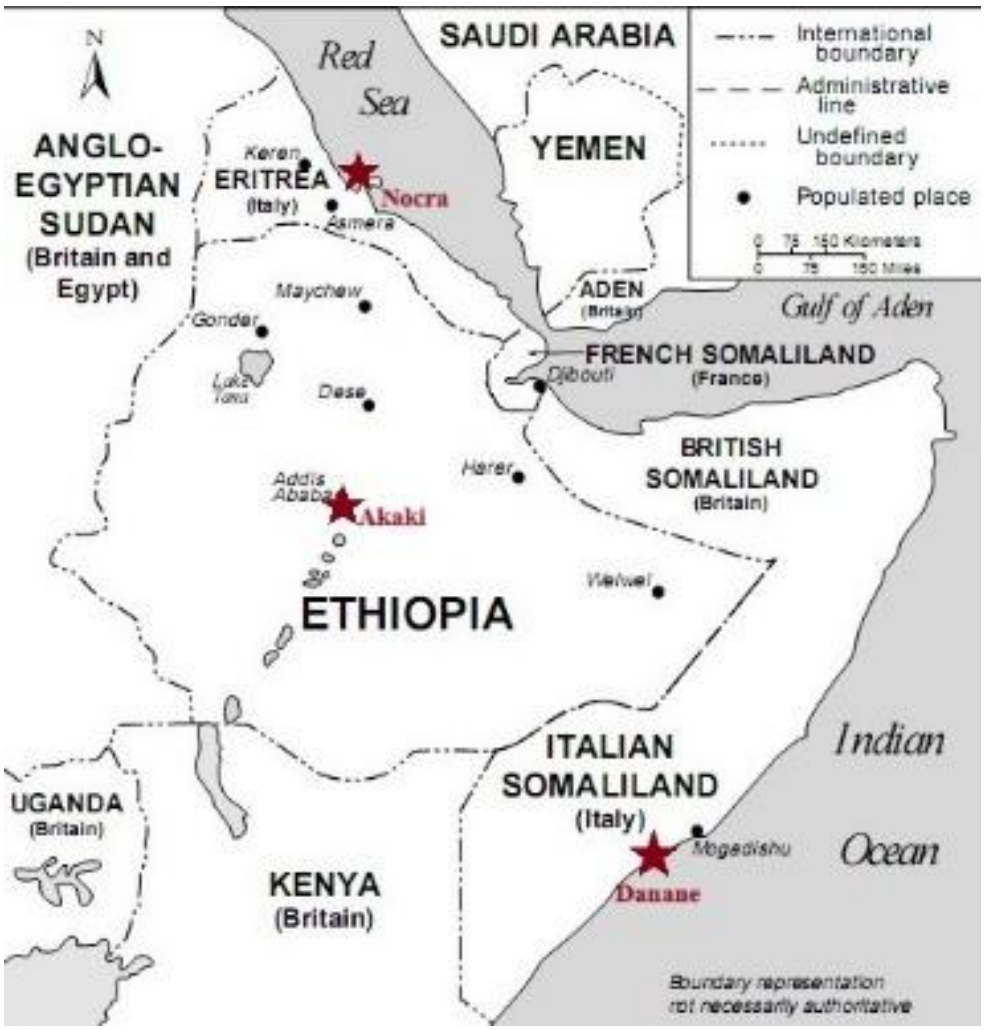

Figure 1: Map of Detentional Camps. Source: Sundin, 2020. (edited by the author)

In the case of Kenya, it is not possible to determine with precision how many Kikuyu camps were established by the colonial authorities or the exact number of detainees deported. This uncertainty arises because the number of prisoners associated with the Mau Mau movement continued to increase, prompting the establishment of new camps and prisons while others were simultaneously closed due to rehabilitation efforts. According to historian Caroline Elkins, there were over one hundred camps operated by the colonial administration (Elkins, 2005, pp. 149–151). Estimates suggest that during

the peak period of Kikuyu detention, their numbers may have reached as high as 70,000. Some sources indicate that the highest daily average was 71,346 detainees in December 1954; however, this figure gradually declined over time. It is important to note that this number does not include individuals who passed through the detention system or were held in other incarceration facilities. Other sources estimate that the number of detainees could have reached 80,000, with broader estimates ranging between 160,000 and 320,000 (Elkins, 2005, p. 429, Zane, 2019, Anderson, 2005, p. 313).

Even in the temporary detention centres established in Addis Ababa, the conditions were inhumane. The black-shirted guards often abused their power, using it for theft and extortion. Prisoners, who were near dehydration, were forced to pay the highest price for a small amount of water in exchange for their survival (Campbell, 2017, p. 189). In many places, prisoners were not provided with food, and particularly in prisons and police stations, torture was common. Diseases, especially typhus, also claimed many victims. One survivor gave the following testimony about the tortures: *' (…) a prisoner who attempted to escape was flogged, (…) then they tied his legs together and turned him upside down, putting his head inside a tin which was filled with human excrement.'* (Campbell, 2017, pp. 225–228)

In the case of Kenya, we cannot only speak of concentration camps, as the British established various types of camps based on their function and the "status" of the prisoners. There were transit camps, which were used to house Kikuyu individuals who were "waiting" to be deported to the reserves. The largest and most famous camps were in Nakuru, Gilgil, and Thomson's Falls. In these camps, as in the Ethiopian camps, the conditions were horrific—filthy, overcrowded, and lacking sufficient food or clean water. As a result, many suffered from diseases and malnutrition. In terms of medicine and food, the Africans were heavily dependent on the Red Cross and other voluntary organizations. Thousands of internees were forced to remain in the camps for months, or even longer, as there was not enough land for the Kikuyu or the reserves had become overexploited (Elkins, 2005, pp. 56–59). Shirley Cooke, a European representing settler, said the following about these camps: *'The reputation will live for years about these Transit Camps, and they will probably get the reputation of the concentration camps after the Boer war, memories of which live even today.'* (Kenya Legislative Council Debates, 1953, p. 80)

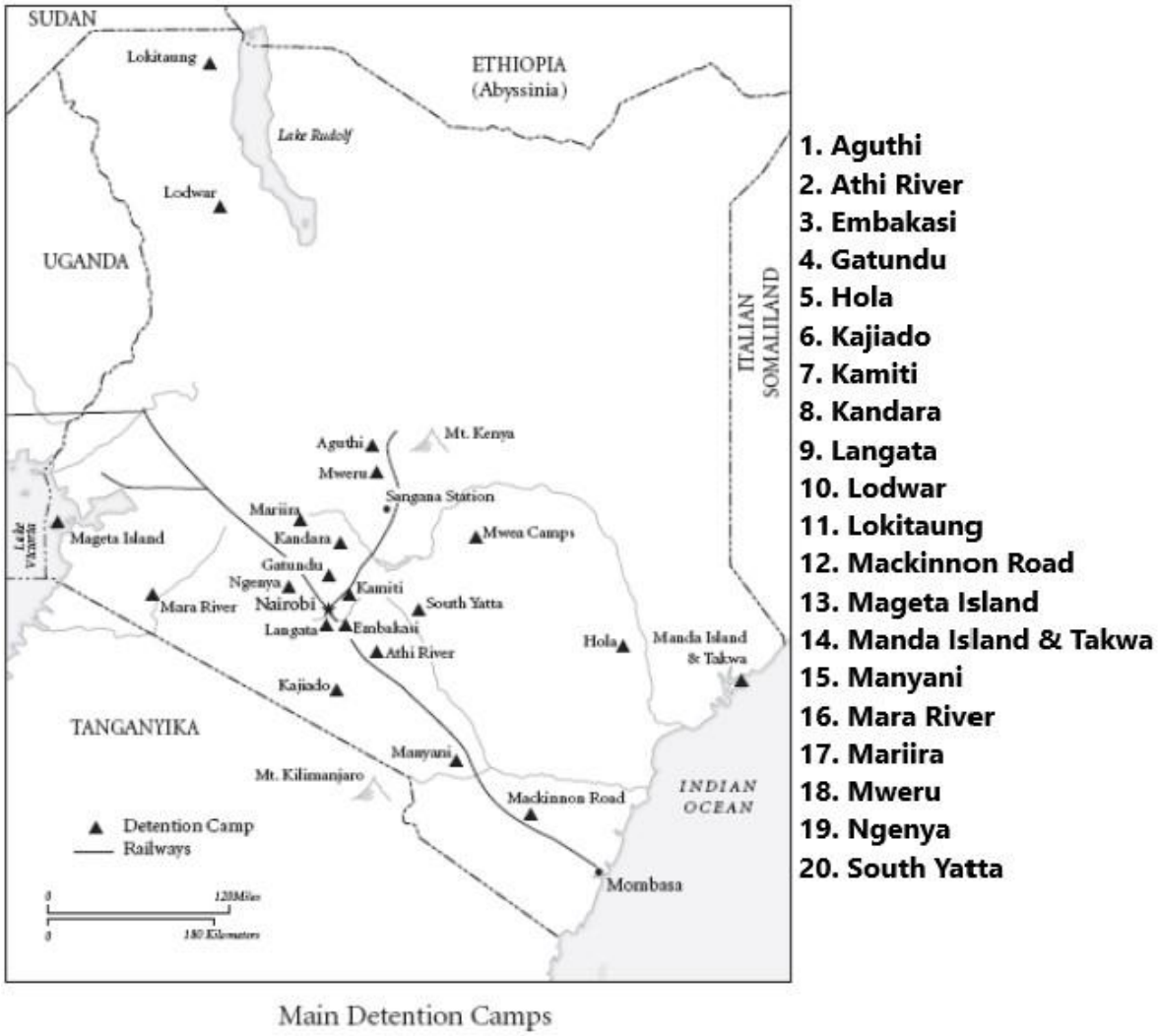

Figure 2: Main Detention Camps in Kenya. Source: Elkins, 2005, p. 150. (edited by the author)

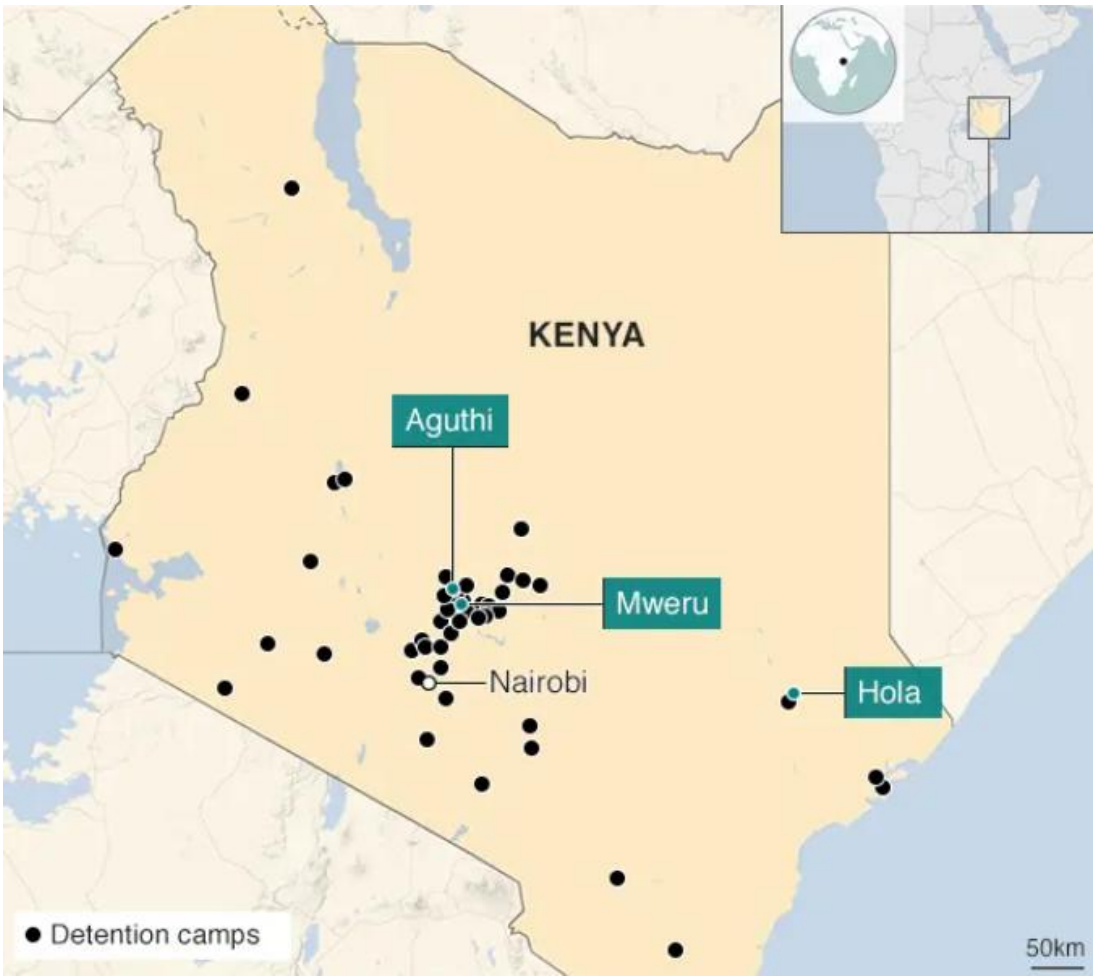

Figure 3: Locations of Mau Mau detention Camps. Source: Zane, 2009.

The Kikuyu suspected of being "connected to the rebellion" were placed in internment camps and divided into two groups: 1. those against whom legal proceedings could be successfully initiated, and 2. those who could not be convicted due to a lack of existing evidence and thus were "sentenced" to detention without trial. During the first year, most of the convicted were held in internment camps enclosed and guarded with barbed wire, while some were placed in prisons. The politically active and dangerous Kikuyu were interned in camps at Athi River and Kajiado, while another main camp was located on Lamu Island in the Indian Ocean. These camps housed the "intellectual" leaders of the Mau Mau, who were mostly from the educated class and therefore posed less of a military threat (Elkins, 2005, pp. 95–96).

Due to the high number of Kikuyu associated with the Mau Mau movement, the population in the camps continued to increase, prompting the British to initiate a "rehabilitation" program. The essence of this program was a civilizing mission, allowing the Kikuyu to confess their oath, which would enable their integration into the colonial economic and social system, while simultaneously suppressing the resistance. The British referred to this system as the *Pipeline*. The rehabilitation process began in the transit camps, where the Kikuyu were classified into three categories: 1. Whites (who were

allowed to return to the reserves), 2. Greys, and 3. Blacks.[4] The "Greys" were sent to prison camps or labour camps, while the "Blacks," those deemed beyond rehabilitation or incapable of being civilized, were confined to special detention camps. The British considered the rehabilitation of women to be even more important, as they did not want to risk the next generation rising up or showing resistance against colonial rule in a similar manner (Elkins, 2005, p. 100, pp. 109–110, Rosberg & Nottingham, 1966, p. 341).

The rehabilitation programme has been a "success", with nearly 24,000 Kikuyu sent to „reception camps" and around 30,000 deported back to the reserves (Baggallay, 2011, p. 556). However, this did not resolve the main issue, namely the land question, which resulted in consequences such as hunger, the spread of diseases, and chaos. Consequently, the British colonial administration decided to implement a four-point plan,[5] with the final point being the expansion of the detention camps. As a result, labour camps were established throughout Kenya, and prisoners were used as a source of labour. There were two types of labour camps: one type was established within the Kikuyu districts (Githunguri, Aguthi, Fort Hall) and primarily served to assist the poor and homeless, who were accused of having "soft" Mau Mau sympathies. Around two thousand Kikuyu – families – were deported to these camps, where they suffered a lot because of poor sanitation, but were considered better than transit camps. The other type of camp system consisted of punitive camps located outside the Kikuyu districts, where approximately 30,000 individuals were interned, deemed unable to return to the reserves. Although these camp systems differed, forced labour was characteristic of both types, as it provided the British with an opportunity to ensure the colonial development through the labour of the Mau Mau population. It was in this context that the international airport, now named Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, was constructed (Elkins, 2005, pp. 129–132).

During the time of the rebellion, several new camps were established, where the conditions were like those of the previously mentioned camps. The number of detainees continued to rise, and by the end of 1954, according to reports from the British colonial government, the number of deportees had reached approximately 52,000. Upon arrival, the *askaris* and British officers confiscated the Kikuyu's belongings and then forced them into a a cattle dip full of disinfectant, which was originally intended for cattle. Afterward, the Africans' clothes were taken away, and they were given only a yellow pair of shorts, two blankets, and a metal wristband marked with a number for identification. In addition to the poor conditions and forced labour, daily torture and interrogations were common, during which inhumane methods of questioning were

[4] This was later reformed in 1956 following a rebellion based on the colonial policy of "divide and rule": instead of "blacks", it became Z1 and Z2, instead of "greys" it became Y, and instead of "whites" it became X and C. (Eliins, 2005, pp. 368–369.)

[5] The first point: their Kiku living in settlements inhabited by Europeans would have been placed in temporary camps until they could find a place for them in the reserves. Second point: they would have been placed in the reserves on the basis of the results of the interrogations, so those who were helpful would have had priority. Third point: a system was set up to help the Kikuyu poor. (Elkins, 2005, p. 128.)

applied. The dehumanization was further exacerbated by the camp commanders, who told the camp guards that the Kikuyu who had taken the oath were cannibals. They claimed that if the guards did not treat them properly (through beatings, torture, etc.), the Kikuyu would eat them as well. As a result, the guards did not view the Kikuyu as human beings, and, without restrictions or feelings of guilt, they were able to abuse and kill the prisoners. Sexual violence was one of the most common methods of torture, including sodomy with foreign objects, animals, and insects. The sexual abuse of men can be traced back to the European myth that African men possessed large penises, which they supposedly intended to use to rape European women. This type of "sexual threat" instilled fear not only in European women but also in European men, who attempted to compensate for this fear and assert European superiority through the acts of violence (Elkins, 2005, pp. 131–135, p. 146, pp. 208–209). One survivor said the following about the torture:

> *'The askaris then put his head* [detainee] *in the bucket of water and lifted his legs high in the air so he was upside down. (…). That's when (…)* [a guard] *started cramming sand in Peterson's* [detainee] *anus and stuffed it in with a stick. Then the other askaris would put water in, and then more sand (…).''* (Elkins, 2005, pp. 156–157)

Despite what they had witnessed and experienced, some Kikuyu collaborated with their captors in exchange for rewards and privileges, thereby placing themselves in a preferential position within the *Pipeline* system. There were also those who were exempted from forced labour and were given tasks such as cooking, cleaning, or performing office work for the camp commanders (Elkins, 2005, pp. 147–148).

In the Pipeline system, men were typically the ones incarcerated, but there was a camp specifically created for women, where those deemed too "hardline" were deported, as their rehabilitation was considered unfeasible. This camp, located in Kamiti, held several thousand women. Since the camp system consisted only of men, homosexuality was prevalent both among the prisoners and the camp personnel, as well as between the two groups. By exploiting sexual relations, prisoners could enjoy some form of protection (Elkins, 2005, pp. 151–152, p. 181).

Another form of detention emerged in Kenya in 1954, which involved the forced relocation of Kikuyu into emergency villages within the reserves. By the end of 1955, because of the ruralization process, more than 1 million Africans were forcibly removed from their land and placed into villages surrounded by barbed wire (804/845/854), a system consisting of 230,000 huts (Elkins, 2005, p. 235, Baggallay, 2011, p. 567, Scheipers, 2015, p. 688). This villagization program was only implemented in the Kiambu, Fort Hall, Nyeri, and Embu districts, not across all of Kenya. The aim of this "program" was also punishment: the Kikuyu's previous homes were scorched, and their belongings were confiscated. The primary focus was directed towards the Mau Mau women, as the forced resettlement allowed for the control and discipline of women,

with forced labour (hut construction, trench digging) being predominant. The conditions in these settlements were also harsh, characterized by overcrowding, hunger, and torture (Elkins, 2005, pp. 240–243, p. 409). Regarding torture, one Kikuyu woman said:

> *"I remember in our village there was a headman who had come from Kiamariga. He was a very cruel man. Whenever that headman desired a woman, and she refused him, he would take a beer bottle, then order an askari to hold one of the woman's legs, and another to hold the other, wide apart. Then he would insert the bottle into the woman's private parts and punch it up to the stomach. Many women died after having been treated that way. First, he beat them with sticks and kicks, but if they still resisted his advances, he used the beer bottle…. Nobody cared about them."* (Elkins, 2005, p. 245)

The mortality rates in the two camps associated with the Ethiopian assassination were significantly high due to the poor conditions: in the Danane camp, 51% of the detainees died, while in the Nocra camp, the death rate reached 58%. This means that out of the 1,100 prisoners in the Danane camp, 561 died, while in the Nocra camp, approximately 232 out of around 400 detainees did not survive the ordeal. In addition to the mortality rates in the camps, it is also important to examine the death rate in other detention facilities. Following the assassination, around 10,000–12,000 Ethiopians were arrested, of whom 700 were executed before the prisoner camps became overcrowded, and some were deported to prisons in Italy. Estimates suggest that 10% (940 people) of the remaining 9,400 detainees died during the first days due to poor conditions, treatment, diseases, hunger, and thirst. According to a report by a British envoy, 3,200 executions occurred, while Italian records state that 5,469 Africans were killed. However, interviews with Ethiopians suggest that most prisoners were released, with around 6,000—mostly women, children, and the elderly—being freed. Based on this, approximately 2,460 prisoners died in one of the detention facilities or during deportations and transfers. Overall, the total number of deaths during detention and in the concentration camps reaches 4,193 individuals (2,460+940+561+232) (Campbell, 2017, pp. 233–234, pp. 313–317). Thus, around 35% of the detainees (12,000 prisoners), while 4.2% of the population of Addis Ababa (100,000 people) died in detention centres.

In Kenya, many Kikuyu also died due to the poor conditions and diseases: the detainees were so overcrowded that they were forced to lie on the ground, often on top of each other. Drinking water was often obtained from drainage ditches and swamps, which led to further illnesses. Due to the harsh weather conditions and the weakened immune systems of the Africans, in addition to tuberculosis, other diseases such as typhus, pneumonia, leprosy, measles, dysentery, scurvy, pellagra, and kwashiorkor were prevalent. But some prisoners went mad and committed suicide or self-mutilation (Elkins, 2005, p. 144, p. 188). According to the Kenya National

Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), 90,000 Africans have been killed, tortured or mutilated in the past eight years, while other sources put the number of victims at between 11,000 and 90,000 (National Army Museum, 2025, Zurlo, 2023, p. 18). Thus, 6% (90,000) of Kenya's population of about 1.5 million (1948 estimate) – Kikuyu, Embu and Meru – died in some form of detention. (Elkins, 2005, p. 429, Crook, 2013, p. 32.).

Conclusion

Following the comparison of the Ethiopian and Kenyan detention systems, it can be concluded that this method was well known among European colonizers. Moreover, the British, through the establishment of concentration camps in South Africa, served as a model for other colonial powers. Numerous similarities can be identified between these institutions, including their primary purpose: punishment, retribution, and the suppression of rebellion. Additionally, poor living conditions – leading to disease – along with torture, abuse, and forced labour can be observed, all of which were intended to support colonial development.

It can be established, however, that the implementation of British detention practices evolved significantly over the years compared to the Boer camps. The use of various detention facilities reflects a shift toward irregular warfare, as both the Boers and Africans frequently employed guerrilla tactics against colonial forces in earlier conflicts. In response to asymmetric warfare, the British sought to expand their control over the civilian population, believing in both cases that civilians actively supported the guerrillas. Initially, this approach was punitive in nature but later transitioned to one with rehabilitative objectives. This shift is closely linked to the transformation of warfare itself. For a long time, European state powers perceived irregular warfare as an inferior strategy, assuming that adversaries lacked the necessary (military) resources to engage in conventional combat. However, following World War II, irregular warfare was reassessed both morally and legally. As a result, colonial powers no longer viewed guerrilla fighters merely as "savages" or illegitimate combatants. Instead, they began framing them as individuals fighting for misguided political ideologies—such as communism—or, in the case of the Mau Mau, as people trapped in archaic religious beliefs and practices, which were often pathologized as mental disorders (Porkoláb, 2020, pp. 19–20, p. 33, pp 51–60, Scheipers, 2015, p. 685).

Another key difference is that in the Kenyan camps, efforts were made to separate detainees into distinct categories, whereas in Ethiopia, the opposite approach was predominant. This suggests that Ethiopians were primarily gathered for punitive and retaliatory purposes, while in Kenya, rehabilitation was at least considered a potential option. This is further supported by the British strategy of establishing a larger number of detention facilities, as well as the prolonged process of their dismantlement. In contrast, the Italians operated only three major detention centers for the concentration of prisoners, indicating that their primary objective was the rapid gathering, execution, or punishment of individuals linked to the assassination attempt. This does not imply that the British were less violent or brutal. However, considering the Pipeline system

and the policy of villagization, it appears that the British were more focused on 'breaking', 're-educating', and ultimately 'utilizing' the Kikuyu population.

Overall, both detention systems were characterized by similarly harsh conditions. However, in the Kenyan facilities, certain advancements were observed in terms of infrastructure, construction, and administration. The difference in mentality is also evident in the fact that, while Ethiopia's detention centres were only dismantled after the end of the Italian occupation, Kenya's system was more influenced by the settler population. Over time, settlers came to view the British penal system as inadequate for managing the African population.

In this context, it is important to reiterate the sense of superiority colonial powers held over Africans. At the turn of the century, this superiority was primarily racial in nature, whereas by the time of decolonization, it had become somewhat more diffuse, incorporating psychological and psychiatric factors. As a result, colonizers positioned themselves as belonging to the "normal" group, while Africans – particularly those who had taken oaths of allegiance – were pathologized and categorized in ways akin to psychopaths. Thus, while rehabilitation was a genuine objective and represented a shift from the earlier goals of detention camps, it ultimately led to even more brutal methods (Elkins, 2005, p. 106–107, Baggallay, 2011, p. 557).

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

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Cyber Threat Map of the Central Sahel Region – A Fragile Foundation of Development[1]

Gyula Vörös[2], Viktor Szulcsányi[3]

Abstract:

The developing, but often fragile digital infrastructure of the Central Sahel region – especially the countries of Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Chad – are recent targets of various cyberattacks. Despite the financial situation of these countries, cybercriminals and even state-sponsored threat actors are continuously exploiting public internet-facing IT systems that are affected by security vulnerabilities. This study aims to describe the current state of the region's digital infrastructure and cyber threat landscape, while identifying the key aspects of sustainable growth and the potential limitations of the countries' cybersecurity posture. Although the region had limited access to the internet in the past, it has witnessed significant increase in the number or households with mobile internet connectivity. This digital expansion affects the daily life of the population, alongside the difficulties of infrastructural underdevelopment, social and financial inequalities and the political instability and all of these factors are leading to a fragile digital environment. Social media usage had also shown a significant increase in the last decade in this region, and it also gave room for political influence, spreading propaganda or deepfake messages and even for the online requitement of armed groups (e.g. JNIM, ISGS). This paper also provides an overview of the current regulations and legal landscape of the countries in this region. In this constantly evolving territory, the legal and institutional background of cybersecurity governance is of key importance in addressing cyber threats and incidents. This study also discusses the main cyber events affecting the Central Sahel region in the recent years and aims to analyse the presence, operational capacity and maturity level of national CERTs and international partnerships to address cyber threats.

Keywords:
Sahel region; cybersecurity; threat; digital infrastructure; development.

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Introduction

Cybercrime is evolving alongside cybersecurity, a phenomenon that challenges experts around the world proves to be an especially difficult problem in a region that recently went through the first stages of digital transformation. The Central Sahel region is making great efforts to handle the exponentially growing need to expand digital access and modernize governance, however, the technological and cultural foundations supporting these changes remain fragile. This progress made the region vulnerable not only to traditional security threats but also to the rapidly evolving domain of cyber threats.

In the region, cybersecurity is often overlooked in both academic and political discourse, even though it is increasingly important to understand the broader security posture and development trajectory of the Central Sahel. As mobile phone use and internet connectivity becomes more widespread, so do the effects of cybercrime, hacktivism, online disinformation and even cyber-based terrorism. These digital threats are exploiting existing social inequalities and infrastructure gaps and often have cross border and cross-sectoral consequences - from undermining public trust in institutions to destabilizing financial systems and threatening humanitarian operations.

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the recent and recurring cyber threats affecting the IT infrastructures of the public or private sector and even the daily life in the Central Sahel region, while also examining the technical and geopolitical aspects of their impact. It also aims to address the state of the digital infrastructure, the prevalence and nature of cyber-attacks, and the capacity of national and regional actors to respond. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the analysis of regulations affecting public institutions and critical infrastructure, and the legal framework underpinning cybersecurity procedures.

Digital Infrastructure

The region is experiencing a continuous increase in the usage of mobile phone network, internet and along with this, in the usage of social media as well. This chapter aims to present the recent statistic data on these indicators.

During the research, the latest statistics for early 2025 were collected and broken down by country on the regional access and usage of digital services. The comparative analysis included statistical data and covered the security policy implications of digitalization in these countries. The sudden emergence of technological innovations could also negatively impact the infrastructure, causing digital fragility, the impact of disinformation campaigns, data protection challenges, and the risks of the online presence of armed and cyber actors. (Kshetri, 2019)

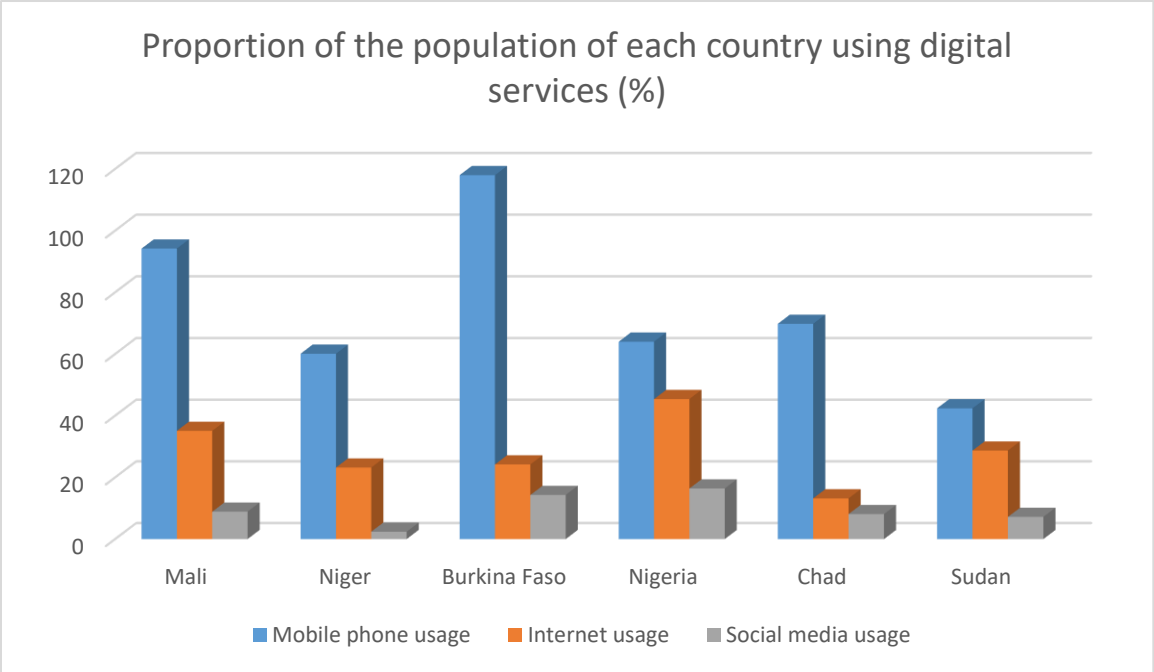

Figure 1: The proportion of the population of each country using digital services

Mali

At the beginning of 2025, only 35.1% of the population of Mali, or about 8.72 million people, used the internet. At the same time, there were 23.4 million mobile subscriptions active in the country, which corresponds to 94.2% of the population. Social media is used even less: in January 2025, only 2.20 million social media accounts were registered in Mali, which represents 8.9% of the total population. Internet access is almost exclusively via mobile networks, as the wired infrastructure is still underdeveloped. There are also significant territorial inequalities, with a much higher proportion of internet users in cities, while access is minimal in rural areas. The most popular social media is Facebook – according to the data published by Meta, approximately 2.2 million people in Mali used Facebook at the beginning of 2025, which is practically the same as the estimated number of social media users. (Kemp, 2025)

Niger

In Niger, only 23.2% of the country's population or approximately 6.37 million people was using the internet at the beginning of 2025, one of the lowest among the countries studied in this paper. However, 60.1% of the population were using the mobile network – this suggests that many people have a phone even if they do not have internet access. Social media usage is very low, with barely 669 thousand users (2.4% of the population) present on social platforms at the beginning of 2025. Since the majority of the population lives in rural areas, network coverage is severely limited outside of large cities, and online presence is mainly concentrated in cities. In Niger, Facebook is also the dominant platform among the few internet users (~669 thousand user base in 2025) (Kemp, 2025).

Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, the prevalence of internet usage was 24.2% at the beginning of 2025, representing approximately 5.75 million internet users. At the same time, the number of mobile subscriptions exceeded the population: there were 28.1 million active mobile connections, which equals 118% of the population – indicating the prevalence of multiple SIM usage. Social media was used by 14.3% of the population or approximately 3.40 million people at the beginning of 2025. Although Burkina Faso has a higher proportion of urban dwellers, around two-thirds of the population still lives in rural areas, where internet access is limited. Most internet users connect via mobile networks. Facebook is by far the most significant of the social platforms: it was actively used by approximately 3.40 million Burkinabé in the beginning of 2025, which is practically the same as the total number of social media users in the country (Kemp, 2025).

Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the more digitally advanced countries in this region. The percentage of internet users have reached 45.4% in early 2025, covering around 107 million people – by far the highest among the countries surveyed. In line with its huge population, the number of mobile phone subscriptions is also high: there were 150 million active connections in early 2025 which is nearly two thirds of the country's population. Social media usage is also significant, with 38.7 million users, representing 16.4% of the population. Almost 55% of Nigeria's population lives in cities, so there is a smaller urbanization gap in terms of digital coverage, although internet access is more limited in rural areas. The most popular platform is Facebook, which was actively used by around 38.7 million Nigerians in early 2025 (Kemp, 2025).

Chad

In Chad, 13.2% of the population or around 2.74 million people had access to the internet at the beginning of 2025, which is an extremely low percentage even in comparison with the other countries of the Central Sahel. In contrast, there were 14.5 million mobile connections, equivalent to 69.8% of the population – many people have a mobile phone, presumably often with multiple SIM cards. Social media use is moderately widespread: there were 1.68 million registered user accounts at the beginning of 2025. Most of the population lives in rural areas, so internet access is typically concentrated in cities. Interestingly, TikTok is one of the leading platforms in Chad – its adult reach, based on advertising data, is equal to or exceeds that of Facebook (Kemp, 2025).

Sudan

The prevalence rate of internet usage was 28.7% at the beginning of 2025 in Sudan, representing approximately 14.6 million people. The number of mobile connections was

21.6 million at the same time – covering 42.4% of the population. The number of social media users was approximately 3.68 million at the beginning of 2025. Due to the war situation, internet outages and government restrictions were frequent, further reducing online presence. By 2025, TikTok had become the largest social platform in Sudan based on advertising reach as it had approximately 3.7 million users, as the use of Facebook and other networks was severely hampered by the conflict (Kemp, 2025).

Cybersecurity Posture in the Central Sahel

The Central Sahel region (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan) has seen rapidly growing internet and mobile usage, but with lagging cybersecurity infrastructure. The spread of social media activity is also high, namely Nigeria and Kenya have some of the world's longest social media engagement times. They are also the countries with the most reported concerns about disinformation campaigns (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2024).

The Central Sahel region — mainly Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger — faces a complex and growing set of cyber risks. These countries are already under pressure from political instability, armed conflict, and limited state capacity. Now, digital threats are being added to the list, and most of the region isn't ready to handle them.

There's not a lot of public data on cyber incidents in this area. That doesn't mean threats don't exist — it just means they often go unreported, unnoticed, or are handled quietly. Government institutions, local banks, and even telecommunication companies in the region have started moving services online, but this digital shift hasn't been matched with enough security. Many public and private networks are vulnerable, either because of outdated systems, weak passwords, or just a general lack of awareness.

The cybersecurity laws in these countries are still pretty new or underdeveloped. For example, Burkina Faso passed a cybercrime law in 2019, but enforcement is patchy. Mali and Niger have some policies in place, but they're not well funded or well known. There also aren't many people trained to work in cybersecurity — this shortage of cybersecurity experts in the region can also be considered as a reason why the attack surface of digital systems is not properly managed.

One of the main issues is that digital development in the region has outpaced regulation. People use phones for money transfers, news, and social media after the sudden spread of digitalization, but that convenience also comes with risks. Phishing scams, fake pages, and fraud are common risks internet users face worldwide and that emphatically applies to those living in the region. However, many governments in the region have only recently begun developing formal cybersecurity strategies.

There have been some steps toward solving the problem cooperatively as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has pushed for shared cybersecurity strategies, and a few regional workshops have been held. But actual coordination between the Sahel countries is still very limited. Most governments are dealing with more immediate security threats, like insurgencies and coups, and digital defense isn't yet a top priority.

The lack of trust between states, weak infrastructure, and frequent changes in leadership make it hard to build long-term cyber strategies. Some international partners — including France, the EU, and the UN — have offered funding or training programs. Although these programs contribute to increase cybersecurity, without a strong local foundation, they're less likely to provide permanent solutions.

Threat Landscape of the Central Sahel Region

In recent years, the Sahel has become one of the most volatile regions in the world — not just in a physical or geopolitical sense, but increasingly online. As mobile phones and social media platforms become more widespread, digital risks emerge as well. Militant groups, foreign powers, and criminal networks have all learned how to use the internet to shape opinions, recruit, spread falsehoods, and exploit security gaps. At the same time, most governments in the region are still trying to build digital resilience while struggling with political instability, limited funding, and a shortage of technical expertise. (Maleh, 2022)

Significant changes are taking place related to information flow as disinformation campaigns are affecting the daily life of people in the region. Armed groups like Boko Haram and ISWAP don't just carry out attacks — they film them, edit the footage, and push it out through Telegram, WhatsApp, and YouTube to intimidate opponents and recruit new followers. Pro-Russian networks have also taken aim at Sahel countries, flooding social media with conspiracy theories, pro-junta narratives, and anti-Western propaganda, especially after recent coups. (Wright, 2025) Even local militias and political actors are now using platforms like TikTok and Facebook to sway public opinion or sow division.

There is also a significant increase in the occurrence of cyber-attacks against financial institutions, government websites, and telecommunication providers. Many of these incidents go unreported, but some have caused serious disruption — millions lost to fraud, online services knocked offline, or attackers managed to steal sensitive or even confidential data. Most countries in the region don't have the capability to strengthen cybersecurity of the IT infrastructure of governmental agencies or critical infrastructures, and existing systems are often underfunded or understaffed. (Pantserev, 2022) International support helps to fill some gaps, but it is still necessary to establish well-functioning national CSIRTs.

This section looks at how social media, disinformation, and other cyber threats are shaping the Sahel's digital landscape. From online jihadist propaganda to state-linked hacking and local cybercrime, the battle for influence is no longer just physical. It's digital too — and the region remains deeply vulnerable.

Social Media and Disinformation Threats

Social media plays a central role in both civil communication and disinformation warfare in the Sahel. In Nigeria, Mali, and Burkina Faso, extremist actors such as Boko Haram

and ISWAP use Telegram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Twitter to spread propaganda, share attack footage, and solicit cryptocurrency donations (Hassan, 2024). They often convey information mixing religious justification with militaristic imagery to achieve a greater psychological impact and therefore support their own recruitment.

These dynamics are further compounded by foreign disinformation campaigns, particularly those linked to Russian or Chinese interests (Wright, 2025). After coups in Mali (2020), Burkina Faso (2022), and Niger (2023), coordinated pro-Russian messaging emerged, portraying military regimes as patriotic defenders, while delegitimizing Western actors. These narratives are driven by media linked to the Wagner Group and local influencers, using platforms like Telegram and Facebook (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2024).

Internal conflicts also produce disinformation surges. In Sudan, both sides of the current civil war deploy coordinated messaging to claim battlefield victories, worsening the information disorder. Jihadist groups such as JNIM and ISGS utilize social media and encrypted channels to project ideological legitimacy as they are often targeting the younger generation through these platforms. As social media access spreads, the region faces a new era of information flow, where propaganda, misinformation, and psychological warfare blur traditional distinctions between legitimate media content and deception. (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2024)

Notable Cyber Incidents

Current, openly accessible data on cyberattacks in the Sahel is limited, yet available indicators suggest significant risk. Nigeria is consistently among the most targeted nations not only in the Sahel, but in Africa as well. Nigerian entities accounted for nearly 27% of all reported cyber breaches in Africa that year. Attacks are concentrated in the finance, government, and education sectors, with phishing, malware, and ransomware dominating the threat landscape.

Outside of Nigeria, there are only a few, yet significant confirmed cases. In Sudan, political instability impairs cyber monitoring. Elsewhere, regional analogs suggest growing exposure: Ethiopia has faced politically motivated DDoS attacks, and in South Africa, the Snatch ransomware group encrypted 200 TB data of the Ministry of Defence. Although these incidents fall outside the Central Sahel's core, they underscore potential vulnerabilities. If a similar-scale attack targeted a Sahelian government database or utility provider, consequences would likely be severe, since the fragile digital infrastructure and limited forensic capacity probably could not handle the incident properly and in the required time.

Group-IB, a Singapore-headquartered cybersecurity company revealed in a report in November 2022, that OPERA1ER, a French-speaking APT group active since at least 2016, extensively targeted financial institutions across Africa between 2018 and 2022. The group carried out more than 30 successful cyberattacks on banks, financial services, and telecommunication companies in African countries such as Burkina Faso, Benin, Ivory Coast, and Senegal. The attackers gained initial access through carefully crafted

French-language spear-phishing emails posing as legitimate invoices or payment notifications, sent mostly on weekends or holidays when staffing was low. Once inside the system, the group typically stayed inactive or kept a low profile for three to twelve months. This slow approach allowed thorough reconnaissance and credential harvesting. When ready, OPERA1ER launched fraudulent transactions from compromised banking infrastructure, leading to cause damages worth at least $30 million to the affected African firms. (Lakshmanan, 2022)

In January 2024, the hacktivist group Anonymous Sudan claimed a massive cyberattack on Sudachad, Chad's main telecommunications provider. According to their Telegram announcements, the attack focused on network devices, network administration systems, and other infrastructure components. The group reportedly carried out distributed-denial-of-service (DDoS) strikes to overwhelm the network and cause outages. During the incident, monitoring services like NetBlocks observed a significant decrease in internet connectivity throughout Chad, which also confirmed that the attack had been successful. Anonymous Sudan justified the attack by accusing Chad of supporting the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan. (DarkReading, 2024)

The Malian branch of Bank of Africa (BOA Mali) faced a cyberattack targeting its internal email system and several local workstations in February 2023. The bank promptly blocked access to its information systems and reset user accounts to contain the breach. According to their official statement, the core banking system and monetary platform were not compromised, and no customer or employee data was exposed. BOA Mali confirmed that there were no financial losses and the response effectively neutralized the threat quickly. (L'Economiste, 2023)

In May 2023, the hacker group Mysterious Team launched a series of DDoS (Distributed Denial-of-Service) attacks against multiple Senegalese government websites, including the websites of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of the Interior. As a result of the attacks, the sites were inaccessible for several hours. The group claimed responsibility through Twitter posts using the hashtag #FreeSenegal, a slogan associated with opposition movements alleging political repression in the country. (Reuters, 2023)

Cybersecurity Capabilities (CERTs and Response)

Most Sahel countries are still building their cyber response infrastructures. National Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERT/CSIRT) are emerging. Nigeria maintains a National CERT Coordination Centre under the National Security Adviser. Sectoral CERTs include the NCC-CSIRT (telecom regulator) and NITDA's CERT (NITDA-CERT or CERRT), as well as a police National Cybercrime Centre (NPF-NCCC) (Onyido et. al., 2024). Niger's new strategy explicitly calls for establishing a *Centre National de la Cyber Sécurité (CNAC)*, a great improvement towards securing digital infrastructure across the country. Burkina's ANSSI is the coordinating body and has begun setting security standards for public IT systems (ANSSI, 2025). Chad's ANSICE, established in 2015, is

the lead authority for cybersecurity and electronic certification (Global Forum on Cyber Expertise, 2025). Sudan has a Sudan CERT (first responder role) under its Ministry of Information Technology (Council of Europe, 2025) though its effectiveness is unclear amid political turmoil. There is no regional CERT network yet, but all Sahelian states are part of larger efforts (AU, ITU, ECOWAS frameworks).

On offensive operations, there is no public evidence of Sahel governments conducting cyber warfare abroad. Regional capacities focus on defense, enforcement and forensics. For example, under Nigeria's law, failure to report breaches to the National CERT within 72 hours is penalized, indicating that incident detection and response is considered a priority. A few countries have shown initiative, for example Sudan's amended Cybercrime Act even criminalizes "fake news", hinting at efforts to control information flows.

But offensive hacking or cyber-intelligence capability are not documented. In practice, defensive capabilities remain insufficient as most Sahel CERTs have limited staffing and budgets, and cyber forensics labs are only now coming online. (Cinini et. al., 2023)

Terrorist Groups and Cyber Operations

Militant jihadist groups active in the Sahel have increasingly adapted to the digital age, though none have shown advanced "cyber" capabilities akin to sophisticated state actors. Boko Haram (JAS) and ISWAP in Nigeria are the most prolific cyber-savvy terrorists in the region. They produce professional propaganda videos and use encrypted apps (Telegram, WhatsApp) for communication and fund solicitation. Although terrorist groups are also active on the dark web, based on recent trends, their activities have increasingly spread to the public internet, including the use of social media, to reach a larger audience. (Besenyő et. al., 2021) Their online activities serve recruitment, fundraising, and psychological operations, but they have not been known to conduct hacking attacks. Instead, their "cyber" activities are disinformation and propaganda: releasing gruesome execution footage and "governance" propaganda online to influence local populations. African media analyses note that Boko Haram and ISWAP now use social networks extensively (videos, audio, coded chats) to coordinate their actions and recruitment. (Hassan, 2024)

In Mali and Burkina Faso, Al-Qaeda–affiliated groups (JNIM) and Islamic State Sahel affiliate (ISGS) appear online mostly via jihadi channels. Studies show that Katiba Macina and Ansar Dine have used WhatsApp, Facebook and Telegram to urge followers to fight foreign forces. They frame attacks as defending Islam and post images of their operations (e.g. a 2018 suicide bombing in Timbuktu). However, these groups have not demonstrated disruptive cyber operations; their use of the internet is propaganda-driven. Ansaroul Islam, an Islamist group active in Burkina Faso and Mali have limited online presence, mainly communicating through radio broadcasts, though recently started to use Facebook and other social media platforms to spread disinformation about government actions. (Vermeersch et. al., 2020)

Importantly, Jihadist groups have not publicly mounted any significant cyberattacks on institutions. Their focus remains physical attacks and media manipulation. There is no evidence of suicide hackers or state-level cyberwar tactics by these groups. Nonetheless, their online propaganda is a serious threat: by exploiting social media they can radicalize or intimidate, for instance, the Boko Haram in remote Nigeria use "middlemen" to pass on jihadist messages from encrypted apps to offline villagers (Cox et. al., 2018). Furthermore, jihadi-affiliated hacktivist entities have begun to appear globally (e.g. "Anonymous Sudan" claimed a DDoS on Kenya's e-service portal), but their ties to Sahel insurgencies are tenuous. (Bezborodko, 2024) Thus, while Sahel terrorist groups have embraced social media for indoctrination, they currently lack the capability or the motive to conduct cyber espionage or sabotage.

Country-Specific Laws and Recent Developments

Each Sahel country is strengthening its legal framework to encompass the needed regulations addressing recent cyber risks and threats. Nigeria passed a landmark Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act in 2015 and amended it in 2024 to tighten provisions on hacking and funding terrorism. Nigeria also enacted the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023. Agencies like NITDA (Digital Policy) and NDPC (Data Privacy) now have enforcement powers including steep fines for breaches. (Onyido et. al., 2024) Niger launched its national cybersecurity strategy (2023–2027) to harmonize with ECOWAS and AU standards, emphasizing new legislation and the creation of a National Cybersecurity Center (CNAC). Burkina Faso updated its cyber law in 2017 and in 2019 implemented a general IS security policy for public agencies. It also has an active data protection authority which have been established in 2021 (ANSSI, 2025). Chad codified cybersecurity and cybercrime in 2015 (Law 009/PR/2015) and set up ANSICE by the same law (Council of Europe, 2025). Sudan repealed its older Computer Crime Act (2007) with a comprehensive Cybercrimes Act in 2018, which criminalizes online defamation and fake news as well as typical cybercrimes. Sudan also has a National Intelligence and a Computer Training Center noted in its laws (Council of Europe, 2025). Mali annunciated a Cybercrime law in 2015 and has a draft of an updated national cybersecurity strategy, although it is still in the development phase, it is expected to be approved this year. (Kassouwi, 2025) Recently, after its 2021 coup, the Malian military regime has shut down some media and internet access as a form of information warfare to control the narrative.

In summary, the Central Sahel has begun to build the legal and institutional pillars of cyber defense, but enforcement is still inefficient. Despite new laws, low prosecutions and lack of technical expertise, it undermines deterrence. Many countries still need to implement regulations and capacity (judges trained in cyber law, forensic experts, etc.) to make these laws effective. Recent advances include Nigeria's 2023 data protection regime, Niger's new cybersecurity center, and regional cooperation projects, such as EU and UN development programs to train CERT staff. However, the pace of regulatory and defensive development remains slower than the pace of threats.

Security Policy Implications

The limited and uneven digital development of these states poses specific security risks. The continuously growing and unmanaged – at least from a security point of view – telecommunications infrastructure and limited cybersecurity capacities lead to significant security gaps. Governments or armed actors sometimes deliberately restrict the internet to create an information vacuum. Online crime is also growing sharply; in West Africa, for example, more than 30% of registered crimes are now cybercrime. (INTERPOL, 2025) Meanwhile, the spread of disinformation and online propaganda poses a new threat. External actors, particularly Russia, are actively waging information warfare in the region, aiming to destabilize societies and weaken Western influence. In Mali, Russian disinformation campaigns have amplified anti-Western narratives, contributing to the government's expulsion of UN peacekeepers and its turn to Russian mercenaries. (Wright, 2025) Terrorist groups also use social media for recruitment and propaganda, further fueling violence and making conflict management more difficult. The lack of a digital sector, coupled with malicious online activities, is creating new types of security threats in the region. Limited access and manipulated information both undermine stability and pose a serious challenge to both affected governments and international security actors.

Conclusion

The Central Sahel region faces growing cybersecurity challenges as sudden digitalization outpaces cybersecurity measures. While the use of mobile devices and internet spread widely, most countries still lack strong cybersecurity systems and well-funded response teams. While Nigeria and Niger have made recent progress with national cybersecurity strategies and legal frameworks, many others are still building the basics. Countries like Sudan and Chad have laws and agencies, but political instability and resource limits hinder their effectiveness.

As cyberattacks targeting the region are increasing, Nigeria have become one of the most attacked countries in Africa, with thousands of incidents against banks, government offices, and schools every week. Although other countries in the Sahel region are generally not reporting detailed information about cyber attacks, global trends suggest they also face similar threats like data breaches, cyber espionage or denial of service attacks. If a large, well-orchestrated attack occurs on a governmental system or infrastructure, it could cause serious damage. The limited capacity of local Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) shows that defensive efforts are still developing.

Social media is playing an increasing role in cyberspace activities in the Sahel. Extremist groups, like Boko Haram and ISWAP use encrypted apps and social media platforms to spread propaganda, recruit and raise funds. In addition, foreign-state supported disinformation campaigns, especially linked to Russia, have targeted countries like Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. These campaigns support military juntas and

propagate anti-Western messages in order to destabilize the region's volatile political environment.

The cyber activities related to terrorist groups in the Sahel currently still focus on propaganda and misinformation, rather than major disruptive or intelligence-focused operations. Groups in Nigeria and Mali use social media and encrypted messaging to coordinate and spread their narratives but lack the technical skills for offensive cyber operations. Meanwhile, hacktivist groups, like "Anonymous Sudan" have launched multiple attacks in the region, but their direct links to Sahel insurgents are unclear.

On the legal side, countries are updating laws or at a legislative phase to address the emerging risks of digitalization. Nigeria already has updated cybercrime and data protection laws, while Niger and Burkina Faso have recent strategies aligned with regional standards. However, enforcement remains weak due to lack of trained personnel, cybersecurity capability, and consistent prosecution.

Recent incidents like cyberattacks on financial institutions in Burkina Faso, Mali's Bank of Africa, and Senegalese government websites show the growing threat of both politically motivated and financially driven cyberattacks. Groups like Mysterious Team and Anonymous Sudan have targeted government systems with denial of service attacks during times of political tension.

In summary, the Central Sahel has a very fragile digital environment as cybersecurity defenses and legal frameworks are still catching up to the recent trends in cyber threats. The region faces a wide variety of criminal, terrorist, and foreign state-supported cyber threats, all of which are exploiting weak infrastructure and political instability at some degree among other factors. Building capability and capacity in national CERTs, improving laws and regulations and investing in cyber awareness are some of the urgent steps needed to protect the Sahel's growing digital economy and fragile security environment.

Conflict of Interest

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

Notes on Contributors

Gyula Vörös is a dedicated professional in the fields of information security and cyber operations, holding degrees in Information Security Management and Military Systems Operation from the University of Public Service in Hungary. His academic and professional interests center around the complexity of cyberspace and the interactions between state and non-state actors within it. He is currently preparing to apply for doctoral studies, where he intends to conduct research on the strategic dimensions of cyber operations, with a particular focus on the assertion of state interests in the digital domain. Over the years, he has compiled a comprehensive database of several thousand articles and analyses documenting cyber incidents, operations, and campaigns from around the world. This resource forms the foundation for his planned research, through

which he aims to perform a systematic evaluation of cyberspace activity. His analysis will go beyond the traditional criminal perspective, focusing instead on the geopolitical, strategic, and policy-related implications of state-driven cyber operations.

Viktor Szulcsányi holds a Master's degree in Computer Science Engineering and is currently a doctoral student at the Doctoral School on Safety and Security Sciences at Óbuda University. He has nearly a decade of work experience in the field of cybersecurity. His doctoral research investigates "The Modeling of Attack Group Activities: Opportunities and Challenges in Attribution," with a focus on the theoretical and practical aspects of cyber threat actor identification. His area of research lie at the intersection of cybersecurity, cyber law, and security policy, aiming to contribute to the development of systematic frameworks for understanding and attributing hostile cyber operations. In addition to his academic pursuits, Viktor Szulcsanyi holds several widely recognized professional certifications, including CISSP, SecurityX, and OSCP, reflecting a strong foundation in both strategic and technical aspects of cybersecurity. His work is aiming to bridge research and practice, supporting evidence-based decision-making in national and organizational cybersecurity contexts.

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Assessment of France Counter-terrorism Operation in Mali: Through the Lens of the Military Strategy[1]

Adam Opeyemi Abass[2]

Abstract:

The Paper assessed France's counter-terrorism operation in Mali and why it failed to bring about peace and stability in the country through a focused analysis of the counter-terrorism operation's military strategy. The study seeks to understand why the decade-long operation, through its examination of the military strategy, fails to suppress the jihadist groups in the Sahelian country. The methodology employed in the paper includes using both qualitative and quantitative data. The findings of the paper reveal that the military strategy was characterised by an overwhelming use of military force, which only contained the threat and kept the conflict protracted, and also served as an incentive to join terror groups. It also finds out that the military strategy lacks a coherent military objective. This can be viewed from two perspectives: 1) its over-ambitious military objectives, and 2) the operation strategy's inability to adapt to the evolving nature of the conflict; instead, the strategy is regarded as a "one-way plan". The paper concluded by recommending that an overwhelming military-focused approach does not solve the terrorism problem; rather, it intensifies it and calls for the adaptation of alternative approaches.

Keywords:
Counter-terrorism; Terrorism; Military Strategy; Conflict; Mali.

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Introduction

Mali gained independence from France in 1960. Since then, the country has been engulfed in a series of overlapping challenges that stem from both internal and external factors, which have also strained the political, social, and economic situation of the country. The complexity of the crisis facing the landlocked nation includes multiple military coups, separatist insurgency, Islamist extremist terror attacks, and a dire humanitarian crisis has set the country on a stage of instability that will have a wider impact on the Sahel region (World Peace Foundation, 2014).

The Separatist Tuareg rebels launched an uprising against the Malian government in 2012 to demand the autonomy of the northern region. The rebellion was marred with violence, and it witnessed the birth of an alliance between the northern rebels and jihadist groups, who have maintained a low profile in the country since the 2000s (Whitehouse, 2021). The coordinated attacks between the two non-state armed actors put the country's stability on the line (Gregory and Thibault, 2015). The growing strength of the rebels and jihadist group resulted in the capture of several territories in the north, and the inability of the Malian armed forces to contain the threat further descended the country into chaos, as the rebel-jihadist coalition advanced towards the capital. This prompted a swift military intervention from the French government to restore the sovereignty and legitimacy of the government, at the request of Bamako (Sergei and Bart, 2015).

The French military launched Operation Serval in 2013, primarily to displace the jihadist groups from their stronghold in the north and restore government control, and the operation was achieved with swift victory (ibid). The French military further entrenched itself in the fight against terror groups in the country and the wider Sahel region, leading to the formation of Operation Barkhane. The long-term operation Barkhane was a region-wide counter-terrorism operation, with the French military deploying its military force against the jihadist groups in the Sahel, stretching across Mali, Burkina-Faso, Niger and Chad (BBC, 2014).

This period, however, witnessed the growth and expansion of jihadist groups such as Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), a coalition of Sahel-based al-Qaida affiliates and the emergence of the Islamic State in the Sahel (Lebovich, 2019). The conflict is often depicted as a protracted conflict, also labelled as the French Forever War, in parallel to the unwinnable United States war in Afghanistan. In addition, nearly 10 years after the military operation following its withdrawal from Mali in 2022, the intervention has been characterised as a failure (Nathaniel, 2021). Attacks perpetrated by the jihadist groups in the country have significantly increased, as jihadist groups have expanded their territories to border states, and are now threatening coastal West African states (Leif, 2022). The Malian state itself has plunged into political instability, with two military coups leading to the overthrow of the democratic government and increasing diplomatic uproar between the junta and the French government has led to the expulsion of French forces from Mali (Al Jazeera, 2022).

This research examines the factors that led to the failure of France's counter-terrorism military strategy, despite its overwhelming military presence and wherewithal. France fails to improve the security situation in Mali, following almost a decade of counter-terrorism operations and billions of euros spent. It therefore makes the case that the lack of an alternative approach to the terrorism menace, in place of the global-traditional solution of military force, will continue to make the fight against terrorism a futile conflict.

The paper consists of five sections. Following the introductory section, it evaluates the research methods and conducts a literature review on the motives of France's military intervention in Mali. Second, it provided a theoretical anchor to analyse the counter-terrorism operation. Third, the study provides an overview of Operation Serval and Barkhane and lastly, explores the reasons behind the failure of the military strategy and concludes.

Methodology:

The paper draws on the use of quantitative and qualitative methods, which include 3 interviews with an academic, a Sahel security expert and a UN official based in London, Wales and Paris, respectively, between November and December 2023, to gain insight on the subject matter. It was then qualitatively complemented by international media reports on the Malian conflict, think tanks, non-governmental organisations and institute reports, books, journal articles and papers. The data was then subjected to a thematic analysis to explore and analyse relevant themes and patterns surrounding French military strategy, its conduct of the counter-terrorism operation, and what led to its failure.

Why France Intervened in Mali:

The motive behind France's intervention in Mali has been contested among scholars, with several studies analysing the justifications that prompted the intervention. However, according to the French government, France intervened militarily to prevent the emergence of a terrorist sanctuary that would pose a significant security threat to France and its Western partners (Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2013). Some studies perceived the intervention as France's continuation of its neo-colonial policies in its former colony. They argued the Intervention is an extension and expansion of French history of military intervention in the region, and its presence in the country is not to fight against terrorism, rather to protect the French government's economic and political interests in the country and beyond in the Sahel region, which will be under enormous threat if there's a jihadist takeover in the country, and a potential spillover to strategic economic sites in neighbouring Niger. (David, 2013; Madi, 2013; Sergei-Boeke and Bart Schuurman, 2015). Other studies also maintained a post-colonial position on the intervention, Carmen viewed it through a francAfrique narrative, which implies the unequal relationship that exists between France and its colonies. Carmen maintained that the attitude of the French policymakers, particularly the extension of the short-term

operation Serval into the long-term Barkhane, indicated France's intention of continuously exerting influence and maintaining the post-colonial hegemonic control over Mali and its resources (Carmen, 2015). While Isaline and Mahamadou viewed the intervention as France's repayment of debt to the country, due to its long-standing colonial and post-colonial relations. They viewed the intervention as a post-colonial responsibility that France had to fulfil due to past colonial favours Mali has rendered to the French empire and to strengthen the existing relationship, and the French government honouring the request to intervene by the Malian authorities, serves as a sign of maintaining the partnership (Isaline and Mahamadou, 2014).

Realist like Tony Chafer argues otherwise, that the French intervention in the country was aimed at projecting France's influence and its global power ambition, at a time when its influence was waning. He further argued that France considers Africa as a privileged arena for asserting influence and contended that, as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, France perceived a responsibility to act on matters of peace and security, particularly in relations to its former colonies. (Tony, 2016).

However, Sussan Wings offers the most compelling and convincing argument that resonates with the realities of the French-led military operation, as Wings posits that the intervention was aimed at portraying France as a reliable counter-terrorism partner, following the United States model and narrative of "war on terror". Sussan Wings explains that the conflict in Mali, has been framed within the framework of the war on terror, and French desires to intervene, expand and extend with the launch of operation Barkhane and also the establishment of European special forces base and other French-led military assemblages such as the Takuba Taskforce, proved that it has positioned itself as a reliable partner in the fight against terrorism in Mali (Sussan, 2016).

Theoretical Anchor:

The paper's core argument is to find out why the military strategy employed by the French military in the counter-terrorism operation in Mali failed. To this end, the paper adopts the military/war model approach, which reflects military thinking on how counter-terrorism operations should be conducted through the application of military force and power. The theory perceives terrorism or an act of terror as an act of war or insurgency, which it posits should be countered with military force. Counter-terrorism within this framework treats terrorist groups as analogous to a state engaged in war with another state. Therefore, all military resources typically directed at a state should also be employed against terrorist groups. (Brittnee, 2017).

The central argument of this theory is the use of maximal force designed to over the enemy(terrorist), it perceives the war against terrorism as a possible never-ending fight, which can be protracted and span several generations, which is why most military approaches to counter-terrorism are termed as "forever-war", and further argues that the military fire-power should be maintained as long as the threat of terrorist attack persists (Roland, 2019). Furthermore, the war model is suited for a decentralised, ideology-driven and transnational terrorist network, which relies on some advanced

military technological power such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), armed drones, missile technology, precision-guided strike, targeted assassination of high-value targets and the use of special forces (ibid).

The theory suits the overall conduct of the French counterterrorism operation, and is suitable for the context of the military strategy employed, with the initial deployment of over 3,000 French troops in Mali, under Operation Serval, and ramped up to over 5,000 troops on the ground under Barkhane, spreading across 4 Sahelian countries (Stephen, 2022). Furthermore, the establishment of French military formations includes the Takuba task force and the EU-training mission. Similarly, the use of advanced and cutting-edge military hardware consisted of approximately 20 helicopters, 200 light vehicles and 200 armoured vehicles, 6 to 10 support aircraft, 4-6 fighter aircraft and 5 drones (Bruno, 2017). Additionally, the targeted assassination and neutralisation of high-value jihadist individuals, such as Mohamed Ould Nouini, known as Abou Hassan al-Ansari, leader of Al-Mourabitoune in Mali in February 2018, and Djamel Okacha, known as Yahya Abou Al-Hammam, leader of the Timbuktu Emirate in February 2019 (Strnad, 2022), through drone strikes and special forces operations. The deployment of such military resources highlights that the French operation was primarily military-centred, lacking alternative approaches in its strategy against the terrorist groups.

France Counter-Terrorism Operations in Mali:

The French military operations in Mali began with Operation Serval, a short-term and light-footprint operation to displace the jihadist groups from their stronghold in the Northern region. The success of the operation Serval led to the establishment of Operation Barkhane, a region-wide counter-terrorism operation aimed at containing jihadist groups scattered across the Sahel and preventing their resurgence.

Operation Serval:

The initial reaction of the French Government to the deteriorating security situation in Mali was one of hesitation, as Paris declined to immediately deploy troops to the Sahelian country (Douglas, 2018). However, as the situation deteriorated rapidly, with jihadists seizing control of northern Mali and advancing southward towards the capital, the French military launched Operation Serval on January 11, 2013. The operation was notable for it fast, measured and efficient approach, which saw the deployment of about 4,000 French troops, with the intent of keeping a light footprint and avoiding the impression of a European occupation force, and it succeeded in achieving both (Micheal and Pascale,2021), Operation serval was conducted in different phases. 1) halt the jihadist advance 2) re-take the Northern territory for the Central government in Bamako 3) pursue the militants into their mountain stronghold 4) begin the process of political reconciliation and stabilisation (ibid).

Operation Serval was deemed successful with an effective approach and also achieving the objectives of the initial French intervention, in driving away jihadist

groups from the south, and ensuring the Bamako government remains in power, clearing jihadist group control of the northern territory, and rendering them ineffective to some extent to conduct large scale operation. Scholars have attributed several factors to its military success. First, France's combat air power was crucial in halting the jihadist advance and subsequently supporting ground troops in the reconquest of Mali's north. Second, the operation benefited from good tactical intelligence, French troops' combat experience and limited media coverage. Mali had become a priority for French intelligence services, providing critical insights into the capabilities and intentions of various terrorist groups. According to French military sources, the troops' experience in Afghanistan significantly enhanced their professionalism and capacity to operate in the harsh environment of Northern Mali. Furthermore, limited media coverage allowed the French military operational flexibility and may have contributed to the absence of significant international criticism. (Sergei and Bart, 2015).

Nevertheless, despite these achievements, the operation exhibited numerous shortcomings and appeared incomplete, as Bruno Charbonneau argues that "despite the early tactical successes of Serval, as early as 2014, France assessed that it could not leave Mali. The situation was not stable, and the fear was to see the jihadists make a comeback. But the French needed a success story, so they claimed, 'mission accomplished' for Serval and transformed it into operation Barkhane" (Oxford Research Group, 2019, para. 6)

Operation Barkhane:

Despite the overwhelming declared success of Operation Serval against the terrorist groups, it didn't eradicate the terrorist groups and the threat they posed. With Operation Serval's short-term duration drawing down, the French realised that completely withdrawing was not a suitable solution for Mali and the whole region. Operation Barkhane differed from Operation Serval, as it transformed the counter-terrorism campaign into a region-wide operation. Barkhane also succeeded the decade-long operation Épervier in Chad. The operation spanned across 5 Sahelian states of Mauritanian, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad (BBC, 2014). The region-wide counter-terrorism effort has three main objectives: 1) supporting partner nations' armed forces in the Sahel-Saharan region, 2) strengthening coordination between the international military forces, and 3) preventing the re-establishment of safe havens for terrorists in the region (Tony, 2016).

Operation Barkhane was conducted in Phases. The first phase was within 2014-2015, and it is bounded by the beginning of the operation Barkhane and the signing of the Peace Accord. This operational phase was labelled as the phase of Emergency. This shift was necessitated by the increase in violent attacks across various parts of Mali, despite the initial setback experienced by jihadist groups. However, two factors contributed to the destabilising security situation, one was the handing over the power and control to the Malian forces, leading to reports of violent abuses, sexual assaults and torture of the

civilian population. Another contributing factor was the emergence of violent clashes between farmers and herders in central Mali (Strnad, 2022).

The second phase was within the year 2015-2017, according to the French Rapport d'information, it is called "containment of the terrorist in the north" as part of the implementation of the Algiers agreement for peace and reconciliation, it rarely expresses the French approach, as it did not help with the implementation of the APR, and the accord that was seen as a significant success in holding the peace between the Tuareg and the central government, suffered from the same fate as previous agreement, as the Malian government failed to step up to the implementation, which makes the Signatories lost patience and fate in the APR (ibid). The period also witnessed the emergence of a coalition of jihadist groups in the Sahel, which formed JNIM, the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wa al-Muslimeen) in 2017 (ICG,2021, in Strnad, 2022).

The third phase was from 2018-2020, which was observed as the hardest period during France's presence in Mali. This period was characterised by a significant portion of unstable situations as attacks were coming from the rising violent activities of JNIM. The escalation in violence in this period was the biggest seen since 2013, and both the civilian population and foreign forces of the UN mission and Barkhane and the Malian forces were victims. France continued their operation, which was not different from the previous period, with the neutralisation of high-value targets, including top commanders and leaders of jihadist groups in the region. This period also witnessed the deployment of additional troops under Operation Takuba Task Force, and the creation of the G5 Sahel, a Sahelian military coalition to jointly combat the region's terrorism threat (Strnad, 2022).

The last phase before the withdrawal of French troops from Mali was from 2020-2022, with the rise in violent attacks still on the rise. However, mid-August 2020 saw the overthrow of the democratic President Keita in a military coup (Strnad, 2022). which brought the military regime to power, and the military justified their action due to the growing rate of violent attacks. Further political obstacles mount as another countercoup by the Malian military, again led by Colonel Assimi Goita. In reaction to the second coup, France suspended its military operation, and days later, the French President announced the withdrawal of the French forces from the Sahelian country (ibid).

Why Counter-terrorism Operations Military Strategy Failed

It is pertinent to emphasise that the failure of these operations stems from both the French government and military, as well as from the Malian Authorities. Beyond military strategy, several additional factors contributed to the shortcomings. (Nathaniel, 2021). Nevertheless, the central focus of the study is on the military strategy. The research reveals two main contributing factors that led to the disaster of the military strategy. First, it is the overwhelming use of military force; most Western nations consider the use of force, as the most effective method of dealing with the terrorism

threat (Isabelle, 2008). However, what Western policymakers and military general fails to realise is the ripple effect of military force.

The use of force has been prioritised by the French in the Sahel, and in the longer term, it escalates the situation rather than addressing it (1), raising questions about the effectiveness of a first-hand counter-terrorism approach. (Judd and Marielle, 2020). The French military strategy has been centred on the use of elite special forces operations, conventional French forces engaging in combat operations, gathering intelligence, conducting drones and airstrikes against high-value targets, and lastly training, empowering and support for the Malian armed forces. The formation of the military strategy was centred on the premise of the swift success of the Serval operations, with which the overwhelming use of military forces saw the defeat of the jihadists and the recapture of their stronghold in northern Mali, and the basis that terrorist groups are the roots of instability in the country, which needs to be removed through the use of force (ibid).

These assumptions led to the buildup of an overwhelming military-centric strategy, that led to the deployment of over 5,000 strong force under Barkhane, together with the establishment of other French-led military assemblages of Takuba task force (roughly 600 troops), similarly also the use of cutting edge military hardware including approximately 20 helicopters, 200 light vehicles and 200 armoured vehicles, 6 to 10 support aircraft, 4-6 fighter aircraft and 5 drones, all deployed over two permanent bases in Gao and N'Djamena (Bruno, 2017).

In practice, the growing over-militarisation of the conflict led to the operation being characterised as an assassination campaign and rapid-response mission targeting jihadist leaders in Mali (Thurston, 2024). This approach failed in diminishing the threat posed by the jihadist group. The French military's assumption that assassinating key leaders would degrade the groups proved inaccurate (ibid), as such efforts were insufficient to achieve long-term degradation. The strength of these groups lies in their ability to recruit locally, particularly in contexts where the state is perceived as violent or predatory (2). This was evident in the continued rise and consolidation of jihadist factions under the al-Qaida affiliate JNIM, and the emergence of the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara.

In context, this military-centric strategy of the counter-terrorism operation exacerbated and contributed to the growth of terrorism due to the frequent and highly intense military operations that resulted in tragic mistakes during the operation and continues to make the operation look flawed, and collateral damages from this operation fuelled resentment against the state. This was best illustrated in a drone strike operation against the terrorist groups, which erroneously led to the target of a wedding celebration, killing at least 21 civilians (BBC, 2021). Correspondingly, the French military partnership with the Malian armed forces, self-defence groups and local militias to protect local civilians, reverberated into the targeted killing of the ethnic local group, particularly the Fulani, exacerbating communal tension, and driving local populations towards the protection of jihadist (Eloïse, Tony & Ed,2023).

The intense militarisation of the operation hindered the stabilisation of conflict-affected communities. This, in turn, served as a push factor for vulnerable individuals and communities to join or collaborate with the jihadist groups, which continued to exploit local grievances. Consequently, jihadist recruitment expanded, allowing these groups to survive, grow and perpetuate violence, thereby complicating the counter-terrorism efforts of the Malian state and its security partners.

Secondly, the absence of a coherent military objective is most particularly under Operation Barkhane. The launch of Operation Serval came with a feasible military objective, which was to halt the jihadists advancing towards the capital, safeguard the government in Bamako and protect the territorial integrity of Mali (Michael and Pascale, 2021). A few months into the operation, the aim was achieved, and France declared a military Victory, as Sergei and Bart contend, that operation Serval avoided being in a protracted conflict due to the clear political goals, coordinated international diplomacy and the effective use of military force (Sergei and Bart, 2015).

However, Operation Serval only weakened the groups' capabilities to mount an offensive, but they were not defeated. The liberation of major northern cities by Operation Serval forces made the jihadist group retreat into the mountainous area, mixed with the local population and began launching guerrilla attacks against the French forces. The French military realizing the persistent threat posed by the jihadist group, led to the establishment of Operation Barkhane, a region-wide counter-terrorism operation, with a dual objective; first, to weaken the terrorist groups and support the armed forces of the participating countries in their efforts to contain the activities of armed groups, and secondly to help the national armies to rebuild so that they could take over counterterrorist operations from French forces and prevent the re-establishment of terrorist sanctuaries in the region (Benjamin, 2022).

This study reveals that the lack of a clear military objective can be viewed from two standpoints: first, the over-ambitious stated objectives of the operation, and secondly, its lack of adaptability and flexibility to the evolving security situation. The over-ambitious objectives as proposed by (Goffi,2017) (Nina,2022) reaffirmed that operation Barkhane had an objective, but it was not feasible. Goffi contends that the operation, with its objectives, remains vague and scattered. He further added that the operation Barkhane of about 3,000 to 4,000 troops representing the enormous and vast territory of the Sahel stretching four Sahelian states, is unsustainable (Goffi 2017), highlighting how troop deployment across the region might strain counter-terrorism efforts. Nina also noted that while the objectives is clear, the feasibility of the strategy is not, she poised that fighting armed terrorist group, is as history has shown a fight without a clear enemy, and subsequently also without a clear end" nullifying the French objectives of eliminating the threat posed by terrorist group in the vast Sahelian territory including Mali (Nina, 2022). in a similar vein Nina further argues "increasing local security forces capacity is a long-term project with an indefinite end-goal, it entails significant number of resources, both financial and material, and political buy in from the local authorities" (ibid). In support, Nsaibia and Duhamel notes that the Malian government lack of

political will to tackle the armed groups further undermined the ability of the security forces in the country (Nsaibia and Duhamel, 2021) and the regional militaries as well looks no better prepared to counter the jihadist threat (Nathaniel, 2022), of which the French policymakers fail to realize early and adjust its strategy and objectives accordingly.

On the other hand, there is a lack of adaptability and flexibility of operation of Barkhane to the changing nature of the conflict. When Operation Barkhane was launched in 2014, as primarily a counter-terrorism-focused operation, the security threat it encountered was different from Serval, with the end of Serval which dislodged jihadist groups from their stronghold, they dispersed into the population in central Mali and neighbouring countries, as Eloise et al note Barkhane now faced a conflict parallel to a local insurrection and inter-communal conflict than to either a conventional war or terrorism (Eloïse, Tony & Ed,2023).

They further argued that France's shift from the Mali-focused operation Serval to the region-wide operation Barkhane is perceived by French military and policymakers to adapt their strategy to the evolving nature of the security threat. However, the Barkhane approach of pursuing armed groups and eliminating the terrorist threat rather than addressing the fundamental change in the insurgent strategy took priority. The jihadist groups' tactic centred on population control, which this population-centric approach of the jihadist groups provided the cover, intelligence, and resources and people power they needed, while the French Barkhane still emphasize it counter terrorism, enemy-centric operation, and the use of overwhelming force, which makes it difficult to counter the terrorist growing threat (Ibid).

The French strategy of operation Barkhane did not adapt successfully to the changing nature of the conflict it faced. When the jihadist groups turned to waged population-centric tactics or more of an insurgency, operation Barkhane still relied on its counter-terrorism strategy, and it, therefore, required operation Barkhane to channel its operation closer to the counter-insurgency, where providing support to the population is crucial to protect them from the insurgent groups, and to ensure peaceful relations between communities (Eloïse, Tony & Ed,2023).

It is important to note that the French government had an open window of opportunity to negotiate with the terrorist groups, when the Malian authorities under President Boubacar Keita, initiated the move to negotiate with the groups, however, the approach was refuted by the French government, based on the no negotiation policy with terrorist group (Thurston,2020). During this period, it intensified its military operation against the Islamic State in the tri-border Liptako-Gourma area (Strnad, 2022), missing the chance of an alternative approach to the conflict. Lastly, what France and its international partners fail to understand is that the war on terror in the Sahel, and Mali in particular, is composed of a complex security and local dynamic that is beyond military military-centred approach. The exclusive use of force risks prolonging the conflict, reinforcing terrorism, and legitimising extremist narratives. Therefore, a credible and effective governance structure must accompany counter-terrorism efforts.

Conclusion:

Almost a decade of French military involvement in Mali and the broader Sahel. The current strategy fails in neutralising the threat posed by these groups. The overwhelming use of military force continues to keep the conflict protracted, with civilian casualties skyrocketing during the period of the military campaign, and the inability to change and adapt the military strategy to the evolving nature of the conflict keeps the conflict at a stalemate, with no victory in sight. The period has also witnessed the emergence and expansion of jihadist groups across the Sahelian countries, and cross-border into littoral West-African countries. Political instability has devastated the region with the rise of a military junta taking power across the Sahelian states, including Mali. This change in political power has effectively altered the security architecture of Mali, with the shift towards Russia and its private military company forces, Africa Corps, formerly Wagner group, for military partnership and assistance in the fight against the jihadist groups. However, it is important to understand for the new military government and its Russian partners to achieve victory in the war against the group, it should refocus its approaches from the heavy reliant on the use of military force, and lessen its military focus on counter-terrorism strategy, not to achieve the same result as the French, instead should pursue other alternative approaches.

Alternative approaches, such as local dialogue and negotiation with the jihadist factions, should be promoted and strengthened. Although the military junta has ruled out negotiations, it will be in their best interest to reconsider this position. Furthermore, delivering credible governance and structural reforms is essential to eliminate the systemic drivers and entry points that these groups exploit for expansion. Without such measures, the counter-terrorism efforts of the junta and its Russian partners risk failure, ultimately resulting in a prolonged and intractable conflict.

Conflict of Interest

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

Notes on the Contributor

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Interests and Conflicts of Interest: Turkey's Experiences from the Libyan Civil War[1]

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Abstract:

The overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, followed by the outbreak of civil war in 2014, plunged Libya into complete chaos. The Government of National Accord (GNA), recognized by the majority of the international community, lost control over two-thirds of the country, where authority was assumed by the House of Representatives and the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by General Khalifa Haftar. As in so many other conflicts in the Islamic world, foreign actors with vested interests in the region quickly emerged in Libya as well—including Turkey, one of NATO's most prominent military powers. During the conflict, Ankara swiftly found itself at odds not only with the supporters of the LNA, but also with states that, by virtue of their NATO membership, are technically its allies. The purpose of this paper is to explore the reasons behind Turkey's military and political intervention in Libya, how these actions shaped Ankara's relations with other actors involved in the conflict, and what strategic lessons Turkey gained from its involvement in the civil war.

Keywords:
Libya; Libyan civil war; Turkey; NATO; Russia; MEAD.

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Introduction

The Libyan civil war was without a doubt one of the most dramatic episodes of the Arab Spring: it shattered the country's political structure and exposed both regional and global conflicts of interest surrounding Libya. Following the fall of Muammar Gaddafi, Libya effectively split into two: the Government of National Accord (GNA), based in the capital city of Tripoli and recognized by most of the international community; and the Libyan National Army (LNA), led by General Khalifa Haftar and supported by the House of Representatives. Various international actors joined the conflict in accordance with their own interests, plunging the country into prolonged chaos.

There is, however, one country for which the Libyan civil war marked a particularly significant milestone: Turkey quickly emerged as one of the GNA's most important backers, providing substantial military and diplomatic support to Tripoli. As the realities of geopolitics so often illustrate, Ankara's assistance was not simply the result of a principled commitment to the GNA. Rather, it presented an opportunity to expand Turkey's regional influence, to reinterpret maritime boundary disputes in the resource-rich eastern Mediterranean, and to test domestically produced defence technologies in live conditions with relatively low risk.

That said, the intervention was far from smooth. Turkey's actions clashed with the interests of several regional and global powers, leading to confrontations with countries such as Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Russia. To make matters worse for Ankara, it also found itself at odds with nations that, on paper, are its allies through NATO membership. Tensions with Greece—never entirely free of hostility—flared up once again, and relations with one of Europe's most prominent powers, France, deteriorated dramatically.

This paper aims to explore the background of Turkey's intervention in the Libyan civil war, examining its interests, objectives, and achievements, as well as the root causes of the conflicts of interest that arose with other international actors.

Background and Key Actors of the Libyan Civil War

The Libyan civil war was undoubtedly one of the bloodiest components of the Arab Spring, which shook much of the Middle East and North Africa in 2011. The Libyan population had grown weary of Prime Minister Muammar Gaddafi's more than four-decade-long reign of terror and following the example of neighbouring Tunisia and Egypt—and with substantial NATO support—they overthrew the ruling regime (this conflict is referred to as the First Libyan Civil War). However, the resulting power vacuum could not be filled: although the Transitional National Council, representing the rebels, was formed after Gaddafi's death, its authority was rejected not only by the former dictator's followers (Kardaş, 2020). Tribal culture remained prominent in Libya into the 21st century, and various militias founded along ethnic and ideological lines soon began trying to enforce their will by force.

The formation of an actual government did not resolve internal divisions. The General National Congress (GNC), which came to power through the 2012 elections and included both moderate and conservative Islamists, failed not only to form a majority government but also to reach internal compromises (Fajarini & Anam, 2022). A significant portion of the population began to rebel against the GNC, and public security in the country fell to an all-time low. The real turning point came in 2014 when, instead of calling new elections, the GNC unilaterally extended its own mandate. This decision sparked a wave of protests, and General Khalifa Haftar—who had played a key role in both Gaddafi's rise and fall—called on the government to dissolve itself. The GNC ignored the prominent officer's warning, but in May 2014, Haftar entered Benghazi, one of the country's most dangerous cities, with his troops. In the operation known as "Operation Dignity," Haftar's forces cleared the city of Islamists, significantly boosting his popularity in Libya's eastern regions.

In response, the GNC hastily called elections, which it lost; however, due to extremely low voter turnout—just 18%—it refused to recognize the newly formed House of Representatives, whose members were forced to flee east and form a new government to Tobruk. The House of Representatives allied itself with Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA).

Although the international community attempted to ease the conflict by establishing a new unity government, the Government of National Accord (GNA), created in 2015, was unable to consolidate its power despite early successes. The country became definitively divided. Backed by the UN, the GNA established itself in the capital, Tripoli, while the eastern territories remained under the control of the LNA and the House of Representatives. The GNA was primarily composed of moderate, pro-Western Islamists, while the LNA was backed by anti-Islamist forces (Fajarini & Anam, 2022).

As in other regional conflicts, a variety of international actors soon became involved in Libya. Supporting the GNA were countries such as Italy, Qatar, and, notably, Turkey—the focus of this paper—while France, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Russia sided with the LNA (Pack, 2019; Tekir, 2022). Moscow also deployed units of the Wagner mercenary group, which gained fame in the Russo-Ukrainian war (Selján, 2021).

Libya's geopolitical significance lies in two key factors: first, the country is located on the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, holds control over important maritime resources, and lies along a major migration route. Second, it possesses substantial oil reserves, bringing an economic dimension into what is increasingly becoming an internationalized great-power competition (Yüksel, 2021; Maalim, 2023).

The civil war reached its peak in international attention by 2020. During the Berlin Conference, the UN managed to broker a ceasefire between the warring factions, but the deep divisions between the GNA and LNA were not resolved—nor were the vested interests of the international actors involved (Hasar, 2022).

Turkey's Interests in the Libyan Conflict
Geopolitical Objectives and the Quest for Regional Influence

From the late 2010s, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's government increasingly sought to establish Turkey as a powerful regional actor. A key component of such geopolitical positioning often involves intervening in conflicts erupting in other states. This strategic approach is evident in the Middle East (e.g., Syria and Iraq) and particularly in the eastern Mediterranean—most notably in Cyprus and, as in this case, Libya (Yüksel, 2021).

In this context, the North African country appeared to Ankara as a kind of strategic foothold. Turkey's objectives spanned multiple dimensions: it provided support to a government ideologically aligned with it, countered the influence of two key rivals—Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (Süsler, 2020; Tekir, 2022), demonstrated its military and diplomatic power, and utilized the conflict as an ideal testing ground for the increasingly prominent Turkish defence industry's latest innovations.

Beyond continental ambitions, a central focus for Turkey was the Mediterranean Sea, particularly its eastern basin. Under the "Mavi Vatan" ("Blue Homeland") doctrine, Ankara considers gaining strategic control over the eastern Mediterranean a vital national goal. This doctrine carries not only commercial and military significance but is also a key component of the Turkish government's identity politics (Fajarini & Anam, 2022; Yüksel, 2021).

Guided by the Mavi Vatan doctrine, Turkey signed a bilateral agreement with the GNA in 2019, essentially redefining maritime borders in the Mediterranean (Maalim, 2023). This agreement, however, put Ankara at odds with Cyprus, Egypt, and Greece (Hasar, 2022; Harchaoui, 2020), as it sought influence over maritime zones that, under decades of international precedent, were generally accepted as part of other states' Exclusive Economic Zones (Molnár et al., 2020).

It is therefore clear that Turkey's political and military intervention in strategically vital and destabilized Libya was aimed at strengthening its regional position. However, its presence in Libya was not an isolated manoeuvre—Turkey has long pursued influence in countries that were once part of the Ottoman Empire through its so-called "neo-Ottoman" ideology (Yavuz, 2020).

Energy Considerations

Turkey's efforts to expand its influence in the eastern Mediterranean are motivated by far more than political and ideological goals. Since the turn of the millennium, significant natural gas reserves have been discovered off the coasts of Cyprus, Israel, and Egypt—developments that have dramatically increased the region's geopolitical significance (Tagliapietra, 2019). These new reserves are of strategic importance to Europe, as the so-called "EastMed Gas Corridor" represents a potential alternative to Russian gas, thereby contributing to the energy security of European countries that maintain strained relations with Moscow. Gaining control over gas fields in the region would grant Ankara

increased influence not only in the eastern Mediterranean but also in regions far beyond the bounds of neo-Ottoman ambitions.

A key indicator of this effort was the Turkish-Libyan maritime border agreement signed on November 27, 2019—officially titled the "Memorandum of Understanding on the Delimitation of Maritime Jurisdiction Areas in the Mediterranean"—which marked a turning point in Turkey's geopolitical and energy policies (Abobakir et al., 2025). The agreement created a maritime boundary that cuts into Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) previously recognized as belonging to Greece and Cyprus (Hasar, 2022; Süsler, 2020).

By signing the agreement, Ankara essentially established a legal basis to conduct exploratory drilling and potentially extract resources in the eastern Mediterranean, despite firm opposition from much of the international community (Abobakir et al., 2025). Turkey's seriousness about the deal is evidenced by the fact that its research vessels—backed by naval forces—have repeatedly conducted exploratory operations in waters claimed by other states (Yüksel, 2021).

With this maritime agreement, Ankara achieved multiple strategic goals simultaneously: by its own interpretation, it claimed access to vast gas fields, from which—under the terms of the agreement—it could legitimately displace previously dominant actors like Greece and Cyprus. Furthermore, Turkey could offer European countries an alternative to Russian gas, which they often view as a security risk. However, this step also placed Turkey in open conflict not only with the Greek-Cypriot (and Egyptian) axis but also with other major players in regional energy extraction—most notably France. That Greece, France, and Turkey are all NATO members makes the situation even more contentious, as Ankara's actions hardly foster the kind of cooperation expected among alliance partners (Molnár et al., 2020).

Military and Defence Industry Interests

Beyond political influence and energy strategy, Turkey's involvement in the Libyan Civil War served a third, often overlooked, purpose: boosting its defence industry. By the late 2010s, Turkey had made significant strides in developing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), armoured vehicles, artillery, and communication systems—technologies with clear export potential. It is well understood in the arms trade that combat-proven systems are significantly more attractive to buyers, and Libya provided an ideal environment to test these products under real conditions (Besenyő & Málnássy, 2021; Shoaib, 2020).

The centrepiece of Turkish military support for the GNA was the Bayraktar TB2 drone, developed by Baykar. These affordable, reliable UAVs played a key role in halting LNA offensives, conducting reconnaissance missions, and even successfully neutralizing Russian-made Pantsir-S1 air defence systems—systems that were specifically designed to intercept drones like the TB2 (Selján, 2021). Though the TB2 would later rise to fame in Syria and the Russo-Ukrainian War, its success story effectively began in Libya. Beyond Ukraine, countries like Morocco and Azerbaijan also expressed strong

interest in the system. Azerbaijan later deployed TB2 drones with great success during the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, where they once again destroyed several, albeit older Russian-made air defence systems (Ács, 2024).

Turkey's military support to the GNA went far beyond weapons shipments. Under a 2019 security agreement, Ankara sent military trainers, advisors, and logistics support units to Libya—essentially establishing its own military base in Tripoli, thereby securing a long-term presence in the region (Hasar, 2022). Notably, Turkey also provided combat units to the GNA, although these consisted of mercenaries from Syria, partly funded by Qatar (Harchaoui, 2020).

Today, Ankara is effectively one of the GNA's primary strategic partners, giving it substantial influence in North Africa. Turkish advisors have helped modernize the Libyan government forces' military structure (Yüksel, 2021), while testing weapon systems in Libya has provided valuable data to Turkish arms manufacturers and excellent advertising for Turkey's defence products.

Turkey's Political and Military Involvement in the Civil War

Military Intervention: Tools, Legal Background, and Theatre Presence

When Ankara decided to support the GNA, it ensured that this move had a legal basis, just like the redrawing of maritime borders. Under the "Security and Military Cooperation Agreement" signed in December 2019, the internationally recognized Libyan government was granted the legal right to request military assistance from Turkey without exposing itself to accusations of violating international law by the GNA's opponents (Hasar, 2022). The agreement also set a precedent for Erdogan, as similar frameworks were later used to justify Turkey's support for Azerbaijan during the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War. The logic was simple: intervening in an armed conflict is not a problem if it occurs at the invitation of a Turkey-allied party.

The support provided by Turkey quickly had an impact on the battlefield: with the help of NATO-standard trainers and advisors, the GNA forces—often lagging in training—caught up with General Haftar's troops in terms of combat capabilities. By spring 2020, Turkish defence industry products had given the government forces a significant advantage. Turkey's commitment was further demonstrated by the fact that these arms shipments reached GNA ports under the active protection of the Turkish navy (Selján, 2021).

Although Erdogan did not risk deploying Turkish combat units, he did not leave Tripoli without battlefield-capable allies. Regardless of Ankara's official denial, several international organizations and independent research groups are certain that Turkey actively recruited fighters from friendly militias operating in northern Syria, equipped them, and then transferred them to Libya (Harchaoui, 2020; Tekir, 2022). However, the deployment of thousands of mercenaries from Syria also caused problems for Turkey: the international community questioned the legitimacy of the Turkish intervention, although meaningful countermeasures were not taken since there was no official connection between the Syrian fighters and Ankara.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Libyan civil war was a pivotal moment for the Turkish defence industry. Ankara was able to test its own developments under real combat conditions, and they performed convincingly. The Bayraktar TB2 achieved great success, effectively destroying several modern Russian-made Pantsir-S2 air defence systems. Compared to similar Western weapons, the TB2 is inexpensive and relatively easy to manufacture. By 2021, it had already received orders from increasingly prominent NATO member states such as Poland, as well as from Azerbaijan and Ukraine. Even Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates—both of which supported the opposing side in the civil war—showed significant interest in the system (Besenyő & Málnássy, 2021). While the TB2 gained global fame due to media attention and propaganda campaigns in Ukraine, its initial breakthrough undeniably occurred in Libya (Ács, 2024).

Although the TB2 drones received the most international attention, their effectiveness would likely have been much lower without another Turkish-developed weapon: the Koral electronic warfare system. Koral is a ground-based device that supports reconnaissance operations and disrupts enemy communication and radar systems, including those found on the Pantsir (Bakir, 2021). The cooperation between the Koral systems and the strike drones provided Tripoli with a significant advantage in combat, and Western experts observed Turkish developments with great interest.

The Turkish weapons' success in Libya also translated into tangible results: between 2012 and 2021, Turkey's arms exports increased by 72.7%, with 23.6% of that growth occurring in the 2017–2021 period alone. As a result, by the early 2020s, Turkey had become the 16th largest arms exporter in the world, while arms import into Turkey dropped by a significant 55.5%. Focusing on drone technology alone, Turkey had sold at least $700 million worth of weapons by 2022 (Soyaltin-Colella & Demiryol, 2023).

Naturally, Turkey received serious criticism for its arms shipments from both rival states and international organizations. However, by the early 2020s, the Turkish defence industry had clearly become a global player. Furthermore, Turkish-manufactured products offered an alternative to countries that did not want to politically align themselves with other major powers but still sought access to modern weapons. From this perspective, it can be stated that the appearance of Turkish military technology in Libya was beneficial not only for testing equipment in live conditions but also for securing diplomatic influence on a new front.

Turkey's Diplomatic Presence in Libya

As has become clear, Turkey's success in Libya largely depended on how effectively it could frame its support for the GNA through diplomatic means. Under the terms of the Security and Military Cooperation Agreement, a legitimate government (the GNA) requested assistance from another legitimate government (Turkey). Officially, Turkey did not deploy combat units to Tripoli, which allowed Ankara to claim that its

relationship with the Libyan government forces was entirely in line with bilateral agreements between sovereign states (Hasar, 2022).

Nonetheless, Turkey ensured the agreement was solidified from multiple angles: Ankara consistently emphasized that the 2019 accord went far beyond arms shipments and training. It also covered the reconstruction of Libya's security sector, the development of military infrastructure, and the transfer of long-term operational knowledge. Thus, President Erdoğan sought to present himself as a state-builder, further legitimizing Turkey's long-term presence in Libya (Yüksel, 2021; Shoaib, 2020).

Naturally, it was to be expected that actors opposed to Turkey's interests in the conflict would challenge its intervention diplomatically. At the January 2020 Berlin Conference initiated by the UN, Turkey was criticized for openly violating the arms embargo on Libya. However, Ankara quickly pointed to double standards, as numerous other participants in the conference—among them Russia, France, and the UAE—were also actively supplying military equipment to the country (Tekir, 2022; Harchaoui, 2020).

Outside the UN framework, Turkey also sought to build a network of supporters. It entered into agreements with Tunisia and Algeria, both of which supported the GNA, as well as with Qatar, which frequently rivals other Gulf states. Still, Ankara had to invest significant effort into maintaining de-escalation channels, especially considering that Egypt and the UAE—supporters of the LNA—were naturally displeased with Turkey's growing presence in the region. Although there were strong exchanges of rhetoric and threats of further military involvement, neither side escalated the conflict (Süsler, 2020).

Ankara also took care to demonize General Haftar's LNA. In Turkish media, Haftar—who had previously helped Gaddafi come to power before turning against him—was quickly portrayed as a "puppet of foreign interests" and a putschist. The House of Representatives, which was elected with a conspicuously low voter turnout, was framed as an illegitimate political body. In contrast, the internationally supported GNA was described as the true representative of the Libyan people, and Turkey insisted it was not siding with any particular party or individual but rather aiding a friendly nation (Hasar, 2022; Selján, 2021).

Consolidating Turkish Intervention in the Long Term

By now, it is entirely clear that Ankara is planning a long-term presence in Libya. The 2019 bilateral agreement provided Turkey with the legal basis to establish military bases in GNA-controlled areas, secure those sites, and—most importantly—reshape the GNA's armed forces in its own image (Hasar, 2022). In Tripoli and in Misrata, Libya's third-largest city, GNA forces are not only receiving basic military training from Turkish troops but are also adopting Ankara's doctrines in intelligence and communications (Yüksel, 2021). This transfer of know-how means that in the long term, the GNA's military will closely mirror Turkey's, and its elite will be deeply tied to Ankara—effectively cementing Turkey's influence.

Yet Turkey's ambitions in Libya go far beyond military influence. Turkish companies are expected to play a key role in rebuilding the war-torn country, including the modernization of civilian infrastructure. Ankara refers to this approach as a "win-win" situation, highlighting that it is present in Libya as a partner, not a colonial power, a term despised by all African nations (Shoaib, 2020).

However, support for the GNA would be meaningless without the appropriate media coverage. Turkey places strong emphasis on making sure that people living in GNA-controlled areas are fully aware that the support they receive comes from Ankara. Turkey's Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) and the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) are already operating in Libya. These state institutions are supporting schools, cultural centres, and mosques, all with adequate media coverage to win broader public support.

The Berlin Conference also made it clear that Turkey is attempting to present itself as a helpful partner on the international stage—even if, as we'll see later, not always successfully—to prevent broader global interference in its Libyan activities. Throughout international negotiations and conferences, Turkey has remained actively involved, always seeking to legitimize its operations.

It's also worth noting that Ankara is likely aware that any successful peace process between the GNA and the LNA would require a division of power over Libya. However, thanks to Turkish support, Tripoli has now grown strong enough to claim favourable positions in such a settlement—positions that, logically, would also empower Turkey (Harchaoui, 2020).

Regional and Global Rivalries

Regional Adversaries: Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia

By intervening in the Libyan civil war, Turkey immediately drew the ire of several other regional powers that also have significant interests in North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. The three most important regional actors in this context were Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (Harchaoui, 2020; Tekir, 2022).

Egypt's interest in Libya's stability is self-evident: as North Africa's most prominent power, it shares a long land border with Tripoli, and as the civil war intensified, arms smuggling rapidly increased, while civilians fleeing the violence triggered a major migration crisis. Additionally, for President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi—who himself came to power as a result of the Arab Spring—the fact that much of the GNA's leadership consists of members of the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist group considered a terrorist organization in Egypt and much of the Islamic world, is particularly alarming (Yüksel, 2021). Accordingly, Cairo chose to support General Haftar. Since the western side of the Egypt–Libya border was already under LNA control, even joint military exercises were conducted along the frontier. Egypt went so far as to threaten open military intervention against the GNA if it attempted to capture Sirte, the birthplace of former president Gaddafi, located on the southern Mediterranean coast (The National, 2020).

The UAE's rivalry with Turkey is far from limited to Libya; similar competition has unfolded in Yemen and Sudan. Abu Dhabi has long sought to uphold a conservative status quo in the Islamic world and viewed Turkey's intervention as a form of "Islamist expansion." Like Egypt, the oil-rich monarchy perceives the Muslim Brotherhood as a security threat, and the group's prominent role within the GNA naturally pushed the UAE into Haftar's camp. The Emirates didn't just provide financial support; the strike drones it delivered proved just as valuable on the battlefield as Turkey's TB2s (Pack, 2019; Tekir, 2022).

Compared to Egypt and the UAE, Saudi Arabia's support for the LNA was relatively restrained. Riyadh did not commit to major arms transfers but consistently voiced diplomatic support for General Haftar and is believed to have provided financial assistance to Tobruk. Like Turkey's other two regional adversaries, Riyadh also cited the Muslim Brotherhood's involvement as its chief concern (Shoaib, 2020).

It is thus clear that Turkey, through its intervention in Libya, openly challenged its regional rivals. While Ankara pursued a highly dynamic foreign policy—willing to confront conflicts head-on if necessary—to establish itself in North Africa, Cairo, Riyadh, and Abu Dhabi aimed to preserve the existing status quo (Yavuz, 2020). It is important to note that such hostilities are not rare anomalies: regional powers consistently seek to expand their influence while attempting to sideline their rivals.

Conflict Within NATO: France and Greece

While tensions between Turkey and other prominent powers in the Middle East were almost inevitable due to longstanding regional rivalries, and renewed friction with old adversary Greece was hardly surprising, the clash between Ankara and Paris generated tensions that proved particularly uncomfortable for NATO.

France's stake in Libya rested on two key factors: first, President Nicolas Sarkozy sought to preserve Paris's waning—and since then steadily declining—influence in Africa; and second, in 2010, 18% of France's oil imports came from Tripoli. Although France officially supported the UN proposal to establish the GNA, it became clear in 2016 under rather awkward circumstances that this support was far from sincere: a military helicopter crashed in LNA controlled Benghazi, revealing the presence of French special forces (Molnár et al., 2020). At that point, it became evident that for Paris, a stable Libya—rather than a democratic one—was the priority, as the key oil fields essential to France lay in the areas controlled by Haftar.

Franco-Turkish hostilities peaked in June 2020 when the French navy's La Fayette-class frigate Courbet attempted to inspect a vessel suspected of arms smuggling. According to Paris, the Turkish frigates escorting the shipment locked fire-control radar on Courbet three times—an accusation Ankara denied. The diplomatic crisis escalated to the point where France suspended its participation in Sea Guardian, NATO's key naval operation to ensure Mediterranean security (Süsler, 2020; Hasar, 2022).

In contrast to France, Greece and non-NATO member Cyprus had no objections to Turkey based on military involvement in Libya per se. Rather, their concerns stemmed from the bilateral maritime agreement signed between Tripoli and Ankara in 2019, which redrew maritime boundaries in the eastern Mediterranean. This agreement largely ignored the internationally recognized EEZs of Athens and Nicosia (Fajarini & Anam, 2022). As a result, areas south of the island of Crete that had been considered Greek interests were to become part of Libya's EEZ, and Turkey effectively assumed control over Cypriot maritime zones—excluding only the immediate coastal waters.

In response, Greece launched a campaign within the European Union to oppose Turkey, prompting an official EU condemnation of the agreement between Ankara and Tripoli (Tagliapietra, 2019). Turkey countered the EU's stance by accusing Brussels of acting with "biased, colonialist logic" and claimed it had no right to interfere in North African affairs (Yüksel, 2021).

Despite this opposition, Turkey continued exploratory drilling in Greek and Cypriot maritime areas, leading to repeated confrontations. This activity persisted even after Libyan courts annulled the agreement in 2021, 2023, and 2024, citing Libya's 1982 ratification of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which clearly defines Greek maritime boundaries. Ankara maintained that since the GNA continued to support the agreement—and as it cannot be unilaterally revoked—it retained the right to conduct exploration in Greek waters.

The dispute between the France–Greece–Cyprus triangle and Turkey placed significant strain on NATO. Athens and Paris accused Ankara of undermining the alliance's collective interests for personal gain. In response, Ankara reiterated that it had been invited by the GNA, Libya's legitimate government, and pointed out that France was not a neutral actor either (Tekir, 2022). The controversy also damaged NATO's global reputation, as non-member states saw that the alliance's members were unable to cooperate in line with shared interests when national political and economic priorities diverged.

Cooperation and Rivalry: Russia

The relationship between Russia and Turkey in recent years has been complex. Ankara and Moscow have supported opposing factions in numerous global conflicts: in the Caucasus, Turkey openly backed Azerbaijan against Armenia, while the Kremlin officially acted as a peacekeeper until April 2024. Similarly, Russia has been an ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, while Turkey supported the paramilitary forces that ultimately toppled the Assad regime. Despite these opposing stances, the two countries have adopted a pragmatic approach toward one another in both Nagorno-Karabakh and Syria—as they have in Libya.

Though the Kremlin denied it for a long time, Russian Wagner Group mercenaries appeared on the LNA's side during key moments of the Libyan war, including the 2019 siege of Tripoli. Until launching the war against Ukraine in 2022, Moscow continued to disavow any ties to the Wagner Group. However, in Africa, it became clear that the

Russian state was using this largely Russian-manned, modernly equipped force to intervene in conflicts while maintaining plausible deniability (Kardaş, 2020).

Wagner's presence in Libya introduced a new dynamic compared to the other foreign backers of General Haftar. While Turkish-supplied weaponry to the GNA primarily faced weapons sent by other countries to the LNA, in Russia's case, trained personnel also took part in combat operations. It is very likely, for example, that the modern Russian-made Pantsir-S1 air defence systems destroyed by Turkish Bayraktar drones were not operated by LNA troops (Selján, 2021; Tekir, 2022). Ironically, Russia's direct military intervention may have even benefited Ankara from one angle: with the U.S. playing a less active role in post-Gaddafi Libya, Turkey—a NATO member—blocking the expansion of a rival great power was viewed favourably in Washington. This likely made the U.S. more lenient toward Ankara at a time when relations between the two countries were strained over Syria and Iraq (Kardaş, 2020).

Despite this, Moscow rarely criticized Turkey through diplomatic channels, and military escalation was never on the table (Harchaoui, 2020). While countries like Egypt saw the Libyan civil war as a direct security threat, France was motivated by energy concerns, and Greece sought to protect its maritime boundaries, Russia had a broader, more strategic approach to Africa. By supporting various state and non-state actors, the Kremlin aimed to increase influence in the region, hinder NATO expansion, sell weapons to allies, and sign energy agreements (Tekir, 2022). Libya itself posed no significant security risk to Russia. Consequently, Moscow could afford to take a more pragmatic stance—even cooperating with Ankara on certain issues. A good example is the ceasefire proposal jointly drafted by Russia and Turkey in January 2020 to prepare for the Berlin Conference. Although it did not lead to lasting peace, it demonstrated that as long as their core interests remained unaffected, the two powers were willing to work together (Yüksel, 2021; Hasar, 2022).

Impact of Regional Conflicts on Turkey's Room for Manoeuvre

There is no doubt that Turkey gained numerous advantages in the MEAD region through its involvement in Libya. However, these foreign policy manoeuvres also triggered serious conflicts with other states, which often limited Turkey's diplomatic flexibility, making clear that such actions usually come with side effects.

Tensions with Greece and France hurt Turkey on three fronts: first, Ankara's "reliability index" among its formal NATO allies visibly deteriorated; second, Athens, Paris, and Nicosia are now likely to be far more reluctant to support Turkey's longstanding goal of joining the European Union. Furthermore, Greek and French lobbying may influence even those EU countries not directly involved in the Libyan conflict to view Turkish foreign policy more critically—though it's worth noting that Ankara's support for the GNA (recognized by most EU countries) could generate sympathy in some quarters (Tagliapietra, 2019). The third consequence extends beyond Turkey: the fact that NATO member states—two of which possess some of the alliance's most powerful armed forces—were willing to risk maritime incidents rather than resolve

disputes diplomatically cast a negative light on NATO's global image (Süsler, 2020; Yüksel, 2021).

President Erdoğan also fell short of fully achieving some of his goals in Libya. Turkey failed to significantly weaken its MEAD-region rivals—Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt—nor did the GNA manage to decisively defeat General Haftar. Just as it alienated certain European countries, Turkey's support for Tripoli also provoked anger from several regional powers in the Middle East, further isolating Ankara diplomatically (Hasar, 2022). However, as noted earlier, this had minimal impact on Turkey's defence industry.

Among all its foreign relationships, Turkey's ties with Russia changed the least. Despite finding themselves once again on opposing sides—as in Nagorno-Karabakh and Syria—the two countries' energy and defence relations (though now less prominent), as well as their mutual interest in avoiding serious escalation, prevented lasting deterioration in bilateral ties (Tekir, 2022).

As a result of the Libyan conflict, Turkey was compelled to seek new regional partners, strengthening ties with Algeria, Tunisia, and Qatar. However, these new alliances may not be enough to offset the diplomatic losses. While Algeria is one of North Africa's key military powers, Egypt currently holds a stronger position. And although Qatar has vast oil reserves, its support for the Muslim Brotherhood makes it vulnerable to isolation in the Islamic world (Attia, 2023).

Summary

Turkey's intervention in Libya was not an isolated foreign policy manoeuvre but rather a live test of a new regional strategy aimed at expanding influence, strengthening economic and military presence, and ensuring autonomous foreign policy capabilities. Based on the experience, Ankara's foreign policy thinking has shifted on multiple levels, increasingly distancing itself from the logic of Western alliances.

The Libyan involvement reinforced the Turkish foreign policy axiom that direct military presence is not merely a defensive tool but can serve as an active instrument of foreign policy shaping. Ankara successfully applied this model first in Syria, then in Libya, and later in Nagorno-Karabakh as well. Simultaneously, the mindset has grown stronger that Turkish power projection need not be confined to diplomatic tools—if necessary, it can deploy asymmetric and hybrid instruments: drones, mercenaries, cyber operations, and economic pressure, along with soft power tools such as support for schools, religious institutions, and aid programs.

At the regional level, Turkey has begun to craft a multipolar balance policy that allows manoeuvrability outside traditional alliance systems. It has managed to cooperate with countries like Qatar, Algeria, Tunisia, and even, at times, Russia, while relations with Western allies—particularly France and Greece—have often become confrontational. Parallel to this, Turkey has proclaimed a doctrine of "strategic autonomy," in which it seeks to assert its interests through its own military strength and economic influence.

The Libyan experience shows that Turkey has successfully increased its military and technological clout and gained significant reputational advantages in the defence industry. However, the intervention also highlighted the constraints imposed by Turkey's need for constant balancing and the fact that active regional involvement is only sustainable when backed by effective diplomacy and strategic alliances.

Notes on Contributors

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Conflict of Interest

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

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To What Extent Do Political Instability and Coups D'état Contribute to the Proliferation and Resilience of Terrorist Groups in The Sahel Region?[1]

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Abstract:

The Sahel region faces a complex nexus of political instability and terrorism, with the former often exacerbating the latter. This research delves into the extent to which political turmoil and coups d'état contribute to the proliferation and resilience of terrorist groups in the Sahel. Beginning with an analysis of the relationship between political instability and terrorist group proliferation, the study examines how periods of governance vacuum and instability create fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take root. Drawing on historical data and case studies from countries such as Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, the research highlights how political upheavals provide terrorist groups with opportunities for recruitment, funding, and operational expansion. Moreover, the study explores the role of external powers, such as France, and the United States, and regional organizations like the African Union and ECOWAS, in shaping the security landscape of the Sahel. It scrutinizes the effectiveness of foreign interventions, aid, and development programs in addressing the underlying socio-economic grievances that fuel terrorism. Furthermore, the research critically analyses the humanitarian consequences of displacement and refugee crises resulting from terrorist activities and state responses. It underscores the importance of cross-border collaboration and regional security architecture, examining initiatives like the G5 Sahel Joint Force and the Lake Chad Basin Commission Multinational Joint Task Force in countering terrorism. By shedding light on the intricate dynamics between political instability and terrorism in the Sahel, this study aims to inform more targeted and effective strategies for countering extremism and promoting stability in the region.

Keywords:
Sahel region; Political instability; Terrorism; Resilience; Regional cooperation.

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Introduction

The Relationship Between Political Instability and Terrorist Group Proliferation

Historical and Socio-Political Context

The Sahel region, an arid expanse stretching across North Africa from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea, has long been a crucible of political instability and conflict. The historical and socio-political context of the Sahel is marked by a legacy of colonialism, ethnic fragmentation, and weak state institutions, all of which have contributed to the proliferation and resilience of terrorist groups in the area. The disintegration of centralized power and the frequent occurrence of coups d'état have created an environment where terrorist organizations can thrive.

For instance, Mali provides a stark example of how political instability facilitates terrorist activities. In 2012, a coup led by Captain Amadou Sanogo overthrew the government, exploiting widespread discontent over the handling of a Tuareg rebellion in the north. This political vacuum allowed various terrorist groups, including Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Ansar Dine, to seize control of northern Mali, declaring it an Islamic state. The weakened central government, preoccupied with internal power struggles, was unable to mount an effective response, enabling these groups to entrench themselves. The international intervention led by France in 2013 pushed back the militants but did not eradicate them, highlighting the resilience these groups gain from exploiting political turmoil.

Burkina Faso offers another illustrative case. The country has experienced multiple coups since gaining independence from France in 1960, the most recent being in 2022. Each coup further destabilized the political landscape, weakening state structures and diminishing public trust in government institutions. This persistent instability has been a boon for terrorist groups such as Ansarul Islam and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), which have capitalized on the government's inability to control vast rural areas. These groups have leveraged local grievances, including ethnic tensions and economic disenfranchisement, to bolster their ranks and expand their influence (Abdoul et al., 2021).

Niger, similarly, has faced chronic political instability and coups, most notably in 1996, 1999, and 2010. The aftermath of these coups often left the country in disarray, with weakened governance and security structures. Boko Haram and ISGS have exploited these conditions, especially in the border regions, where state presence is minimal. The repeated cycles of political upheaval have hampered development efforts, exacerbated poverty, and fostered a sense of neglect among the population, conditions that terrorist organizations skilfully exploit for recruitment and support. These examples underscore a critical dynamic: political instability and coups d'état in the Sahel create power vacuums and governance failures that terrorist groups exploit to establish and expand their presence (Charbonneau, 2017). The socio-political fabric of the Sahel,

characterized by ethnic diversity and historical marginalization, further complicates the situation. Terrorist groups adeptly navigate and manipulate these complexities, presenting themselves as alternatives to ineffective and corrupt governments. This historical and socio-political context is essential for understanding the persistence and proliferation of terrorism in the Sahel, as it highlights the deep-rooted issues that go beyond mere military solutions and call for comprehensive political and social interventions.

Case Studies of Specific Countries

Examining the Sahel region through case studies of specific countries reveals how political instability and coups d'état have directly contributed to the proliferation and resilience of terrorist groups. Mali stands out as a critical example where a series of political disruptions has paved the way for terrorist activities. The 2012 coup, led by Captain Amadou Sanogo, epitomizes this connection. The coup was fuelled by dissatisfaction with the government's handling of the Tuareg rebellion in the north. The subsequent power vacuum allowed groups like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Ansar Dine to take over large swaths of territory. The Malian state's fragmentation and the ensuing chaos provided these groups with the perfect opportunity to establish control, enforce their rule, and gain local support by exploiting ethnic and socio-economic grievances. Despite international military interventions, these groups have shown remarkable resilience, continually resurfacing and adapting to new security measures.

Burkina Faso's experience mirrors Mali's in many ways, showcasing how repeated political upheaval can undermine state authority and enable terrorist expansion. Following the ousting of President Blaise Compaoré in 2014 after 27 years in power, Burkina Faso entered a period of significant instability. The power vacuum and the transitional government's weaknesses were exploited by groups like Ansarul Islam and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). The 2015 coup attempt further destabilized the country, allowing these terrorist organizations to gain a foothold, particularly in the northern regions. These groups capitalized on local grievances, including disputes over land and resources, and marginalized communities' frustrations with the central government's neglect. The state's inability to provide security and basic services in these areas has allowed terrorist groups to present themselves as viable alternatives, thereby strengthening their influence and control.

Niger also exemplifies the detrimental impact of political instability on counter-terrorism efforts. The country has endured several coups since its independence, with notable ones in 1996, 1999, and 2010. These political disruptions have consistently weakened the state apparatus, leaving large areas under-governed and vulnerable to terrorist infiltration. Boko Haram and ISGS have exploited these conditions, particularly in the Diffa region bordering Nigeria. The repeated coups have hampered Niger's ability to maintain a robust security presence in these areas, allowing terrorist groups to operate with relative impunity. Additionally, the socio-economic challenges resulting from

political instability, such as unemployment and lack of education, have made the population susceptible to recruitment by these terrorist organizations.

These case studies highlight a recurring theme: political instability, marked by coups and weak governance, directly facilitates the proliferation and resilience of terrorist groups in the Sahel. Each instance of political turmoil creates opportunities for these groups to exploit power vacuums, deepen local grievances, and expand their operational capacities. The situations in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger underscore the complex interplay between political instability and terrorism, illustrating how the breakdown of state structures and authority can have far-reaching consequences for regional security. This analysis calls for a multifaceted approach to counterterrorism that addresses not only the immediate security challenges but also the underlying political and socio-economic factors contributing to instability in the Sahel.

Mechanisms Through Which Political Instability Supports Terrorist Resilience

Recruitment and Radicalization

The process of recruitment and radicalization in the Sahel region is deeply intertwined with the socio-political environment marked by instability, economic hardship, and ethnic tensions. Terrorist groups in the region, such as Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), have adeptly exploited these conditions to bolster their ranks and entrench their influence.

In Nigeria, Boko Haram's recruitment strategies illustrate how political instability and socio-economic disenfranchisement fuel radicalization. The group's emergence and growth can be traced back to widespread corruption, poor governance, and a lack of economic opportunities, particularly in the northeastern regions. Boko Haram capitalized on these grievances by presenting itself as an alternative to the failing state (Fischer, 2017). The group targeted disaffected youth, offering them not only financial incentives but also a sense of belonging and purpose. The abduction and indoctrination of young people, often from marginalized communities, highlight the desperate conditions that make radicalization a viable option for many. Additionally, Boko Haram has utilized propaganda to tap into religious and ethnic sentiments, framing its cause as a fight against both Western influence and the corrupt Nigerian state.

Mali offers another poignant example where recruitment and radicalization have been driven by a combination of political instability and ethnic strife. The 2012 coup and the subsequent Tuareg rebellion created an environment of chaos and uncertainty. Terrorist groups like AQIM and Ansar Dine exploited this turmoil, recruiting from both the local Tuareg population and other marginalized groups. These organizations provided financial support, security, and a semblance of order in regions where the state's presence was minimal. Furthermore, they leveraged existing ethnic tensions, promising autonomy and respect for local customs and grievances. The failure of the Malian government to address the needs of these communities effectively pushed many

towards radicalization, viewing it as a means of securing their rights and livelihoods (Benedikter et al., 2018).

In Burkina Faso, the rapid rise of terrorist activities post-2014 can be attributed to successful recruitment and radicalization efforts in the wake of political instability. Following the ousting of long-time President Blaise Compaoré, the transitional government struggled to establish control, particularly in the northern regions. Groups like Ansarul Islam exploited the power vacuum and the local population's dissatisfaction with the central government. They focused on recruiting from marginalized communities, particularly among the Fulani, who faced ethnic discrimination and economic neglect (Erforth, 2018). By addressing local grievances and providing social services, these terrorist groups positioned themselves as legitimate alternatives to the state. This strategy not only increased their numbers but also deepened their integration into local communities, making counter-terrorism efforts more challenging.

The situation in Niger further underscores the critical role of socio-economic factors in recruitment and radicalization. The repeated political upheavals and chronic poverty have created a fertile ground for terrorist recruitment. Groups such as Boko Haram and ISGS have targeted economically disenfranchised youth, offering them financial stability and a sense of purpose. The lack of educational and employment opportunities, exacerbated by political instability, leaves many young people vulnerable to radicalization. Additionally, these groups exploit local grievances, such as land disputes and ethnic tensions, to foster a sense of injustice and mobilize recruits against perceived enemies.

The recruitment and radicalization of individuals in the Sahel region are intricately linked to pervasive political instability, economic deprivation, and social marginalization (Wing, 2018). Terrorist groups have effectively exploited these conditions, using a combination of financial incentives, ideological indoctrination, and addressing local grievances to attract and radicalize new members. These dynamics highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism that not only addresses security concerns but also tackles the underlying socio-economic and political issues that facilitate recruitment and radicalization in the first place.

Funding and Resource Acquisition

In the Sahel region, the funding and resource acquisition strategies of terrorist groups are deeply intertwined with the prevailing political instability and economic fragility. Terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram, and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) have developed sophisticated methods to finance their operations, capitalizing on the weaknesses of state institutions and the chaotic socio-political environment.

Mali provides a salient example of how terrorist groups exploit state instability for financial gain. Following the 2012 coup and subsequent insurgencies, northern Mali fell into a state of lawlessness. AQIM and its affiliates took advantage of the power vacuum to establish control over key smuggling routes. These routes, which traverse the vast Saharan landscape, are vital for trafficking drugs, weapons, and human beings. AQIM,

for instance, has profited significantly from the cocaine trade, with the drug often originating in Latin America and transiting through West Africa to Europe. The lack of effective government oversight and widespread corruption have allowed these activities to flourish. Additionally, the kidnapping of Westerners for ransom has been a lucrative source of income for AQIM. High-profile abductions not only bring in substantial ransom payments but also serve to protect the group's power and influence.

In Nigeria, Boko Haram's funding mechanisms illustrate how terrorist groups exploit local economies and weaknesses in state control (Ajala, 2021). Boko Haram has diversified its income sources to include extortion, robbery, and cattle rustling. The group targets local businesses and wealthy individuals, demanding protection money and engaging in outright theft. In areas where state authority is weak or absent, Boko Haram imposes taxes on local communities, coercing residents to pay in return for security or leniency. This parasitic relationship drains local economies and further entrenches the group's presence. Furthermore, Boko Haram has also benefited from funding linked to illicit oil bunkering and the black-market sale of petroleum products, exploiting the instability in Nigeria's oil-rich regions.

Burkina Faso's experience highlights another dimension of resource acquisition through the exploitation of artisanal mining (Benedikter et al., 2018). Following the political upheaval in 2014 and the subsequent weakening of state structures, terrorist groups such as ISGS have targeted the gold mining sector. Artisanal mining, which is often informal and unregulated, has become a major source of revenue for these groups. They impose taxes on miners, control access to mining sites, and engage in direct extraction. This control over gold mining not only provides substantial financial resources but also enhances the groups' influence over local economies and communities. The revenue generated is used to fund their operations, purchase weapons, and recruit fighters, thereby sustaining their insurgency efforts.

In Niger, the pervasive instability and porous borders have facilitated the smuggling of various goods, which in turn funds terrorist activities. ISGS and Boko Haram have exploited Niger's position as a transit hub for smuggling routes that include human trafficking, narcotics, and contraband goods. The revenue from these illicit activities supports their logistical needs, from acquiring weapons and ammunition to funding recruitment drives. Additionally, terrorist groups have benefited from the cattle rustling trade, particularly in regions where traditional pastoralist routes cross international borders. This trade not only finances their operations but also disrupts local economies, exacerbating tensions and creating further instability that terrorist groups can exploit.

These examples from Mali, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Niger demonstrate how terrorist groups in the Sahel effectively capitalize on political instability and weak governance to fund their operations. Their ability to control smuggling routes, exploit local economies and engage in various illicit activities underscores the complex interplay between state fragility and terrorism financing. Addressing these funding mechanisms requires a multifaceted approach that includes strengthening state institutions,

improving border security, and fostering economic development to reduce the vulnerabilities that terrorist groups exploit for resource acquisition.

International Influence and Foreign Intervention

Role of External Powers

The role of external powers in the Sahel region is a crucial aspect that influences the proliferation and resilience of terrorist groups (Wing, 2018). Foreign interventions, particularly by France and the United States, have significantly impacted the dynamics of terrorism in the region. However, these interventions often yield mixed results, sometimes stabilizing the situation temporarily but also exacerbating local grievances and fuelling anti-foreign sentiments that terrorist groups exploit.

France's military intervention in Mali in 2013, known as Operation Serval, aimed to drive out Islamist militants who had taken control of the northern part of the country following a coup. While the operation initially succeeded in dispersing the militants and retaking major cities, it did not eradicate the terrorist threat. The intervention led to a prolonged presence of French troops in the region under Operation Barkhane, which has faced increasing criticism and resistance from local populations (Pérouse de Montclos, 2021). The presence of foreign troops has sometimes been perceived as an infringement on national sovereignty and has been used by terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) to bolster their recruitment narratives, portraying themselves as defenders against foreign occupation.

The United States has also played a significant role through its counter-terrorism initiatives, primarily by providing training, intelligence, and logistical support to Sahelian countries. The U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) has been instrumental in building the capacities of local military forces. However, the effectiveness of this support is often undermined by the political instability and corruption within these countries. For instance, despite substantial U.S. assistance, the security situation in Niger remains precarious, with frequent attacks by Boko Haram and ISGS. The high-profile ambush of U.S. Special Forces in Niger in 2017 underscored the volatility of the region and the limitations of foreign military assistance in stabilizing it.

The involvement of international organizations, such as the United Nations and the European Union, has also been pivotal in addressing the security and humanitarian crises in the Sahel. The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has been deployed since 2013 to support political processes and stabilize the country. However, MINUSMA has faced significant challenges, including frequent attacks on peacekeepers and logistical difficulties. The mission's limited mandate and the complex security environment have hindered its ability to bring about lasting peace. Moreover, the reliance on foreign peacekeeping forces has sometimes led to a lack of ownership of the security processes by local governments, undermining long-term sustainability.

Additionally, regional organizations like the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have attempted to coordinate responses to the security threats in the Sahel. The G5 Sahel Joint Force, composed of troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, represents a regional effort to combat terrorism and transnational crime. Despite its potential, the G5 Sahel Joint Force has struggled with inadequate funding, logistical constraints, and coordination issues. The reliance on external donors for financial and technical support has also raised concerns about the sustainability and effectiveness of the force(Önal et al., 2021).

These examples illustrate the complex role of external powers in the Sahel region. While foreign interventions and support have been crucial in countering immediate terrorist threats, they often fail to address the underlying issues of governance, economic development, and social cohesion that fuel terrorism. Moreover, the presence of foreign military forces and the dependence on international assistance can exacerbate local grievances and provide fodder for terrorist propaganda. Therefore, a more nuanced approach that combines security measures with efforts to strengthen local governance, promote economic development, and foster regional cooperation is essential for achieving long-term stability in the Sahel.

Aid and Development Programs

Aid and development programs in the Sahel region play a critical role in addressing the root causes of instability and terrorism, yet their effectiveness varies significantly due to a range of complex factors (Kfir, 2018). These programs, often spearheaded by international organizations and donor countries, aim to alleviate poverty, improve governance, and provide essential services. However, the success of these initiatives is frequently undermined by the region's political instability, corruption, and challenging security environment.

One illustrative example is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) initiatives in Mali, which focus on poverty reduction, governance improvement, and conflict resolution. Despite the substantial financial investment and the implementation of various projects aimed at fostering economic development and social cohesion, the impact has been limited. Political instability, especially following the 2012 coup and the ongoing insurgency in the north, has hindered the effective deployment and sustainability of these programs. The persistent insecurity has restricted the movement of aid workers and disrupted project timelines, thereby reducing the overall efficacy of development efforts. Moreover, the local government's limited capacity to absorb and effectively utilize aid exacerbates the situation, often resulting in mismanagement and corruption, which further alienates the local population and fuels grievances that terrorist groups exploit.

In Niger, the World Bank has been active in promoting agricultural development and food security, crucial given the country's dependency on subsistence farming (Abdoul et al., 2021). Projects aimed at improving irrigation infrastructure, providing access to agricultural inputs, and offering training to farmers have the potential to significantly

improve livelihoods. However, the persistent threat of attacks by Boko Haram and ISGS in the Diffa region has made it difficult to maintain project continuity and ensure that aid reaches the intended beneficiaries. The instability disrupts markets and agricultural cycles, leading to food insecurity that exacerbates the conditions terrorist groups exploit for recruitment. Furthermore, the local population's distrust of government authorities, often seen as corrupt and ineffective, limits the community engagement necessary for these programs to succeed.

In Burkina Faso, the European Union has funded several initiatives to enhance education and healthcare, addressing long-term developmental challenges that contribute to instability. Programs such as the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa have aimed to provide job opportunities and improve access to education in vulnerable regions (Ajala, 2021). While these initiatives have had some positive impacts, the escalating violence and frequent attacks by terrorist groups such as Ansarul Islam have severely hampered progress. Schools and health centres are often targets of attacks, leading to closures and a breakdown in service delivery. This not only disrupts the benefits of these programs but also deepens the sense of insecurity and neglect among the local population, which terrorist groups leverage to bolster their ranks and support.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has also been involved in various capacity-building projects across the Sahel, focusing on governance and economic development. In Mauritania, for example, USAID has supported programs to improve local governance and increase economic opportunities through vocational training and entrepreneurship support. However, the entrenched issues of political corruption and weak institutional frameworks have limited the effectiveness of these interventions (Touré,2021). The beneficiaries of these programs often face bureaucratic hurdles and lack the necessary support to translate training into sustainable livelihoods. Consequently, the intended impact of reducing vulnerability to radicalization is diminished, as economic desperation and disenfranchisement persist.

These examples underscore the significant challenges that aid, and development programs face in the Sahel. While they are essential for addressing the underlying socio-economic issues that contribute to instability and terrorism, their success is frequently compromised by political instability, corruption, and security challenges (Charbonneau, 2017). Effective development in the Sahel requires not only substantial financial investment but also a strategic approach that integrates security measures, promotes good governance, and ensures community engagement. Strengthening local institutions, improving transparency, and fostering local ownership of development initiatives are critical for these programs to achieve sustainable, long-term impacts and mitigate the conditions that allow terrorism to thrive.

Impact on Civilian Populations and Humanitarian Consequences

Displacement and Refugee Crises

The displacement and refugee crises in the Sahel region are both a consequence and a catalyst of political instability and terrorist activity. These crises exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and create new opportunities for terrorist groups to recruit and expand their influence. The complex interplay between forced migration, instability, and terrorism highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to address the root causes of displacement and mitigate its impact on regional security (Rudincová, 2017).

In Mali, the conflict that erupted in 2012 led to a massive displacement crisis. The Tuareg rebellion, followed by the Islamist insurgency and the subsequent military coup, forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, primarily fleeing to neighbouring countries such as Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mauritania, found themselves in precarious conditions with limited access to basic services and protection. The instability and lack of governmental control in northern Mali created a power vacuum that terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Ansar Dine exploited. These groups offered protection and basic services in exchange for support and loyalty, thus embedding themselves within local communities and refugee populations. The protracted displacement situation has strained host communities and fostered competition over resources, which further fuels grievances and tensions that terrorists can exploit.

Burkina Faso has experienced a significant surge in violence and displacement in recent years. The rise of terrorist attacks by groups such as Ansarul Islam and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) has led to a humanitarian crisis, with over one million people displaced within the country as of 2023. The rapid escalation of violence in regions like the Sahel and Centre-Nord has overwhelmed local authorities and humanitarian organizations, complicating efforts to provide adequate support and security. Displaced populations often seek refuge in urban centres or makeshift camps where living conditions are dire, with limited access to food, water, healthcare, and education. These dire conditions create a fertile ground for terrorist groups to recruit young men who see no future in their current situation. By providing necessities and a sense of purpose, terrorist organizations can strengthen their ranks and expand their influence (Osaherumwen et al., 2018).

In Niger, the displacement crisis is exacerbated by the cross-border activities of Boko Haram and ISGS. The Diffa region, bordering Nigeria and Chad, has been particularly affected by the spillover of violence from Nigeria. Thousands of Nigerians fleeing Boko Haram attacks have sought refuge in Niger, adding to the number of internally displaced Nigeriens. The resulting strain on resources and infrastructure in already impoverished areas has created severe humanitarian challenges. The presence of large, unmonitored refugee and IDP populations provides a fertile ground for terrorist recruitment. Boko Haram, for instance, has been known to exploit the desperation and lack of opportunities among displaced youths, recruiting them with promises of financial incentives and protection.

The refugee crisis in the Sahel also has significant implications for regional security and stability. Refugee camps and displacement sites, often located in remote and under-governed areas, can become hotbeds for radicalization and recruitment (Hardy, 2019). For example, the Mbera camp in Mauritania, which hosts Malian refugees, has faced challenges related to security and infiltration by extremist elements. The camp's isolation and the difficult living conditions make it easier for terrorist groups to operate under the radar and influence vulnerable populations. The lack of effective governance and security oversight in these camps enables terrorist organizations to use them as safe havens and logistical hubs.

These examples from Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger demonstrate the intricate link between displacement and the proliferation of terrorist groups in the Sahel (Pérouse de Montclos, 2021). The displacement crisis not only results from but also contributes to ongoing instability and insecurity. Addressing this issue requires a multi-faceted approach that includes improving the living conditions and security in displacement sites, ensuring access to basic services, and fostering social cohesion between displaced populations and host communities. Moreover, strengthening local governance and enhancing the capacity of state institutions to manage and integrate displaced populations is crucial for preventing the exploitation of these vulnerable groups by terrorist organizations.

Human Rights Violations and Civilian Casualties

Human rights violations and civilian casualties in the Sahel region are both symptomatic of and contributors to the proliferation and resilience of terrorist groups (Erforth, 2018). The widespread abuses committed by both state actors and terrorist organizations have deepened mistrust between the local populations and their governments, thereby creating fertile ground for radicalization and recruitment into terrorist groups.

In Mali, the cycle of violence has been marked by significant human rights violations by both government forces and armed groups. Following the 2012 coup, the Malian military was accused of committing extrajudicial killings, torture, and arbitrary arrests, particularly against ethnic Tuareg and Arab populations suspected of supporting insurgent groups. These actions have exacerbated ethnic tensions and fuelled grievances among communities that feel targeted and marginalized by the state. For example, in the town of Dioura, reports of Malian soldiers executing civilians suspected of being insurgents have stoked fear and resentment. These abuses have driven many young men to join militant groups not necessarily out of ideological commitment but as a form of protection and retribution against state violence (Wing, 2018).

Burkina Faso has similarly witnessed a surge in human rights abuses amid escalating conflict. Security forces, in their efforts to combat terrorist groups, have been implicated in numerous cases of arbitrary detention, torture, and extrajudicial killings. In regions like the Sahel and Centre-Nord, where terrorist activity is rampant, the Burkinabe military has conducted counter-terrorism operations that often result in civilian casualties. These actions have included indiscriminate shelling of villages and summary executions of suspected terrorists, which frequently include innocent civilians. The

massacre in the village of Yirgou in 2019, where security forces and vigilante groups killed over 200 Fulani villagers in retaliation for a terrorist attack, exemplifies the severe consequences of such violations. This incident has not only intensified ethnic tensions but also pushed members of the Fulani community towards radical groups that promise protection and justice (Alda et al., 2014).

In Niger, the conflict with Boko Haram and ISGS has led to numerous reports of human rights abuses by both state forces and militants. Nigerian security forces have been accused of using excessive force, conducting unlawful killings, and engaging in torture during their operations against Boko Haram. The infamous Zinder incident in 2020, where security forces reportedly killed dozens of civilians during a raid on a suspected terrorist hideout, illustrates the brutal tactics often employed. Such actions have had a counterproductive effect, fostering animosity towards the government and sympathy for terrorist groups among the local population. Additionally, Boko Haram's atrocities, including kidnappings, mass executions, and sexual violence, have terrorized communities and further destabilized the region. The group's attack on the village of Toumour in 2020, where dozens of civilians were killed and many homes were destroyed, highlights the indiscriminate violence faced by civilians caught in the conflict.

The pervasive human rights abuses and civilian casualties not only undermine the legitimacy of state authorities but also provide terrorist groups with powerful propaganda tools. These groups often exploit instances of state violence and impunity to recruit new members, portraying themselves as protectors of the oppressed. In Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, terrorist organizations have effectively used narratives of state persecution and injustice to draw support from marginalized communities. The portrayal of government forces as indiscriminate and brutal actors bolsters the appeal of terrorist groups, which promise justice, protection, and a means to avenge the wrongs suffered by their supporters.

Addressing human rights violations and minimizing civilian casualties is crucial for undermining the appeal of terrorist groups in the Sahel (Traoré, 2019). This requires comprehensive reforms within the security forces to ensure accountability and adherence to international human rights standards. Strengthening oversight mechanisms, providing human rights training, and fostering community engagement are essential steps toward rebuilding trust between state authorities and local populations. Moreover, enhancing the capacity of judicial institutions to address grievances and deliver justice can help mitigate the cycle of violence and prevent further radicalization. Ultimately, a holistic approach that combines security efforts with respect for human rights and effective governance is essential for achieving long-term stability and countering terrorism in the Sahel.

Regional Cooperation and Security Architecture

Cross-Border Collaboration

Cross-border collaboration is essential for combating the proliferation and resilience of terrorist groups in the Sahel region (Önal et al., 2021). The porous borders and vast,

ungoverned spaces facilitate the movement of militants, weapons, and resources across national boundaries, making unilateral efforts by individual countries insufficient. Effective regional cooperation among Sahelian states and their neighbours is crucial for addressing the transnational nature of terrorism.

The G5 Sahel Joint Force, comprising military units from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, exemplifies an ambitious regional initiative to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime. Established in 2017, the Joint Force aims to enhance coordination and joint operations across borders to dismantle terrorist networks. However, despite its strategic intent, the force has faced significant challenges. Financial constraints, logistical issues, and varying levels of commitment among member states have hampered its effectiveness. For instance, the lack of adequate funding and equipment has limited the Joint Force's operational capabilities, while differing national priorities and political will have often resulted in inconsistent participation and coordination (Fischer, 2017). These issues were evident during a 2018 operation where joint forces struggled to maintain cohesion and communication, leading to operational delays and reduced impact.

The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), which includes Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, presents another example of regional collaboration aimed at countering Boko Haram. This initiative has seen some success in reducing the group's territorial control and disrupting its operations. For instance, coordinated military offensives in 2015 and 2016 led to the recapture of significant territories previously held by Boko Haram. However, the MNJTF has also faced considerable obstacles, including logistical coordination, intelligence sharing, and sustained political commitment from member states. The fluctuating commitment levels were particularly evident in 2017 when Nigeria, the lead nation in the fight against Boko Haram, temporarily diverted resources and attention to address other internal security issues, leading to a resurgence of Boko Haram attacks in the Lake Chad region (Hardy, 2019).

The role of international partners, such as the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN), in supporting cross-border collaboration is also critical. The EU's support for the G5 Sahel Joint Force through financial assistance and capacity-building initiatives highlights the importance of external aid in bolstering regional security efforts (Touré,2021). For example, the EU has provided funding for infrastructure, training, and logistical support, aiming to enhance the operational effectiveness of the Joint Force. Despite this support, challenges remain in ensuring the sustainability and local ownership of these initiatives. The reliance on external funding can lead to dependency, which becomes problematic if international attention and resources wane.

Furthermore, the African Union's (AU) Peace and Security Council has attempted to foster greater regional cooperation through initiatives such as the African Standby Force and its regional brigades. While the AU's involvement underscores the importance of a continental approach to security, the implementation has often been hindered by bureaucratic inefficiencies, lack of political cohesion among member states, and limited

resources. The slow deployment of AU forces in critical situations, as seen in the delayed response to escalating violence in northern Mali in 2019, exemplifies these challenges.

The necessity for effective cross-border collaboration extends beyond military cooperation to include intelligence sharing, border security, and socio-economic development initiatives. Enhanced intelligence sharing among Sahelian countries, and their neighbours is vital for pre-empting and disrupting terrorist activities (Rudincová, 2017). However, distrust among states and the lack of standardized communication channels often impede effective information exchange. Efforts to improve border security through joint patrols and monitoring have also faced logistical and political challenges. For instance, the porous borders between Niger and Mali have allowed terrorist groups to move freely, undermining national and regional security efforts.

Moreover, addressing the socio-economic root causes of terrorism requires collaborative development initiatives that transcend national borders (Kfir, 2018). Projects aimed at improving infrastructure, education, and economic opportunities in border regions can help mitigate the factors that contribute to radicalization. The Liptako-Gourma Authority, a regional organization focused on promoting development in the border regions of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, is an example of such efforts. Despite its potential, the organization's impact has been limited by insufficient funding, coordination issues, and persistent insecurity in the region.

While cross-border collaboration in the Sahel is essential for effectively combating terrorism, significant challenges impede its success. Addressing these challenges requires sustained political commitment, adequate funding, and the establishment of robust mechanisms for coordination and information sharing (Osaherumwen et al., 2018). By fostering a holistic approach that integrates security measures with development initiatives, Sahelian states, and their partners can enhance regional stability and undermine the conditions that allow terrorism to thrive.

Capacity Building and Governance Reforms

Capacity building and governance reforms are critical components in addressing the root causes of terrorism and promoting stability in the Sahel region. Strengthening the capacity of state institutions and improving governance mechanisms are essential for enhancing security, fostering socio-economic development, and addressing the grievances that fuel extremism.

In Mali, the 2012 coup and subsequent conflict exposed deep-seated governance failures and institutional weaknesses that contributed to the country's instability. To address these challenges, efforts have been made to rebuild state institutions and improve governance at both the national and local levels. For example, the Malian government, with support from international partners such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union (EU), has implemented initiatives to enhance the effectiveness and accountability of public administration. These efforts include decentralization reforms aimed at devolving power to local authorities, strengthening their capacity to deliver services, and promoting citizen

participation in decision-making processes (Charbonneau, 2017). However, progress has been slow, and challenges persist, including bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, and resistance from entrenched interests.

Similarly, in Niger, capacity-building efforts have focused on strengthening state institutions to improve security and governance (Benedikter et al., 2018). The country has received support from international partners, including the United States through its Security Governance Initiative (SGI), aimed at enhancing security sector reform and promoting good governance. Initiatives such as the creation of specialized units within the security forces, training programs for law enforcement and judicial officials, and the establishment of oversight mechanisms have been implemented to enhance the government's ability to address security threats and uphold the rule of law. However, the effectiveness of these efforts has been hampered by resource constraints, limited institutional capacity, and the persistence of corruption.

Burkina Faso has also embarked on governance reforms to address the underlying drivers of instability and terrorism. The country has undertaken initiatives to strengthen democratic institutions, promote transparency and accountability, and combat corruption. For example, the establishment of the National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANLC) and the adoption of anti-corruption legislation demonstrate the government's commitment to addressing governance challenges. Additionally, efforts to improve public service delivery, enhance access to justice, and promote inclusive development have been prioritized to address the grievances of marginalized communities and reduce the appeal of extremist ideologies. However, progress has been uneven, and challenges remain, including political instability, weak rule of law, and the persistence of patronage networks (Abdoul et al., 2021).

The role of regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) is instrumental in supporting capacity-building and governance reforms in the Sahel. These organizations provide platforms for dialogue, coordination, and cooperation among member states to address common security challenges. For example, ECOWAS has established mechanisms such as the Early Warning System and the ECOWAS Standby Force to facilitate regional responses to security threats. Additionally, the AU's African Governance Architecture (AGA) promotes democratic governance, human rights, and the rule of law through policy dialogue, capacity-building, and peer review mechanisms. However, the effectiveness of these regional initiatives depends on the political will and commitment of member states to implement reforms and uphold democratic principles.

Capacity building and governance reforms are essential for addressing the root causes of terrorism and promoting stability in the Sahel region. While progress has been made in strengthening state institutions and improving governance mechanisms, significant challenges remain. Addressing corruption, promoting transparency and accountability, and enhancing public service delivery are critical steps in building resilient and inclusive societies that can withstand the threat of extremism. Moreover, regional cooperation

and support from international partners are crucial for sustaining momentum and ensuring that efforts to promote good governance yield tangible results.

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

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Impact of an Integrated ERP System on Corporate Structure and Corporate Culture – the Case of and African-Based Flower Growing Enterprise, Marginpar[1]

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Abstract:

Despite the growing adoption of ERP systems in the life of enterprises, less research has been conducted on its impact on corporate structure and culture. This study addresses this relationship, focusing on Marginpar, a multinational flower company, growing flowers in African premises and employing local Africans, and examines the effects of ERP introduction on both corporate culture and structure. The research includes in-depth interview with Marginpar's Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) manager, surveys distributed to Marginpar employees through the ESG manager in Africa and the Netherlands, and analysis of online articles from the company's website. The findings reveal that the ERP implementation has significant impacts on corporate culture and structure, specifically, it leads to clearer task definitions, changes in employee attitudes toward greater task orientation, departmental modifications, altered communication patterns, organizational disarray, shifts in employee roles and responsibilities, and changes in employee positions. These results underscore the profound influence of ERP systems on a company's culture and structure. Future research should expand on these findings by examining the ongoing impacts of ERP systems on corporate culture and structure over time. This study highlights the critical need for organizations to understand and adapt to these transformative effects when implementing ERP systems.

Keywords:
Corporate Culture;
Corporate Structure;
ERP system;
Marginpar;
Organizational Change.

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Introduction

Firms' corporate structure and culture evolve over time to ensure the fitness of the organization with their internal and external environment. It is crucial for an organization to perform to have the proper corporate structure and culture. High–performing organizations do not want an organization that simply works, but rather an organization that performs (Galbraith, 2014). Therefore, it is essential to look at the implications caused by ERP implementation on corporate culture and structure since it affects the organization's performance (Alkhaffaf and Alnhairat, 2017; Olsen, Haaland and Hustad, 2022; Zaitar, 2022). ERP systems are cross-functional and process-centered systems that integrate and streamline data across the corporation into one complete system that supports the demands of the entire venture and consist of modules (a group of related programs performing a significant function). These modules usually include accounting, inventory and purchasing, sales and distribution, manufacturing, human resource management, and supply chain. The introduction of these information systems into the business domain began in the 1980s after the introduction of personal computers; by then organizations had a single information system. In the late 1990s companies started implementing integrated systems (Bradford, 2015; Nurmukhamet and Tick, 2022).

In the last few years, there has been a lot of research related to ERP implementation, most of which focused on the critical success factors of ERP implementation, its failure, and critical challenges (Alkhaffaf and Alnhairat, 2017; Yusuff, Shahzad and Hassan, 2019; Zendehdel Nobari *et al.*, 2022; Michelberger, 2024; Zsótér and Végh, 2024). Such research includes impacts on the performance after ERP implementation and general impact on various organizations. Some researchers have talked about how culture impacts ERP implementation (Guo and Wang, 2015) but there is a lack of research directed specifically toward the impacts of integrated ERP system implementation on both the corporate culture and structure of a company, while ERP implementation is a major cultural change for organizations, and the success of implementation can be affected by the existing culture within the organization (Zaglago *et al.*, 2013, 2014; Guo and Wang, 2015).

The present research focuses on the impacts of implementing ERP systems on both the corporate structure and culture using Marginpar, a multinational flower company operating in African flower plants and employing local Africans. With its headquarters in the Netherlands Marginpar owns seven farms in Kenya and three in Ethiopia, has partner farms in Zimbabwe and Tanzania, and imports flowers from these four countries into the Netherlands, where it auctions them.

The paper is organized as follow. After the introduction, the literature review explores the two aspects of the subject of the research, then the research aims, questions and the research methodology are described, followed by the results of the interview and the survey conducted amid the employees. The Conclusion section summarizes the findings, gives recommendations, research limitations and future research possibilities.

1.Literature Review

The literature review will briefly look into different organizational structures, followed by expounding on corporate culture, then ERP implementation and how ERP systems could interfere with corporate culture and structure as well.

1.1. Organizational structures

Mintzberg (1979) defined organizational structure as simply a summation of methods used to divide the organizational labor into several jobs and then achieve coordination between them. Král and Králová (2016) depicted organizational structure as a combination of its processes, strategy, people, culture, environment, and technology. Stroh et al. (2002) conveyed that organizational structure consists of activities such as coordination, supervision, and task allocation which are directed toward the organizational goals. Mintzberg (1979) stated that division of labor is simply dividing the task to be performed and came up with the following coordination: mechanism, mutual adjustment, direct supervision, standardization of work process, standardization of work output, and the standardization of workers' skills.

Ahmady et al. (2016) mention that there are two types of organizational structures which are *physical* and *social* in which physical structures refer to the relations between physical elements of an organization such as buildings and geographical locations while social structure refers to the relationship between social elements, departments, positions, people, and organizational units. There are seven types of organizational social structures, namely *simple*, *functional*, *multidivisional*, *matrix*, *hybrid* and *network structure* and *bureaucracy*. Furthermore, there are *mechanistic* and *organic structural forms* where the organic structural form is a less horizontal, highly collaborative, with flexible tasks, informal communications (Szilagyi, 2022), and decentralized decision–making structural form while the mechanistic structure is a structure characterized by the differentiation of the horizontal level, exact and inflexible relations, formal communication channels and centralized decision–making (Ahmady, Mehrpour and Nikooravesh, 2016). Morton and Hu (2004) used Mintzberg's categorization and defined five dimensions of organizational structure, namely *simple, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, divisionalized form,* and *adhocracy.*

Mintzberg (1979) depicted *simple structure* as a structure with zero or little technostructure, few support staff, sloppy division in labor, there is no much differentiation within its units, and there is a negligible managerial hierarchy. Ahmady et al. (2016) and Mintzberg (1979) both argue that coordination in this structure is by direct supervision, control over all the important decisions tends to be centralized to the Chief Executive Officer, which can make decision-making flexible. This structure is a structure with one or a few person's apexes and a living operating core.

Awa (2016) as well as Ahmady et al. (2016) talked about a *functional structure* as a structure whereby tasks and activities are categorized by functional framework for example finance, marketing, production, research and development, and human resource management. Awa (2016) described this structure as a structure that suites smaller businesses or those that concentrate on single goods and services and remarks that this structure sorts employees according to their particular abilities and job duties,

while all function heads report to the director, or CEO, or company president as structured.

Ahmady et al. (2016) describe a *multidivisional structure* as a set of different functional structures with a single reporting center. Döhler refers to this structure, as a structure with several semi-independent sub-units that share only a few general services which include accounting, data processing, and procurement, each division is dedicated to a special market segment and can operate autonomously, as its profit center. He further illustrated that these divisions are less hierarchical but rather mainly characterized by internal divisions that compete with one another (Smith and Brooks, 2013; Döhler, 2017).

Abdula (2017) portrayed a *matrix structure* as an overlay of two structures as for example of a geographical divisional structure and a functional structure to leverage the advantages of both, which type of combination of more than one organizational structure is confirmed by Mosca et al. (2021), and Galbraith (2014) as well. Some advantages of this structure include decentralized decision–making, strong product, great environmental monitoring, quick response to change, flexible use of resources, and efficient use of support systems, however some of its disadvantages are the high cost of running the administration, potential confusion over authority and duty, and excessive attention on internal decisions (Galbraith, 2014; Abdula, 2017; Mosca, Gianecchini and Campagnolo, 2021).

A *hybrid structure* is defined as not a pure type of organizational structure because it does not fit perfectly with any organizational structure, it involves a combination of two or more organizational structures and the hybrid structure involves the incorporation of both centralized and decentralized structures (Abdula, 2017), or on other words a structured and a non-structured part where the hybrid structure can be unclear (Ahmady, Mehrpour and Nikooravesh, 2016; Dudovskiy, 2016; Joblin *et al.*, 2023).

Achrol and Kotler (1999) defined a *network organization* as an autonomous combination of task or skill-specialized economic entities which operates without hierarchy control, but it is embedded, by dense lateral connections, mutuality, and reciprocity in a shared value system that defines roles and systems. The network structure is divided into four types which include, internal networks (are designed to reduce hierarchy), vertical networks, intermarket network, and opportunity network (they are organized around customer needs and market gap. According to Abdula (2017) network structures are coordinated by market mechanisms or relational norms instead of the hierarchy command chain.

Ahmady et al. (2016) illustrate a *bureaucratic organization structure* as a structure that has the following features: a high volume of consistent and ongoing executive work, observing formal and routine regulations, the existence of distinct units performing clearly defined designated duties, centralization of authority and use of a commanding hierarchy to decisions and full administrative structure with clear lines separating personnel from queue activities.

Meyer et al. (2022) illustrated that as industries change more rapidly organizations need to be more innovative, flexible, and adaptable, which has resulted in the organization changing from functional, hierarchical and vertical structures to structure

that are more appropriate for an environment that is stable and predictable into horizontal and versatile structures. Meyer et al. (2022) and Ahmady et al. (2016) portrayed matrix and flat structures and organic structures as an example of horizontal structures and matrix and flat structures as decentralized and adaptable structures. Ahmady et al. (2016) explained organic structure as flexible and has collaborative decision–making thus suitable for changing environment. **Hiba! A hivatkozási forrás nem található.** contrasts these two categorizations.

Organizational forms by Morton (vertical) and by Almady (horizotall)	*Simple*	*Functional*	*Multidivisional*	*Matrix*	*Hybrid*	*Network*	*Bureaucracy*
Simple	+			((+))	(+)		
Machine bureaucracy				((+))	(+)		+
Professional bureaucracy		+		((+))	(+)		
Divisionalized form			+	((+))	(+)		
Adhocracy				((+))	(+)		

(+): combination of any of the forms vertically; ((+)) combination of any two forms, a centralized and a decentralized one

Figure 1: Organizational structures by Almady et al. (2016) and by Morton and Hu (2004) based on Mintzberg (1979)

1.2. Corporate Culture

Rasak (2022) clarifies that an organization's treatment of its employees is determined by its organizational culture, which is a set of shared presumptions, attitudes, and beliefs; these widespread views have a significant impact on the employees of the organization and dictate how they act, dress, and do their work. Culture is a pattern of group behavior and assumptions that are taught to the newcomers in the organization. Each company develops and maintains a unique culture that sets expectations and boundaries for the behavior of its members. Corporate culture is made up of seven characteristics that range in importance from high to low, namely (1) *Innovation and risk-taking* (the degree of risk-taking and innovation fostered among employees), (2) *Attention to detail* (the extent to which a person must demonstrate accuracy, thoughtfulness, and thoroughness), (3) *Outcome orientation* (the extent to which the management emphasizes the outcomes or results rather than the methods and procedures employed to accomplish these objectives), (4) *People orientation* (the degree to which managerial decisions consider how a decision will affect the organization's employee), (5) *Team orientation* (the degree to which work is structured around teams rather than individuals), (6) *Aggressiveness* (how competitive and aggressive people are as opposed to easygoing), and (7) *Stability* (the degree to which organization efforts prioritize the

preservation of the status quo over growth). Each of these characteristics has a unique value that, when added together, defines the particular culture of an organization. Organizational members determine the value that their company places on these characteristics, and they subsequently alter their behavior to conform to this perceived set of values (Rasak, 2022).

According to Handy (1976) each culture has a different way of controlling people, making decisions, resolving conflicts, structuring responsibility and planning. He has also pointed out that each culture makes various presumptions about the relationship between a person and an organization, people's motivations, leadership roles, workplace priorities, and sources of influence. Furthermore, Handy (1976) also talks about *Power culture, Role culture, Task culture* and *Person culture* as summarized in Figure 2.

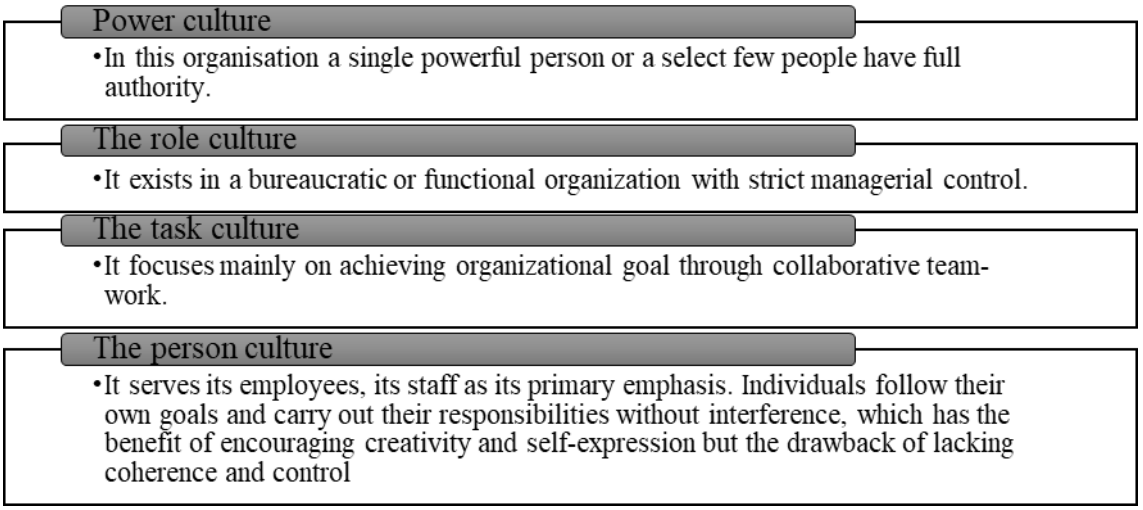


Figure 2: Culture types, Source: (Handy, 1976, pp. 67–84).

1.3.ERP Implementation

Behera and Dhal (2020) mention that ERP systems implementation involves picking and installing the program, transferring the closing data from old to new systems, configuring and customizing user needs and various business processes and hand-holding user training. It is almost as important to choose the correct software in the first place as it is to find the perfect implementation partner. They also claim that ERP systems implementation is a significant endeavor that needs significant resources, dedication, and changes throughout the entire organization, then state that after the implementation of ERP systems the organizations primarily put their efforts into the effective use of ERP systems (Behera and Dhal, 2020). According to the findings by Almahamid and Awsi organizational culture (2015), including factors such as top management support, business process reengineering, and effective project management, has been found to have a positive correlation with ERP perceived benefits. Alaskari et al. (2021) classified the implementation process into seven phases which are process analysis, preparing the statement of work (SOW), creating project plan, build the system, preparing the standard operating procedure (SOP), creating data plan migration, user acceptance test, user training, and finally going live. (1) *Process analysis* involves reviewing the current workflow and processes and defining additional

modifications to the selected ERP system. (2) *Preparing SOP* involves discussions between the software providers and the company management about the software modules as it is to be implemented and where customization is needed. In this phase the company adjusts some of the workflows for the ERP system's full configuration and to meet the company's needs, thus avoiding any mismatch between the company's logic and the ERP's logic. The aim of the phase (3) *Creating a project plan* is to create a project work plan, to cover project activities and to implement milestones by planning training sessions and testing modifications. Phase number (4), *Build the system* aims at building the system based on the scope of work, the system; the screen, the document layouts, reports etc. are customized, and access approval points throughout the process flow for the end user are created. The selected ERP systems usually have a Business Process Management tool that configures the systems to get the right relationship, rules and procedures of the workflow. Phase number (5) *Preparing the standard operating procedures* aims to customize an standardize the existing operating procedures as approved by the company. The key users are asked to review the standard operating procedures document based on their area of responsibility in this phase. (6) *Creating a data migration plan* involves comparing the company's current data with the system target data, then setting up some translation rules to determine viable data and eliminating redundancy by removing incorrect and outdated data records. (7) *User acceptance tests* involves executing different workflows and processes according to standard operating procedures and ensuring that the standard operating procedures reflect the actual steps that users need to conduct and ensuring that the processes were tested and approved by the software development team as well as the important users from the project team. (8) *User training* ensures that the key users in each department get familiar with the new ERP system, and will be able to train the other department members. In the phase (9) *Go live* data is uploaded into the software in the live environment and the IT infrastructure within the company are updated to ensure that all the hardware is accessible to accommodate the new ERP (Alaskari, Pinedo-Cuenca and Ahmad, 2021).

Baykasoğlu and Gölcük (2017) stated that after the implementation of ERP systems, not all the firms have been successful in implementing as well as using the systems effectively. For this reason firms focus their attention on Critical Success Factors (CSFs)–based evaluation framework to decrease the probability of failure of implementation (Alkhaffaf and Alnhairat, 2017). The most influential CSFs in descending order are, major former IT change experience, major organizational change experience, change management program, understanding political structure, training of technical staff and finally training on future business processes (Baykasoğlu and Gölcük, 2017). Xie et al. (2022) classified the CSFs identified for ERP implementation into five categories which include top management support (leadership, commitment, and participation of senior level management), users (user's perception, commitment, interest, feedback, IT skills, familiarity with other team members), IT infrastructure (database, hardware, software), Project management (project team selection, team training, team competence) and Vendor support (vendor expertise related to training, technical knowledge and support, maintenance, updates and reliability). Most of what Baykasoğlu and Gölcük (2017) illustrated, fell under project management in the Xie et al. (2022) explanation. Chopra

et al. (2022) mentioned that certain post–implementation tasks, which include software updating and maintenance are essential in the life cycle of the system since they play part in maximizing the system's economic benefits. As Alkhaffah and Alnhairat (2017) state the efficiency of the IT department, support of senior management, and ERP vendor support are critical success factors that significantly affect organizational performance.

Menon et al. (2019) mentioned some of the problems facing ERP implementation such as disbanding the project team soon after the project goes live which leaves the employers without a consultant, interference issues, lack of proper testing during implementation, time zone limitation, stresses caused on people by the implementation, delay caused by offshoring, peoples resistance to change, letting go some project members due to the high cost of implementation, no support from internal stakeholders (employees), data cleansing, excessive customization and leadership not understanding the complexities. They stated that addressing critical challenges in an ERP implementation can make the issues organizations face more visible (Menon *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, multinational corporations implementing ERP systems face challenges due to different business actors and their heterogeneous interests influenced by local strategies and context (Rahimi and Møller, 2013), implying that national cultural dimensions can affect organizations' ERP implementation success rates (Cyrus and Nejad, 2014). On top, organizational learning culture influences individual assimilation level of ERP systems, impacting individual motivations and utilization of the ERP software (Guo, Wang and Feng, 2014; Ray, Mishra and Dash, 2022).

1.4.ERP Influence on Both Corporate Structure and Culture

Svärd (2018) has pointed out that the organizational structure has to be changed to fit the rules and processes for the successful implementation of ERP systems; various respondents gave proof of the influence of ERP during the implementation on corporate structure for successful implementation, such as positively affecting organizational performance, including cost reduction, task automation, customer satisfaction, and improvement of decision making (Zaitar, 2022). Some respondents had to outsource the project managers and break the work into work streams and project teams had enough mandate to make decisions without taking them to the top management. Skoumpopoulou and Moss (2018) also showed evidence of ERP implementation's impact on corporate culture, they pointed out that before the introduction of an ERP system, a company identity would denote as a power culture, as depicted in Handy's model (1976) and after the introduction of the ERP systems, the company's culture changed to a task culture. Ranjan et al. (2016) states that ERP implementation in its implementation phase affects the corporate culture and Coşkun et al. (2022) mention that during the implementation of ERP systems apart from wasting money and time, the system implementation can disrupt the company's corporate culture. The efficiency of the IT department, the support of senior management, or the ERP vendor support are critical success factors that significantly affect organizational performance (Alkhaffaf and Alnhairat, 2017; Ebirim *et al.*, 2024). Osnes et al. (2018) show evidence of conflict in the post-implementation phase between the parent company that seeks control by use of standardized solutions and the local subsidiaries that may want to sustain local

processes and routines in multinational companies. The organizational culture could improve ERP success, and it affects the success of ERP systems in the post-implementation stage through group culture, hierarchical culture, and external-oriented culture (Guo and Wang, 2015). Herberhold (2013) highlights the interaction between ERP systems and organizational culture, saying that there are several cultural factors influenced by ERP usage, such as top management support, business process reengineering, or effective project management. The adoption of ERP can bring about overall improvement in financial, organizational and social ratios as well (Trucco and Corsi, 2014; Ali, Edghiem and Alkhalifah, 2023). ERP implementation is a significant cultural change for organizations, affecting organizational processes, spatial organization, and employee behavior (Bajolle, 2024). The integration of ERP systems can lead to improved organizational performance and efficiency, with cultural dimensions and organizational capabilities playing crucial roles in the success of ERP implementation (Berglund, 2023). On the other hand, one of the most important obstacles in ERP implementation is culture-related problems, which might lead to resistance in adopting ERP solutions among users and organizations (Cyrus and Nejad, 2014). Morton and Hu used the structural contingency theory to determine the critical features of ERP systems and organizational dimensions that help to ensure a smooth fit to ERP implementation success (Morton and Hu, 2004).

Considering the corporate culture moderating role in the influence of ERP implementation on corporate structure, apart from the highly bureaucratic organization and power corporate culture ERP implementation might result in high resistance and a low fit. However, in several corporate structure forms a well–selected corporate culture might ease ERP implementation and can make it successful.

From this section, we can confidently conclude that there is a research gap on ERP implementation's impact on the corporate structure and culture of a company. Apart from some case studies (Trucco and Corsi, 2014; Almahamid and Awsi, 2015; Guo and Wang, 2015; Le and Han, 2016; Gaol, Deniansyah and Matsuo, 2023) the ERP→corporate structure and culture impact is scarcely discussed. No research has been found that considered a multinational company concentrating its main supply on the African continent, namely in Kenya and Ethiopia. This research will analyze the impacts of ERP implementation on both corporate culture and structure in the coming sections through a case study.

2. The Research Objectives and Aims

Based on the literature review and the identified research gap the present research aims to identify and evaluate the ERP implementation and its impact on the corporate culture and structure of Marginpar flower company. After the identification of Marginpar's corporate structure and culture and focusing on the central research question, i.e. how and why ERP application influences corporate structure and culture, the following research questions can be posed:

RQ1. What are the barriers and challenges of the introduction of an ERP system at the company?

RQ2. What factors could lead to a successful implementation of an ERP system at the company?

RQ3. In which areas can the introduction of the selected ERP system cause organizational structure and culture changes?
RQ4. What changes can be identified in the corporate structure and culture at Marginpar after the system's introduction?
RQ5. What are the negative or positive impacts caused in Marginpar after the introduction of ERP systems, and what recommendations for improvement can be given in case of a negative impact?
Consequently, from the research questions the following propositions were formulated:

P1. The human resources, manufacturing, and customer relationship management fields of integrated ERP systems are more likely to interfere with the corporate culture after ERP implementation.
P2. Expensive implementation cost is one of the challenges of ERP implementation in most firms.
P3. Training employees is one of the key success factors in ERP implementation, while the phase of employee training causes changes in the corporate structure and culture of a company.
P4. The implementation of the ERP system changed Marginpar's organizational culture to task culture and its structure to functional organizational structure.
P5. ERP implementation at Marginpar has no negative impact on both the corporate structure and the culture of Marginpar after the implementation.

Based on Morton and Hu's organizational Fit and ERP Implementation Success model (Morton and Hu, 2004) the following research model is proposed that includes the interrelationship of the ERP system implementation, the changes in the corporate culture and corporate structure (Figure 2). The dynamics in the model presents the change and influencing features of the interrelationship of ERP implementation, Corporate Structure (CS) and Corporate Culture (CC).

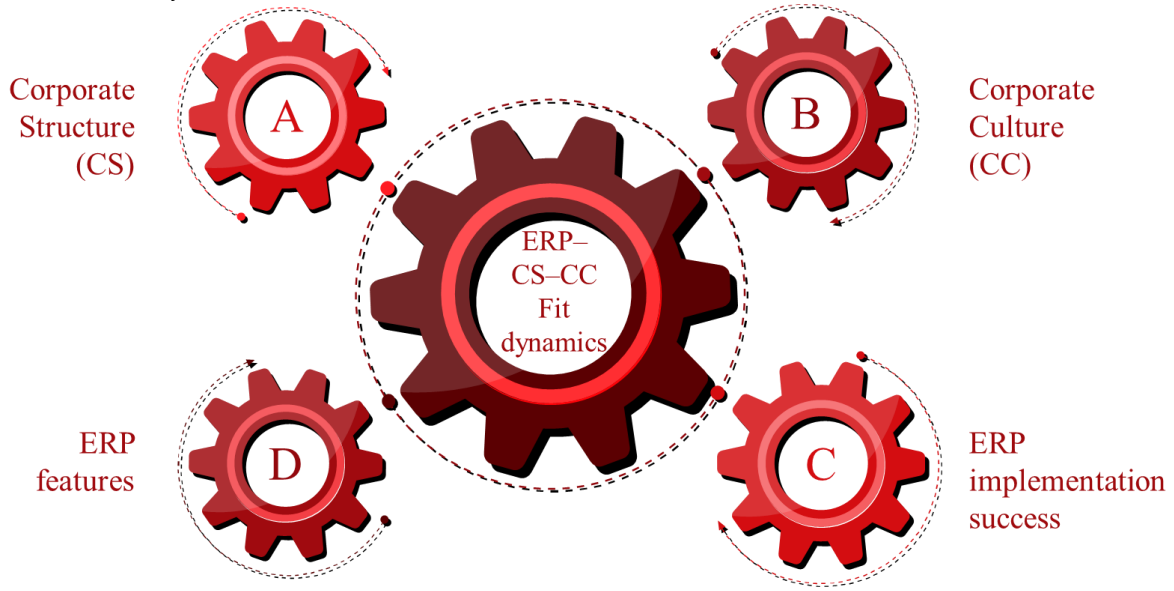


Figure 3: ERP – Corporate Structure and Corporate Cultures Fit dynamics (based on Mortin and Hu (2004).

3.Research Methodology

In the literature review data related to the topic, and the impacts of ERP implementation on both corporate culture and structure was collected from various scientific articles. The case study primary research data mainly consisted of qualitative data obtained through an interview with only a few quantitative data collected through an online survey in January 2023. The company's employees could volunteer to respond to the survey questions, anonymity was ensured and they gave their consent by filling in the questionnaire. Data collected from the interview with Marginpar's ESG manager located and working in all farms in Africa in January 2023, the company's website, a survey conducted in January 2023 and necessary company articles are used and analyzed. The in-depth interview was conducted via phone, the interview was recorded, and the interviewee was ensured about the deletion of the recording after the analysis of the interview. An interpretive philosophical approach was taken as Chowdhury (2014) depicted that this approach helps us understand the social world by providing meaningful interpretations of the world that people live in. The advantage of the approach in the present research is the matters affecting corporate culture and structure, such as leadership, ethics, values, cultural change and communication between departments are studied in depth. The thematic data analysis method was used as Guest et al. (2012) demonstrate that it requires more involvement and interpretation from the researcher, and that it has moved from counting phrases to focusing on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data which are themes. They further illustrated that to summarize the raw data for further analysis, codes are created to represent the distinct themes (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012).

4.ERP Implementation at Marginpar and its effect on both the corporate structure and culture

Marginpar started as a family business in 1988 that imported summer-cut flowers from Zimbabwe to the Netherlands for sale. Around 2002 they partnered with Kariki farm in Kenya and some farms in Tanzania and started importing flowers from Kenya and Tanzania, which led Kariki farm to grow from three to seven farms. Marginpar increased in cultivation from one hundred million stems to two hundred and fifty million stems per year. Due to this success, the two CEOs decided to combine their firms, Marginpar BV and Kariki farm to form the current Marginpar company. The two companies became integrated into the chain whereby production became its main activity. The other partner farms in Tanzania and Zimbabwe remained as partner farms while Marginpar also made more partner farms in Ethiopia (Marginpar, 2021).

Marginpar, with headquarters at Aalsmeer, Netherlands, has seven farms in Kenya, three in Ethiopia, three partner farms in Tanzania, and three partner farms in Zimbabwe. The company has about 4000 employees on its farms and about 1000 on its partner farms. Its core activities include breeding, cultivation, harvest, post-harvest, logistics, and marketing (Marginpar, 2022b).

4.1. Demographic Profile

The survey used in the research had 28 responses from Marginpar employees, from both the headquarters from the Netherlands (IT managers, Finance, Marketing, Sales and Analysis), Kenya and Ethiopia (Production, HR, IT managers, Finance, Development and Social Services, Engineering, Procurement, Sales and Export). Despite having more female employees than males, 57.1% of the respondents were male and 39.3% of the respondent were female. One employee preferred not to say his/her gender (Figure 4).

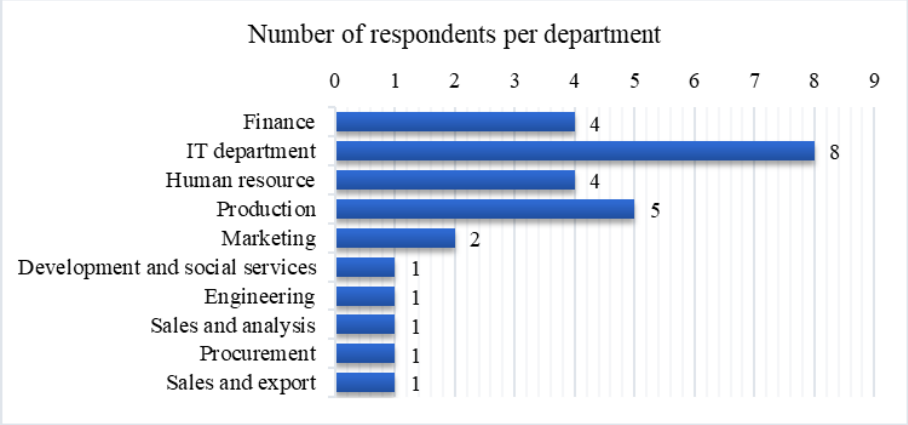


Figure 4: Number of respondents per department, Source: developed by the authors.

The IT department had the highest number of respondents accounting for 28.6% of the total respondents, the production department followed with 17.9%, then the human resource department and finance department with 14.3%, respectively, and finally the marketing department. There was one respondent from each of the following departments, engineering department, sales and export, sales and data analysis, procurement and development, and social services. Most of the employees who replied were workers (53.3%). The supervisor/team leaders accounted for 20% of the respondents. The head of the department and assistant manager each represented 10% of the total respondents. Only one intern and one manager filled in the survey.

4.2.Marginpar Culture

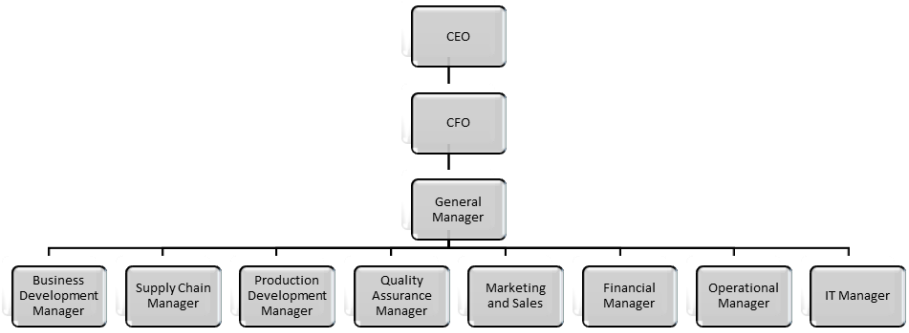
During the interview the company's ESG manager said that Marginpar's culture was derived from their company's vision stating that „*We are trendsetting the market by empowering dedicated people who create the world's most unique summer flowers*" (Marginpar, 2022b). The ESG manager and the company website both affirmed that the company firmly believed that trusting, valuing and empowering people is all that matters (Marginpar, 2022c).

The ESG manager described the company culture as the *Hamuka* culture, which he depicted as a people–centric culture. The company website further expounded on the Hamuka culture, saying that the culture is derived from a Japanese concept, Kaizen („Kai"=change; „Zen"=for good), and that Marginpar strives for continuous improvement. The interview and the company's website both indicated that this culture was only applied in the farms in Kenya and Ethiopia but was yet to be applied in the partner farms in Zimbabwe and Tanzania. Newcomers are taught the Hamuka culture on their first day at the firm and as the company has standardized all the work processes,

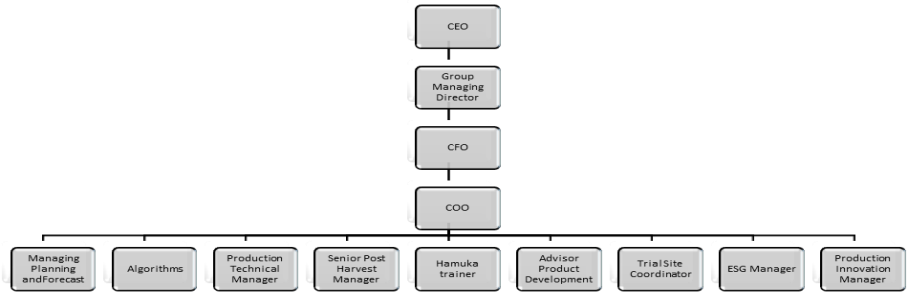
every employee knows what is expected of them and does it without waiting for orders. The ESG manager has also denoted that each employee in a production line sees the employee in the next step as their customer, that is the breeders see the planters as their customers and the cultivators see the harvesters as their customers, and the employee tries best not to pass the bad quality of product to their next customer. Both the company's website and the ESG manager asserted that they encouraged employees to share their ideas for improvement which led to great innovation from the employees (Marginpar, 2022a). According to the ESG manager the employees took part in decision-making by contributing their suggestions. In summary, concluding from the literature review and the interview, Marginpar is a mixture of both *task* and *people culture*. A company culture is also determined by shared values. Marginpar shared values include focusing on each other's talent to grow together, cooperation, sustainability, and continuity in the way the company develops relationships and brings flowers to the world.

4.3.Marginpar Structure

Marginpar has a *hybrid structure* (Abdula, 2017) because it has two CEOs, one in charge of production in Kenya and Ethiopia and the other in the Netherlands, where quality control, marketing, and selling of flowers take place (Marginpar, 2022a). Each CEO has a specific number of functional departments according to regional functionality, for example, in the Netherlands revolves around marketing, quality control and sales because this is where they sell and market their flowers. The corporate structure in Kenya and Ethiopia revolves around production because this is where production takes place. Figure 5 displays Marginpar's corporate structure in the Netherlands as well as in Kenya and Ethiopia.



a) Marginpar corporate structure in the Netherlands



b) Marginpar corporate structure in Kenya and Ethiopia

Figure 5: Marginpar organizational structure in the Netherlands, in Kenya and Ethiopia. Source: (Marginpar, 2022a).

There is only one CFO at both the Netherlands and the Kenya-Ethiopia structures and thus acts as the connection between the two structures. The organizational structure of Marginpar is not a regional divisional structure, whereby the CEO is the head of each region because Ahmady et al. (2016) described the multidivisional structure as a structure with a single reporting center, and in Marginpar's case, the reporting centers are the two CEOs. According to Awa (2016), a functional structure is a structure whereby tasks and activities are categorized by a functional framework, for example, finance and marketing, and all functional heads report to a director, a CEO, or the company president. Therefore, we can conclude that Marginpar has two dependent functional structures connected by the CFO and the task process from production to marketing, therefore, Marginpar is a hybrid structure. Marginpar has a clear set hierarchy and decision-making is centralized to the two CEOs, thus we can say that Marginpar is a mechanistic structure. Apart from the organizational structure at the organizational level, all Marginpar farms have functional structures. The organizational structure of a farm looks as shown in Figure 6.

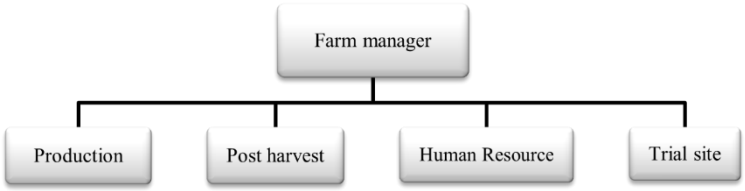


Figure 6: Organizational structure at Marginpar farms Source: (Marginpar, 2022a).

In the interview, the ESG manager has also mentioned that they have an open-door policy. Shenhar (1993) depicted an open-door policy as an open management system, he portrayed this policy as a way to improve trust, motivation, and satisfaction among employees. The ESG manager in the interview expounded that they have decision inputs not only from the CEO, the board and the investors but also from the employees.

4.4.ERP Implementation at Marginpar

The major reason why Marginpar decided to implement ERP in 2019 is to increase performance by reducing waste within the processes. In the interview, the ESG manager explained that the ERP was implemented through several steps (however, not all the steps were followed given by Alaskari et al. (2021)), that were identified as the key steps by the company management:

1. *Identifying and analyzing the processes*: identifying the processes involved them bringing in an expert, the Marginpar team acquainted the experts with the company business and operating processes, that is how long each process took, how many people it involved, and the inputs and outputs of each process. After the processes' careful scrutiny, the company identified the wastes within the processes, which were eliminated through the implementation of the ERP system.
2. *Workshops*: After the implementation, workers with the same performance were selected, whom they referred to as natural teams in the company. They were trained for about a week and after achieving the desired results, these results were implemented in other processes.

3. *Training*: The manager said that after the first workshop employees from the other farms, were brought in for training (new trainers), and then they can go back and implemented the new processes. He further expounded that apart from training the trainers they also did horizontal learning whereby they brought together people who did similar tasks at different farms so that they could learn from the already trained personnel.
4. *Evaluation*: After the training, the results were evaluated with the experts and improved in some areas. He also emphasized that even now after the implementation the company still does weekly and monthly evaluations to ensure continuous improvement.

4.5.Challenges Marginpar Faced During the Implementation

According to the company's ESG manager Marginpar faced several challenges and barriers in the implementation of the ERP system. Before the implementation, the information used to flow from top to bottom, but, after the implementation the information started flowing from bottom to top. So, a c*hange in Paradigm* was observed. Some problems occurred *with empowering employees.* After the implementation, there was confusion about who reports to whom which led to the creation of clusters and domains in the *organizational structure*. The company faced *a language barrier* while implementing an ERP system in different countries. Bringing translators who could speak both languages was used to resolve the language barrier, however in some instances they used pictures to convey the message. Problems occurred with *different policies in different countries* where the ERP systems were implemented. The *high initial cost* was pointed out as another challenge the company faced. For Marginpar the high initial cost was mainly because some external experts had to be brought in and contracted.

4.6.Critical Success Factors in ERP Implementation at Marginpar

Three critical success factors for the ERP implementation were identified from the survey responses and the interviews, namely (1) satisfaction, (2) training and (3) considering inputs such as weather, for example, at Marginpar. Employees were asked about their perceived satisfaction of the introduced ERP system. Eighteen of them enjoyed using ERP systems, eight employees do not use it so there has been not much difference for them after the implementation. Only two employees said that the ERP systems are tiresome (Figure 7).

Employees response	No of employees	Percentage (%)
They are fun to use	16	57.14
I do not use them so there's not much difference	8	28.57
They are tiresome	2	7.14
Make coordination easier	1	3.57
Less paperwork and work became easier	1	3.57
Total	**28**	**100**

Figure 7: A table showing how employees feel about the ERP systems, Source: developed by the authors.

We can state that most employees are satisfied with the implementation of the ERP system, around 64% of the employees had positive feedback on ERP implementation with only just two employees saying they are tiresome. In the interview, the ESG manager illustrated that they trained their employees through workshops, horizontal learning, and training the trainer who later train the employees, which was one of the key success factors during the implementation of the ERP system at Marginpar as confirmed by the 78.6% of the respondents who were trained. The ESG manager also mentioned as success factor the distinct kinds of inputs, since they did not use only machines and therefore, they had to take other factors such as weather patterns into account.

4.7.ERP Use at Marginpar

One of the achievements the company wished to reach with the implementation of the ERP system was to cut waste because the company refers to company waste as surplus input. Therefore, the ERP system is used to keep inventory and to know which input is necessary and needs to be ordered. The ESG manager has added that the system detects unnecessary inputs within the process, eliminates them and the system is also used to project when plants will be ready for the market. The company uses a system different from an ERP system that takes pictures of flowers as they grow and feeds the pictures onto the ERP system on a timely basis, which helps the ERP system by the use of artificial intelligence to compare current pictures and old pictures and know when the flowers should be ready for harvesting. This is also important for the company as Marginpar's business policy is not to push their products into the market, but rather operate on the market demands. The manager has illustrated that after an in-depth analysis of the market, the company plans backward to when the flowers should be planned to be available at the market at a specific time. The use of the ERP system has made this business operation very easy for them. The ESG manager has also pointed out that the ERP system has also helped the company to deliver the products on time and error-free. In case of eventual bad comments from customers such as bad vase-life, using the ERP system the company can trace back who packed the specific flower and who processed it and trace all the details to the breeding phase. This is important as it helps in improvement in case a problem is detected. He further expounded that by using the system they can detect which part of the farm does not produce quality flowers because the system has details of every flower grown on a specific farm.

4.8. Impacts of ERP implementation on both the corporate culture and structure of Marginpar

4.8.1. Impact on corporate culture

According to the ESG manager, Marginpar's culture used to be a 'bit reserved' before the introduction of the ERP system, before 2019. The workers did not take initiative, after having arrived at the company, they waited for the managers to give instructions. The introduction of the ERP system had a beneficial impact on the above–described culture since after the introduction tasks were defined for each worker, and after arriving they would just start work immediately.

The ESG manager also demonstrated that before the introduction, the employees would just do what they were to do, for example, the drivers would just drive flowers without caring if the flowers have arrived in good condition. After the implementation he explained that all the employees started and had to see their next person in line as their next customer, which reinforced the Hamuka culture, and they had to pass good quality to their customers (employees next in line). It can be concluded that this culture change happened because, in case of damages, the damage could be traced back to the person who caused the damage in the system, thus more employees became more attentive and responsible for their own work.

Regarding the perception of company culture change due to the implementation of the ERP system, employees are more positive, communication has become easier and with work being better organized, accountability improved. More defined tasks tend to make people more focused on their tasks and finally more flexibility and strong customer service could develop. As stated in Garai-Fodor et al. (2023) state the conscious development of organizational culture needs to be paid attention to, in which individuals are responsible for culture development.

We can conclude that before the introduction of the ERP system into Marginpar, the company had a power culture (Handy, 1976). Before the implementation of the ERP system, the CEOs were the only decision-makers in the company. The other managers and the supervisors were selected to lead and pass down the CEOs' decisions. After the introduction of the ERP system, by 2023 (three years later) the culture at Marginpar changed to **task culture**. In Marginpar people started to get focused on allocated tasks thus getting the job done, they also made sure that they passed good quality to the next person in line and people started collaborating more hence group work was done with increased efficiency. Figure 8 below displays the summary of ERP implementation on corporate culture.

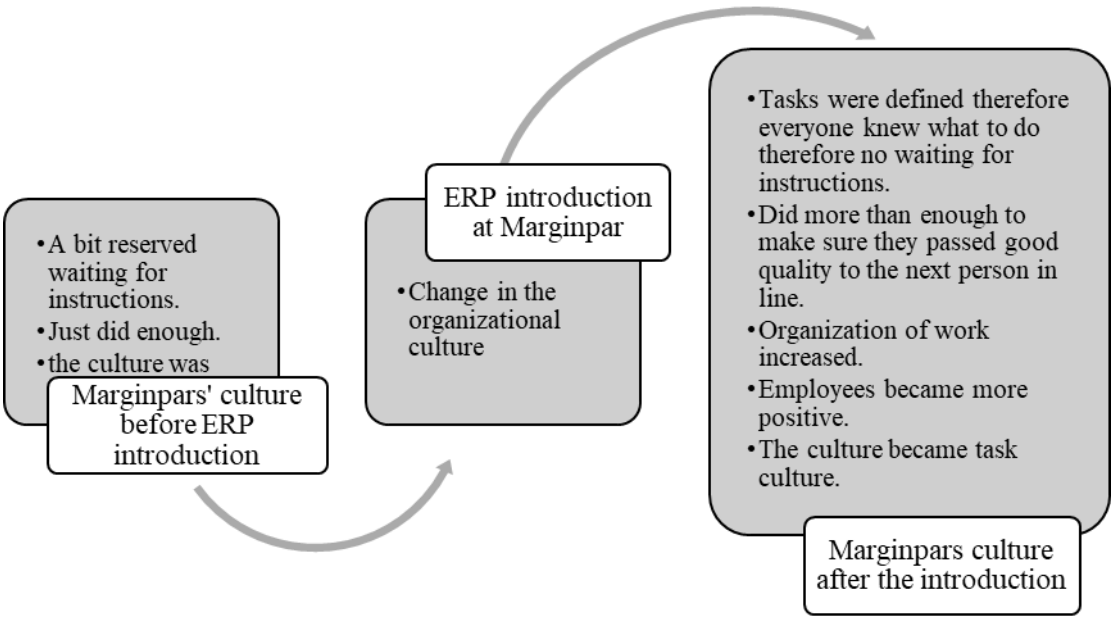


Figure 8: A figure showing culture change in Marginpar after ERP introduction, Source: developed by the authors.

4.8.2. Impact on Corporate Structure

This sub-section looks at the impact of ERP implementation on corporate structure in Marginpar. ERP implementation affects corporate structure through change in (1) communication, (2) organisation structure change, (3) task and role change, and (4) changes within the department. Marginpar's ESG manager illustrated that before the introduction, information used to flow from top to bottom on what needed to be done. After the introduction of the ERP system the structure somehow became inverted whereby the employees became the decision-makers and information started to flow from the employees to the top management. In the survey, most employees view communication up and down the hierarchy as better (82.1%), maybe because they can contribute unlike before when information was only top-down. 14.3% said that there is no difference, and only 3.6% said that it has become worse. Figure 9 shows how employees view communication up and down the hierarchy after the introduction of the ERP systems.

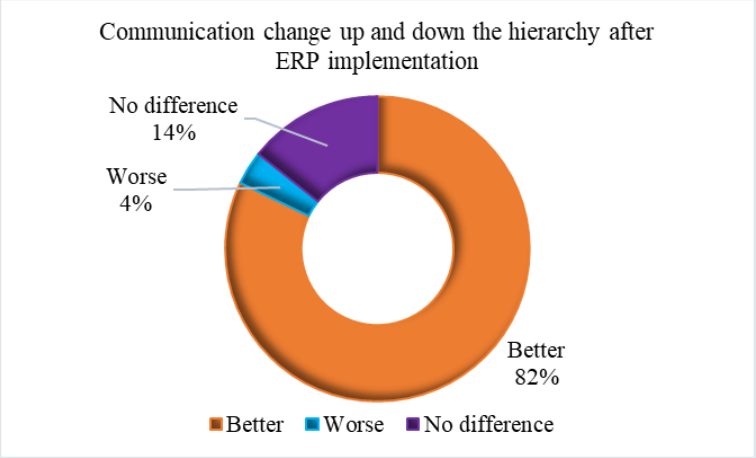


Figure 9: Change in communication up and down the hierarchy after the implementation of the ERP system at Marginpar, Source: developed by the authors.

The ESG manager also mentioned that before the implementation the communication in the company was not good whereby the workers would see the boss coming and they would just hide. He further expounded that there was a lot of blame game in the company, this was because no one wanted to be blamed for failures. However, after the introduction of the ERP system, the communication improved, and instead of hiding after seeing a supervisor coming the employees would approach them for guidance and help. The ESG manager demonstrated that before the implementation of the ERP systems information such as how the company was performing used to be held by top management. After the implementation of the ERP system, the employees also had access to such information.

In the survey, there was evidence of changes in the way employees within the same department related after the introduction of the ERP system. In the survey, 64.3 % of the employees said that there was no change. According to an employee, however, *they communicate with each other and coordinate tasks better*, while another one experienced that *work became easier thus hitting the deadlines which lead to a better relationship with other employees*. Furthermore, one employee feels that *her*

relationship with other employees within the same department became copacetic and a fourth employee perceived *efficient communication and exchange of ideas*. Finally, according to one of the employees *the system has led to better communication between them due to better accuracy and availability of clear information about what they are dealing with*.

The ESG manager unraveled that ERP implementation led to disorganization in the organization structure after the implementation, whereby there was confusion over who reports to whom, which further led to the creation of clusters and domains. Some of the clusters which were created include the board of directors and strategic clusters, the business development cluster, the finance cluster, the marketing cluster, the production cluster, and the human resource cluster. These clusters were somehow related to the Modules in the ERP system.

According to the ESG manager the roles of the managers, supervisors and employees changed after the implementation. Earlier the managers used to direct and supervise the employees on what to do and on the day's activities. After the implementation the managers and the supervisors became supporters, who guided their employees. Also, the employees became more important to the company and were referred to as value adders.

In the survey, there is also evidence of change in allocated tasks and job positions after the implementation of the ERP system, however, fewer employees experienced changes in their job or position (39.3%, 11 employees). Almost two thirds, 60.7% (17 employees) indicated that there was no change in their job or position (Figure 10).

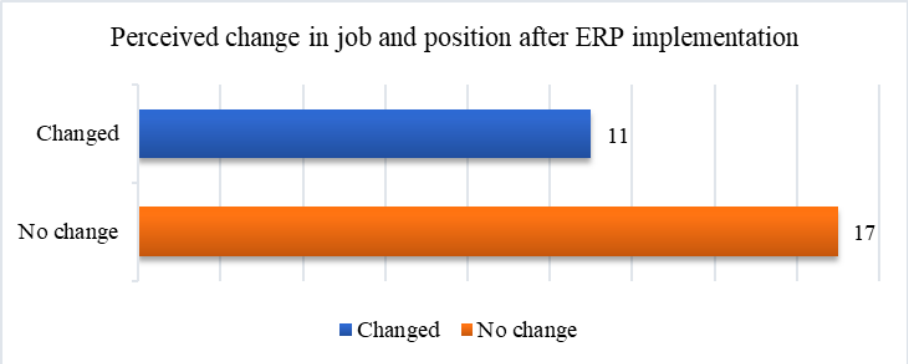


Figure 10: Number of employees who had changes in their job and job position after the implementation of the ERP system, Source: developed by the authors.

Out of the eleven respondents who indicated that there is a change in job and job positions after the implementation of the ERP system, nine gave specific answers. One of them said that *they were able to be more efficient in their delivery*, and two employees have found *that work became easier for them*. One employee elaborated that *by use of the ERP system he/she has been able to easily access management systems which have promoted good customer service on their side which has led to them being competitive at marketing* and one employee experienced that *his/her position was increased*. One of them felt that *they became the team leader* while perceived that *the ERP system automated time-consuming tasks for them of which most were repetitive tasks, and he/she specified the reports*. He/ she further elaborated that *this gives him/she more time to focus on pressing matters and people*. A next employee indicated that

there was seamless planning and product availability on time and finally one employee simply stated that *there was a better correlation after the implementation*.

After the implementation, there is also evidence of change in the relationship between employees within different departments. Two thirds (67.9%) of the employees said that the relationship between them and employees from different departments improved. 21.4% just said that there was no change in the relationship and 10.7% just said that the relationship changed. It is important to note that no single employee said that his/her relationship deteriorated after ERP system implementation (Figure 11).

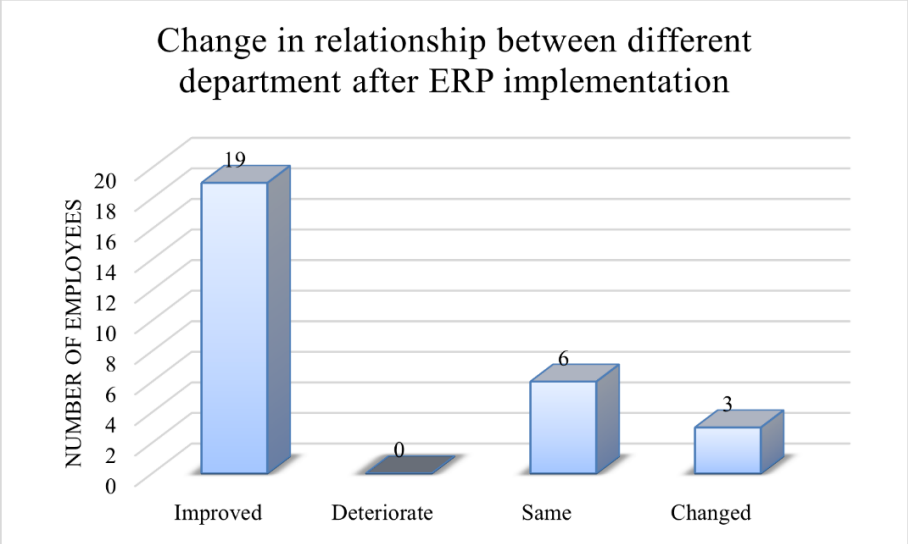


Figure 11: Change in the relationship between employees from different departments, Source: developed by the authors.

The survey has also showed that there is some departmental change after the implementation of ERP systems at Marginpar, 79% of the employees did not experience such change. The remaining 21% of the employees gave personal reasons what departmental changes they experienced, as, for example, *departments collaborating more than before*, *the departments operating much better*, *more personnel being employed to help Marginpar*, *and some departments being merged*. Figure 12 summarizes the causes and effects of ERP implementation on the corporate structure at Marginpar company.

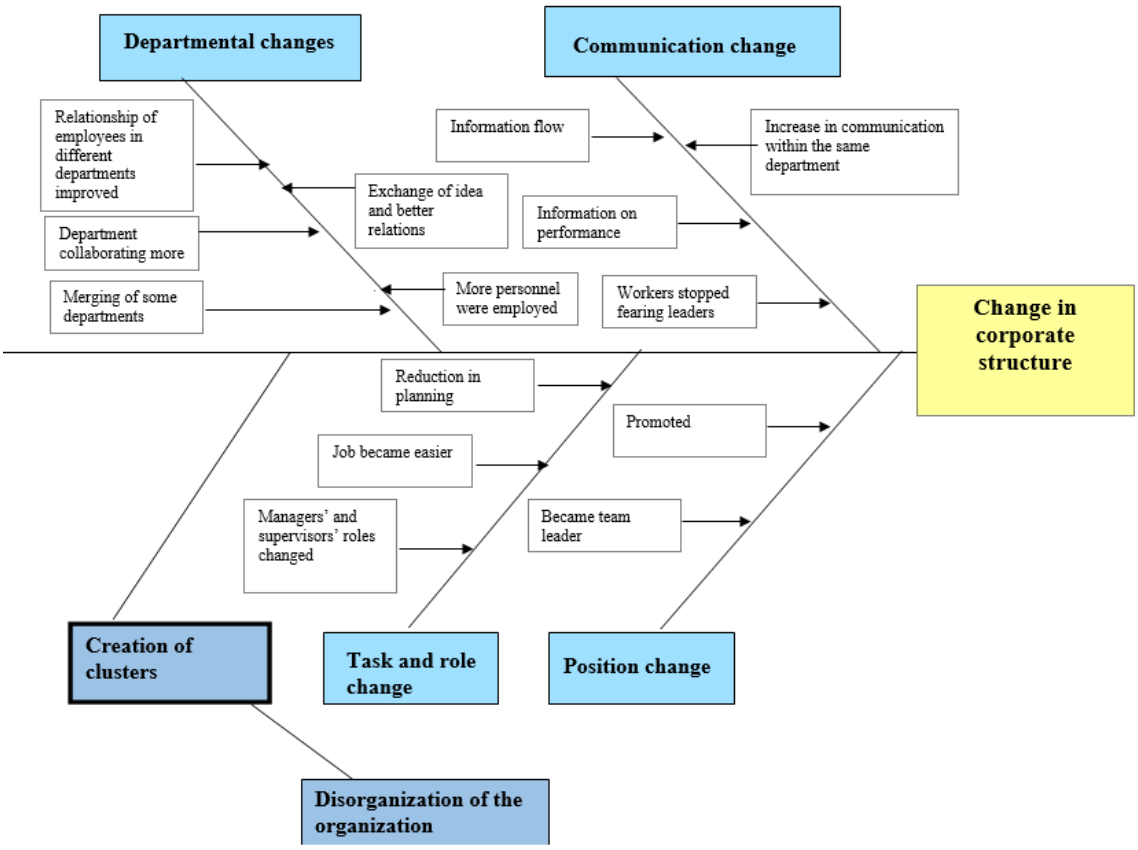


Figure 12: A fishbone diagram showing the causes and effect on the corporate structure after ERP implementation, Source: developed by the authors (Ishikawa, 1989).

The figure shows that change in corporate culture due to ERP implementation is caused by communication change, departmental change, creation of clusters which results from disorganization of the organization, task and role change, and finally position change. The departmental change is caused by changes in the relationship between different departments, the department collaborating more, merging of some departments, and employment of new employees. After ERP implementation the organization structure has become disorganized because of confusion about who reports to whom, which further led to the formation of clusters that impacts the corporate structure as can be seen in Figure 11.

The corporate structure is also caused to change by work position change. ERP implementation causes some people to be promoted and others to be made team leaders, leading to a change in corporate structure (Figure 11). Task and role change also cause a change in the corporate structure. Some of the factors mentioned prior such as the role of supervisor and manager changing, and the changing of the job in general which are caused by the ERP implementation cause changes in the corporate structure.

Communication change also causes a change in the corporate structure. ERP implementation increases communication within departments, changes the direction of the information flow, employees have access to more information on the company and workers communicate more with leaders. All these factors combined tend to cause

changes in communication within an organization which leads to changes in the corporate structure.

5. Conclusion

The present research aimed to identify and evaluate the impacts caused by the introduction of an integrated ERP system on the corporate culture and corporate structure of a company. The results indicate that there was an impact on both the corporate structure and corporate culture of Marginpar, the observed company after the implementation of the ERP system. The barriers and challenges to ERP implementation and factors that could lead to a successful introduction of an ERP system are also identified from the aspect of Marginpar, the flower company. It has been found that most changes start to occur in both the corporate structure and culture of the company at the last implementation phase (after the full implementation) of the ERP system.

The research results justified the hypotheses, namely, that the human resources, manufacturing, and customer relationship management fields of integrated ERP systems are more likely to interfere with the corporate culture after ERP implementation (supporting P1); expensive implementation cost is one of the challenges of ERP implementation in most firms (supporting P2); training employees is one of the key success factors in ERP implementation (supporting P3); the phase of employee training causes changes in the corporate structure and culture of a company (supporting P4). Furthermore, the organizational structure changed from *hierarchical* to *functional* organizational culture and its culture shifted from *power* to *task* culture, and according to the positive feedback from the employees and the interviewee, the employees perceived positive changes in both corporate structure and culture (supporting P5). Positive impacts of ERP implementation are, an increase in production, good corporate culture, easy organization of work, better communication, reduced time wasting and better relationships at work. However, some negative impacts were also mentioned. A negative impact of ERP implementation is the disorganization of the organization which confuses who reports to whom. In summary, it can be concluded that the research propositions are justified and the research questions are answered.

There was a research gap in the research directed toward the impacts of ERP implementation on the corporate culture and the structure of a company. This research fills that gap by illustrating how implementing an ERP system could interfere with the corporate structure and culture. This research does not show the cultural and structural change over time as the company continuously uses the ERP system. Future studies may address these cultural and structural company changes over time after the introduction of ERP systems.

Data in this research was collected through an interview, a survey, and from online sources, mostly qualitative data. Some of the methodological limitations faced during the research include not having access to all employees, only accessible employees could be approached, causing some bias in the research. A future research possibility is open to reach as many employees as possible to conduct a more comprehensive research. A further limitation is that not all the accessible employees were willing to participate in the survey causing a non–response error.

Despite these challenges, the results of this research are acceptable because the responses gave a coherent view on the corporate structure and culture change caused by the implementation of an ERP system at Marginpar and calls the attention to a de-centralization effect and a more task and functional –oriented way of business operations. The present research allows fellow researchers to conduct similar research and explore the structural and cultural changes caused by ERP implementation at other companies operating in other geographical locations run by different nationalities with different cultural background.

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.

Notes on Contributors

Derrick Kamau Njambi, graduated from the BSc course in Technical Management at Obuda University. His research is inspired by the growing use of ERP systems in organizations and the need to explore their impact on corporate culture and corporate structure, which are vital aspects in every organization's success.

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Examining the Profound Global Influence of the African Diaspora: A Comprehensive Analysis of Cultural, Social, and Economic Contributions[1]

Gold Sunday Chukwuemeka[2]

Abstract:

The African diaspora is a dilatory typology of a history of dispossession, slavery, and oppression. The pain of the Diaspora is not only that of the displacement of more than 400 years, but also one of the spirits that haunts each of the communities of African descent around the world. The paper through analytical and historical methods of research attempts to peel back the layers of this shared agony blocking and as well examine the profound global influence of the African diaspora: a comprehensive analysis of cultural, social, and economic contributions. The transatlantic slave trade left behind one of humanity's darkest periods. The African diaspora. slavery that saw the forced displacement of millions of Africans, with the human beings treated as property and forced to endure unenviable living conditions in the Americas and elsewhere. The paper notes the far-reaching impact of the African diaspora on the global structures of culture, music, artwork, cooking, language, and religion, where each retains a distinct mark of African tradition. However, the paper also explores wide-ranging social benefits that the African diaspora continues to offer, with particular emphasis on the lasting influence of diasporic peoples through art, economics, political activism, and social movements in the nations that they call home.

Keywords:
Slave; Diaspora; Oppression; African; Social; Diaspora; Oppression.

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Introduction

The African diaspora started with the scourging of millions from their motherland, a process that was not only physical but also violently deracinating in every other way. During the transatlantic slave trade, which lasted from the 16th to the 19th century, historical account estimates that between 12 and 15 million1 Africans were forcibly displaced (Eltis, 2001). This mass extraction of people and entire communities is the first layer of this pain of the diaspora.

Following the transatlantic odyssey of millions of people to the Americas reveals a history of agonies and brutalities. Enslaved Africans endured a brutal regime of plantation labour, savage punishment, and routine dehumanization. It left behind an existential wound, a palpable and deeply felt sense of "unbelonging" that reverberates across generations. The narratives of slaves, as is the case with those collected in the 1930's witnessed and seen the harsh realities of the physical living conditions of slaves as well as their psychological torment (Yetman, 2000).

The damage done by slavery was not limited to the physical but also to the psychological, affecting the identity, self-image, and interactions of those in the African diaspora. The concept of Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS) coined by Joy De Gruy posits that the centuries of slavery and systematic racism left lasting psychological scars on the offspring of enslaved Africans. DeGruy (2005). The result is generations of social dysfunction from internalized racism to cycles of violence, passed down through African-American communities. Joy DeGruy's work lays the groundwork for understanding the ways in which the traumas of subjugation have been inherited intergenerationally which manifests in an overall impact of collective mental health of people of African diasporic descent today.

While displacement and subjugation have debilitating effects, the African diaspora has displayed incredible resilience and agency. For the erasure of African identities, cultural retention and adaptability have become marked areas of resistance. The Black Atlantic as a transcultural space is a concept devised by Paul Gilroy, wherein African diasporic forms have developed in dialogue yet in opposition and resistance to one another and, in so doing, shaped the aesthetic practices of the contemporary world, influencing best global art, music, and literature.

The African diaspora today faces myriad social, economic and political challenges, many of which have deep-seated roots in the original trauma of uprooting and enslavement. As more expansive histories of the African diaspora of the last two decades such as "The African Diaspora and the Discourses of Displacement," which was edited by Isidore Okpewho and Nkiru Nzegwu, (2009) point out, the struggles of diasporic from identity to the battle for reparative justice tend to remain as eternal as the widest tropics and highest mountains. In their anthology, Okpewho and Nzegwu compile several scholarly viewpoints that together "analyse the ways in which the past haunts the present" and advance the diaspora's contemporary search for healing and empowerment.

Literature Review

A lot of pieces of literature have existed on the topic of discussion. As a result, some work by other scholars will be explored. The African Diaspora has considerably impacted the globe with many aspects including cultural, social and economic. The African Diaspora has not only transformed the economies of countries around the globe but has also had a tremendous impact on global culture and society. This may include works such as Campt (2012) who interrogates the relevance of archives, photography and the African Diaspora in Europe to show how diaspora can gain cultural significance by creating links to transnational identities and narratives. It suggests that the African Diaspora is not simply as a question of forced migration and cultural interaction, but as a complex genealogical history formed by colonial outgrowth and human displacement that has shaped global cultures.

Additionally, the impact of the African Diaspora transcends both economic and cultural, but social and political as well. Wado et al, adds to a growing body of research on the risk and protective factors related to pregnancy and early motherhood among East African (EA) adolescents and young women (Welch et al 2019) at multiple levels of analysis, emphasizing social and health-related challenges experienced among at-risk and vulnerable groups with the African Diaspora. This further highlight why it is necessary to interrogate the social and health inequities that coy individuals of African descent, especially within the diasporic enclaves. Although the African Diaspora has been widely studied in terms of its economic, cultural, and social influence, it has not been fully understood, and there are gaps in knowledge that need to be addressed. The African Diaspora claims complex roles that we do not yet fully understand; it would be beneficial to explore the layers of impact that make up economic opportunities and cultural flows in various locations.

The Origin of the African Diaspora

The African diaspora sometimes called one of the largest forced migrations in human history has guided the formation of cultures, economies, and societies around the world. To comprehend how millions of Africans were scattered and assimilated into a whole new and alien places, and how that fed into the enormous tapestry of human civilization in many ways, it is important to follow the threads of its true origins.

The transatlantic slave trade – which extended from the 16th to the 19th centuries – lay at the epicentre of the African diaspora. Enslaved Africans were captured and taken from their homeland, with most coming from what is now Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, and Angola. They were then shipped over the Atlantic Ocean to toil in plantations throughout the Americas and the Caribbean, working under conditions that were brutal and inhumane. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database estimates that up to 12.5 million Africans were embarked onto transatlantic slave ships, and as many as 10.7 million survived the dreaded Middle Passage and arrived in the New World (Eltis and Richardson, 2008).

European colonial powers played a leading role in facilitating the transatlantic slave trade. All these countries — Portugal, Spain, Britain, France and the Netherlands — were significant in the transportation and exploitation of Black slaves from Africa. As an example, the British Empire is mentioned as having transported over 3.4 million Africans, with Britain's ports of Liverpool and Bristol being the hotspots of the expansion of the slave trade (Rediker, 2007). The former role was so predominant, to the point that until the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act (1807), Britain was regarded as the largest slave-trading nation ever (Williams, 1944). As they struggled through these insurmountable adversities and beyond, Africans and their descendants tenaciously held onto and reconstituted elements of their vast cultural legacy — as well as challenged their oppression in multiple ways. As well as slave insurrections and rebellions, covert acts of resistance were common. In some cases, these were graphic and brutal, like the Haitian Revolution, where enslaved Africans were able to lead an uprising that led to the overthrow of their French colonizers and the establishment of Haiti as a free republic in 1804 (Dubois, 2004). This indomitable spirit has been passed down through generations, helping fuel civil rights movements and the fight for equality across the globe.

The migration of Africans has also had a considerable impact on the countries they have settled in culturally. There are African influences on music, cuisine, language, religion, and many more facets of life. In the United States, the diverse cultural contributions of African Americans—the unique musical styles of blues, jazz, gospel, even hip-hop—have been a part of the very fabric of American society (Gates Jr 1988,) whilst in Brazil the African impact on Brazilian Portuguese—full of words deriving directly from African languages—has been linked with Afro-Brazilian cults including Candomblé (Hayes 2012,).

The African diaspora grows today, with new generations of Africans seeking better opportunities for education, wealth, or to escape oppressive regimes. Such later movements have led to dynamic African communities in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere, often serving as conduits for cross-cultural exchanges, evolving into an expansive conception of diaspora as a state of cultural fluidity and hybridity (Gilroy, 1993).

While it initially designated the historical experience of the Jewish people, for the last several decades the term diaspora has been largely applied to African peoples as well. The African diaspora is most understood as a term of the interconnectedness in its time, culture, and ethnicity of various people in the world resulting from the historical movement their ancestors left Africa, specifically to the Americas, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, amongst other places. Indeed, one of the earliest harbingers of this trend was the transatlantic slave trade from the 16th to 19th centuries that forcibly displaced millions of African peoples and initiated the widespread diffusion of African cultures and peoples around the globe (Smallwood, 2008). But the diaspora did not start with this trade and did not end with its abolition; it has ancient roots and is a living heritage, as people of African descent have been shaping society, culture and politics in the spaces in which they find themselves through ages.

The political inheritance of the African diaspora is also considerable. The transatlantic slave trade birthed new communities that have battled for recognition, rights and political power. The US civil rights movement is another leading example of this, pioneering legal and social changes regarding racism (King, 1963). The resonance of the movement in contemporary movements like Black Lives Matter serves as a reminder of the persistent nature of racism and inequality, and the diaspora's continuing struggle for justice and equality (Cullors, Tometi, & Garza, 2013).

Social and economic systems around the world are likewise stamped with the African diaspora. Most African-descendants populations remain oppressed and denouncing the systemic racism and poverty generated by the historic injustices they have suffered. Despite these challenges, diasporan people have also been significant economic contributors to their new countries through their roles as labourers, entrepreneurs, scholars, and icons, helping to challenge negative stereotypes. (Olaniyan & Sweet, 2010). For continuations, the African diaspora experiences a kind of renaissance at the time of globalization and migrations. Transportation and communication advancements have brought African migration to a new stage, as skilled professionals and students now look for options around the world. The assimilation of these diasporic communities into unfamiliar surroundings has been at times fraught with friction; however, it serves as an ever-evolving conversation between historical struggle and the continually shifting global landscape (Zegeye & Harris, 2011).

The Fabric of Our Shared Humanity: Weaving Together the African Diaspora

The African Diaspora which is considered one of the greatest movements in human history has been forced through slavery, migration and colonization through transatlantic ways, calling tens and millions of peoples from wide range of cultures all over the world (Shepperson), 1966. Historically, the African Diaspora is traced to the transatlantic slave trade when approximately twelve million Africans were forcibly carried to the Americas, effectively transforming the demographic and cultural make-up of the continent (Eltis et al., 2015). This grim experience of diaspora and slavery shaped not only the spread of African culture across the ocean, but the world in which contemporary societies were made.

Written culture is probably the most explicit evidence of the broad spread of the African Diaspora. The impact of Africa can be felt in the syncopated rhythms of jazz and the soulful cadences of blues music as well as in artistic and literary contributions (Thompson, 1983). That cultural heritage continues to echo in modern societies today in the form of African diasporic cuisine, dance, clothes, and linguistic tones. The African diaspora makes significant contributions economically. Slavery was an engine of agricultural and early industrial revolutions in the Americas, which helped to drive European economies and spur global capitalism (Williams, 1944). Today, the diasporic

network continues to foster international trade and entrepreneurship in the African and African-descended communities, strengthening economies across continents.

Psychologically, the impact of the African Diaspora has defined identity and consciousness, both of individuals and of collectives. The legacy of imperialism and resistance to racial oppression paint a complex picture of self-awareness and collective unity (Gilroy, 1997). Across the diaspora, those of African descent have woven intertwined tapestries of identity brought about by plural histories and collective struggles and victories. And a testament to the undeniable bonds of the African Diaspora, testaments of human tenacity that moulds the discomfort of struggle our seat of artistic exhibition and economic growth. The implications and insights that remain from the displacement and resistance of millions of Africans are profound in connection with our international community now.

The transatlantic slave trade began the large-scale dispersion of Africans across the world, and although traders sought to commoditize human life, these people brought with them the indestructible seeds of African culture (Eltis & Richardson, 2008). The forced migration formed new societies in the Americas and the Caribbean societies that were, while grounded in African traditions and rhythms, becoming increasingly mixed with the influence of indigenous and European societies. This resulted in a peculiar set of syncretic, or mixed, cultures such as the practice of religions like Vodou in Haiti and Santería in Cuba (Hall, 1990).

The African Diaspora has a rich and nuanced culture composed of diverse artistic, musical, and literary forms. This pivotal time known as the Harlem Renaissance was when African American writers, poets, and artists celebrated and critiqued their cultural identity beginning a legacy that would move on to inspire black artistic movements across the globe (Locke, 1925). In music, African impact exists in styles like reggae, samba, and hip-hop, reflecting a continual artisanal process reorienting African musical templates in different cultural landscapes (Floyd Jr. 1995). Furthermore, the ongoing global success of the Afrobeat genre is a yet another example of a moving diasporic cultural exchange.

The African Diaspora Economy is intricate, a patchwork quilt of exploitation torn asunder, patch worked with, empowerment. The slave trade and its legacy, however, did produce resistance and adaptation, as well as economic differences (Inikori, 2002). African Americans helped to grow the economic infrastructure of the United States and after emancipation sought education and entrepreneurship, despite systems barriers (Woodson, 1915). The African diaspora today continues to impact the global economy, and leaders must recognize the economic potential of connection among the many dispersed population origins and destinations.

The African Diaspora's Stain is Permanent on World Culture

The shaping of the world cultural landscape — brought on, of course, by the African Diaspora. What started out of the bumpy streets of the trans-Atlantic slave trade turned

into a thrilling mix of traditional African way of life and countless cultures across the world. The migration and dispersal of Africans and their descendants across the globe is being performed through forced migrations, for slavery, followed by voluntary diasporic movements (Gilroy, 1993). Blending indigenous cultures across the southern coast with African cultural elements has produced rich, hybrid identities. The global contribution of the African diaspora is neither monolithic nor static; it is dynamic and reflects diverse experiences and adaptations.

The Musical and Dances Cultural Mix

African music and dance have left lasting marks in performing arts around the globe. From blues, jazz, salsa, samba, and reggae — all have their roots in African rhythms and melodies. As Holloway (2005) explains, these genres serve an emotional function as articulation for an African Diaspora history rendered into a complex sonorous and kinetic narrative. For instance, hip-hop was birthed within African American communities in the 1970s, yet now this form of cultural expression is one of the most widely engaged with forms of music in the world.

Artistic Expressions

In visual arts, African influence can be seen in several artistic movements, particularly during the Harlem Renaissance and much later. Artists such as Picasso have famously admitted the influence of African sculpture upon their own (Vogel, 1997). Mime artists and theatre performers as well as fashion designs also have parlayed African aesthetics to vibrant works that cross cultural borders.

Infusion in Global Cuisine

The global food scene is another aspect of life in which the influence of the African diaspora is palpable. Traditional ingredients, culinary techniques, and flavour profiles originating from Africa have mixed with local practises to produce unique cuisines. With Edna Lewis's "The Taste of Country Cooking" (Lewis, 1976) as no better evidence of the power of African-American cooking to alter the American South, and by extension the world at large.

Linguistic Influence

Language is a powerful vessel for culture, and the impact of the African diaspora is evident in numerous Englishes across the world. For instance, the European and African vernacular integration in Caribbean Creole languages embodies the adaptive quality of diaspora communities (Faraclas, 1996). The lexical innovations alongside the buttressing of the respective national literature with words of anglicised Indian origin have included narratives of conquest, survival and cultural interactions too.

Religious Syncretism

African diaspora countries have experienced much syncretism in their religious practices, the original African spiritual elements being preserved alongside the tenets of Christianity and Islam. The result is an overlapping religious mosaic that includes Vodou, Santería and Candomblé. Today these religions, based on African spiritual traditions, have spread across the world and they not only provide spiritual nourishment to many, but also complement research on religion as a dynamic and integrative phenomenon.

The Pan African Roots of the Diaspora

The African diaspora, the large and expanding collection of people of African origin that live outside of their homeland, has offered a lot to social structure of societies all over the world. This dispersion through voluntary and involuntary migration – mainly the transatlantic slave trade – has endowed them with so many cultural, economic and political influences that are still shaping and enriching the communities in which they live.

Cultural Excitement and Creativity

Their impact on art, music and literature is truly powerful. Jazz, blues, reggae and hip-hop, genres with dominant African roots, have transformed the world music stage, producing soundscapes that connect cultures and communities. Notable among these are publications like "African Diaspora in the Cultures of Latin America, the Caribbean, and the United States" (Braham, 2014), a text that explores cultural expressions produced from the effects of the diaspora's dispersals.

Economic Contributions and Acumen

The diaspora communities' economic engagement has been transformative, too. Money sent back home by those who have gone abroad is a major source of income for many African countries. In addition to remittances, the diaspora has created networks that promote trade and investment, which in turn, spurs job creation and technology transfer. (Toyin Falola, and Niyi Afolabi) (2017).

The High Cost of Political Engagement and Civil Rights:

In the political sphere, the diaspora has been a driving force behind civil rights movements worldwide, fighting for equality and justice. In the U.S., for instance, figures such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X who had African ties in their ancestry were among the leaders who pushed the fight for rights for African Americans. (Van Deburg, 1997).

Solidarity and Community Networks:

It has been significant in establishing community and solidarity amongst diasporic groups, leading to resource sharing and cultural exchange. A key work is Robin Cohen's Global Diasporas: An Introduction, which is partly an extended discussion of these dynamics, and how diasporic consciousness can serve as a building block for the formation of global communities (Cohen, 2008).

Academic Qualifications and Activism Engagement:

One of the most prominent social contributions the African diaspora has made is in education. They actively fight for better educational opportunities and add to the academic culture of their adopted countries as scholars, educators and students. West, Darrell M. "Brain Gain: Rethinking U.S. Immigration Policy." (2010): mention of the reasons and benefits of diasporic educational advancement as a form of intellectual capital (not just for the diaspora but their host countries too).

Critical Role of the African Diaspora in Global Education

Educational contexts of the African diaspora are not monolithic rather are instead reflective of the diaspora itself. Socioeconomic status, immigration, language barriers, racial discrimination, and resource availability are essential factors in determining the educational outcomes of diasporic communities (Tettey & Puplampu, 2005). Research indicates that systemic issues impact these communities, but they continue to thrive and engage in academic excellence (Thomas, 2014).

African immigrants in the United States, for example, are often well-educated: a substantial number hold bachelor's and advanced degrees (Thomas, 2014). In 2016, "29% of the U.S. African immigrant population had a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 19% of adult native-born Americans" according to the American Immigration Council (American Immigration Council, 2016).

Members of the African diaspora have contributed significantly to global discourse and practice both in K-12 classrooms and ivory towers alike (Walters, 2017). They have introduced multicultural curriculums, pioneered research and scholarship across a wide array of disciplines.

The African diaspora has contributed immensely to global education, one way being through enriching curricula with a multicultural perspective. Educators of African descent — Paulo Freire, bell hooks, and similarly motivated scholars have problematized Eurocentric educational modalities and created educational models based on critical pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogies (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994). Their works highlight the need to recognize students' diverse cultural backgrounds to improve students' engagement and learning (Banks & Banks, 2010; Berry, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994). From ivory tower to global fieldwork: African Studies and Black Studies Development Scholars of the African diaspora have pioneered programs and disciplines in African Studies and Black Studies and have expanded knowledge and understanding

of African history and cultures, global African experiences. Such programs often focus not just on African content but methods that empower African perspectives (Collins, 2001).

African diaspora Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) achievement can be found around the world. Their contributions range from history makers like Lewis Howard Latimer, who collaborated with Thomas Edison as an inventor and electrical engineer, to modern-day trailblazers like Mae Jemison, the first African American woman in space (Brandon, 2019; Jemison, 2001). Groundbreaking academic scholarship by diasporic scholars has also provided insight into some of our world's most pressing challenges. Such as agricultural scientist George Washington Carver, whose work gave way to sustainable farming practices that still resonate today (McMurry, 1981). Individuals like Tebello Nyokong, a chemist from Lesotho, today carry on this legacy by applying nanotechnology to medical and environmental uses (Nyokong, 2008).

Policy Advocacy and Leadership

These policies have been championed in some cases by educators and activists of the African diaspora. One of these initiatives was that of fighting against apartheid education in South Africa that ultimately brought the end of the system of oppression and, subsequently, the emergence of reform in the sector of education (Chisholm, 2005). Additionally, internationally recognized figures like Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the UN, have also promoted global educational programs, highlighting the significance of education regarding international advancement and poverty cessation (Annan, 2000).

Impact on Arts and Humanities

The influence of the African diaspora in the arts and humanities has transformed academia. Likewise, Chinua Achebe in the 1950s and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in the twenty-first century have explored post-colonial African identity and migration-related challenges through novels that remain foundational in education (Achebe, 1958; Adichie, 2003). In the performing arts field, African diasporic experiences and contexts are exemplified in the educational curricula developed to make sense of and translate into tangible, actionable means what are often fraught social realities and historical events, often through the arts of music, song, dance, and theatre (Gilroy, 1993).

Conclusion

The history of the African diaspora, filled with the anguish of displacement, the brutality of slavery and the humiliations of subjugation, is not just a sad episode in the past, but an ongoing story whose impacts determine the lives of millions. A people shattered across the ages reminds us that pain is a reminder of the resilience and creativity of the

human spirit in the darkest hours. It is also a statement in support of the recognition, reparations, and healing that all the descendants of this tragic past deserve. As we explore their tribulations, we also discover their suffering and celebrate their lasting contributions to the weave of humanity. Through this painful lexicon, we not only honour the struggles and triumphs of those who did come before us, but we create the scaffolding for a more just and empathetic future. The legacy of pain experienced by the African diaspora is a powerful reminder of our shared humanity and the pressing need for reconciliation and progress.

The African Diaspora is the quilt of pretty much every story of millions who, having been torn from their African motherland against their will, have touched the very fabric of the social, cultural, and economic world. The vastness of the diaspora is a rubric that encapsulates our collective humanity, demonstrating how the human spirit can rally around adversities that bridge cultures, breakthroughs, and what transcendence is beyond the parochial. We now look back on the vast influences—past and present—of the African Diaspora, and the unbreakable threads that connect us all as part of an intricate human tapestry.

The African diaspora has influenced world culture in wide-ranging and deep-seated ways, from music, art and cuisine to language and religion. That journey, in its duality of suffering and overcoming conquest, is precisely what makes this people so special. The experience of the African diaspora's connection to global educational efforts is one of struggle but also one of meaningful contributions to both the raising of educational standards and the expansion of horizons. Such is the diversity afforded by the diaspora, generating multiple voices and talents working together to change the landscape of people and fortify the forces for global education in infinite ways multicultural perspectives that bring new perspectives to the classroom, cross-cutting innovation and policy advocacy that fosters inclusive and equitable educational practices.

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

Apostle Professor Gold Sunday Chukwuemeka is a highly respected figure in the religious and academic communities. He hails from Utagba-Uno, Ndokwa West Local Area of Delta State, Nigeria. From a young age, Apostle Chukwuemeka showed exceptional intelligence and hunger for knowledge. His passion for education led him to pursue a PhD in History and International Studies, from Unizik, Awka, PhD in Christian Education, from MAS, Lagos, PhD in Biblical, from DTS, Port Harcourt, Affiliated to HBU, USA, Master Degree in History and International Studies from Unizik, Awka, Master in Divinity from CTS, Abeokuta Affiliated to Ekiti State University, Master of Arts Degree in Pentecostal Studies, Post Graduate Diploma in Biblical and Theological Education, B.A in History and International Studies from Delta State University, Abraka

and Diploma in Theology from Grace Theological Seminary, Anambra State. Besides his primary assignment as a pastor and a spiritual leader, ApostleChukwuemeka is also a highly respected academic. He has served in the cadre of Head of Department, History and International Studies, ECU, University Faculty Chairman of Research and Publication, ECU, Member of the University Senate, ECU etc.

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The Development Process of the Somali National Language and Script[1]

Abdilahi Ismail Abdilahi[2]

Abstract:

Somalia is a country with a single language and a single ethnicity. Through immigration, religious dissemination, and colonial invasions, various foreign languages and scripts have successively integrated into the lives of the Somali people. These influences have enriched and contributed to the development of the Somali native language and script to some extent. However, the dominant position of the Somali national language in Somali social life has remained unchanged. The development and evolution of the Somali national language and script are important reflections of Somalia's history, culture, and social transformations. This paper traces the process from the origins of the Somali language and script—beginning with the era of oral transmission without written form, through the introduction of the Arabic script, the adoption of the Latin script, the creation of indigenous scripts, and finally the establishment of the modern Somali language and script. It summarizes the challenges encountered during this development and offers prospects for the future of the Somali language and script.

Keywords:
Language and Script; Somalia; Development Process.

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Introduction

Somalia is one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries in Africa, with ethnic Somalis making up 97% of the population. The country also exhibits significant linguistic uniformity, with approximately 95% of its residents speaking Somali. [3]However, throughout history, the Somali language existed primarily as an oral language it had no official script and left behind no written records. In the early stages of its development, there was no dedicated writing system, and the language relied entirely on oral transmission. Somali oral literature is exceptionally rich, and Somali culture is renowned for its poetry, proverbs, and folktales, earning it the reputation as the "Nation of Poets."

1. The Oral Tradition Period Without a Writing System

The oral tradition period of the Somali language refers to the historical stage in which the language was transmitted and expressed entirely through speech, without any form of writing. This phase lasted for thousands of years and continued until the mid-20th century, when a formal writing system was finally established. During this era, Somali culture, history, social norms, and literary works were passed down orally from generation to generation. The content of oral transmission typically included Somali history and collective memory, contemporary laws and social codes, poetic and literary creations, religious rituals, and cultural practices. One of the most important literary forms in Somali oral tradition was poetry, particularly "Gabay", which held a prominent role in both social and political life. These poems were often rich in satire and criticism, and Somali poets were known for their linguistic mastery, complex structure, and symbolic depth. Narratives and folktales, known as "Sheeko", were also vital cultural components. Through these stories, people conveyed historical memory, moral teachings, and practical wisdom. Songs and ballads "Hees" were often created collectively, touching on themes such as labor, love, and warfare, and encouraged active participation from the community. These forms of expression represented the most significant manifestations of Somali oral tradition.

Beyond artistic and cultural value, Somali oral tradition served as a key mechanism for education, social cohesion, historical preservation, and cultural identity. In the absence of a writing system, Somali history and ethnic memory were preserved through oral histories. The chronicles of clans and tribes, heroic deeds of ancestral figures, major events, and records of wars were all passed down through extensive narratives, poetry, and songs. These stories were typically told or recited by oral historians, elderly people, or poets.

Somali society upheld a customary legal system known as "Xeer", a traditional form of tribal law. Though informal, it was crucial and was maintained entirely through oral

[3] Dubnov, Helena .A Grammatical Sketch of Somali. Koln: Rudiger Koppe Verlag. [EB-OL] (2003) [2021-11-15]. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somali_language

agreements and public discussion. This system regulated social relationships, resolved conflicts, and upheld justice within and between clans. It emphasized harmony, responsibility, justice, and respect for elders. Poetry, especially the "Gabay", played a pivotal role in oral tradition. More than just an art form, it functioned as a medium for emotional expression, political commentary, historical documentation, and social regulation. These long-form poems narrated history, conveyed opinions, praised heroes, expressed love, and described nature, all while being rich in metaphor and rhythm making them a powerful symbol of Somali culture. Although Islam was introduced to Somalia in the 7th century, religious knowledge and practices during the early oral phase were also passed down verbally. Islamic teachings and rituals, particularly the Qur'an in Arabic, were taught through recitation and oral instruction.

Oral tradition also covered the transmission of social roles and cultural customs such as marriage practices, feast etiquette, and ritual ceremonies which were usually passed on by elders or experienced community members during family or clan gatherings. In the absence of a formal educational system, oral tradition was the primary means of education in Somali society. Elders or tribal leaders taught moral values, historical narratives, and cultural knowledge, while the younger generation learned social norms through listening and imitation.

This oral culture helped maintain strong social bonds within and between clans and communities. Through collective ceremonies, storytelling, and poetry, both individual and collective identities were shaped, strengthening community cohesion. Ultimately, in the pre-literate era, oral tradition enabled Somalis to remember and transmit their history. Events such as wars, peace treaties, migrations, and clan alliances were all preserved through spoken words, allowing people to maintain a strong sense of identity across generations.

2. The Influence of the Arabic Script

The Arabic script began to influence the Somali language with the introduction of Islamic culture to Somalia in the 7th century. During this period, traders, missionaries, seafarers, and travelers played a key role in shaping Somali perceptions of the wider world. Particularly influential were members of Sufi religious orders, who spread Islamic teachings across the Somali region by introducing Arabic religious texts, performing prayer rituals, establishing mosques, and founding Qur'anic schools. As a result, Arabic script became, for a considerable period, the primary writing system used by Somalis to write their native language.

[4]**In the 11th and 12th centuries, rulers along the Somali coast and inland regions began referring to themselves as sultans, establishing various sultanates. Major coastal sultanates included**Zeila, Berbera, Mogadishu, Merca (Marka) and Brava (Barawa). The inland kingdoms included Majeerteen, Hobyo, Dhulbahante, Warsangali, and Geledi, etc. **During this time, Arabic spread widely as a religious language alongside the**

[4] he Somali genealogy and religious poems in Somali mosques are recorded.

expansion of Islam. Somali children learned to read and recite Arabic script in Qur'anic schools to memorize the Qur'an, further reinforcing the Arabic script's role in Somali education and religious life.

This integration of Islamic and traditional Somali education helped popularize the use of Arabic script to write Somali, and it became the most used script for writing Somali within certain spheres. The earliest recorded Somali texts in Arabic script were primarily religious manuscripts written by Somali scholars. One of the most influential figures in this tradition was Sheikh Uways Al-Barawi in the late 19th century. [5]Two of his surviving manuscripts, written in Arabic script, recorded the Somali language: one is a narrative about the Somali national hero Sayid Mohamed Abdullahi Hassan and his resistance against British colonialism, and the other is a collection of religious poetry composed by Sheikh Uways himself. These works were widely embraced by the Somali public and played a role in inspiring anti-colonial sentiment. Another prominent advocate of writing Somali in Arabic script was Sheikh Mohamed Abdi Makahil, who authored a work titled "The Institution of Modern Correspondence in Somali Language", in which he explicitly encouraged the use of Arabic script for Somali. He was one of the most vocal supporters of this practice. Other notable figures who used Arabic script to write Somali include Osman Yusuf Kenadid, Musa Haji Ismail Galal[6], Sheikh Abdirahman Qadi[7], Dr. Ibrahim Hashi Mohamud[8], and even British officer Dhamme J.S. King[9].

Although Arabic traders and missionaries introduced Islam and Arabic to Somalia from the 7th century onward making Arabic an important language in religion, education, and trade the Arabic script ultimately faced limitations when applied to Somali. This was primarily due to the inability of the Arabic alphabet to fully represent the unique phonetic features of the Somali language. Despite these technical challenges, Arabic exerted a lasting influence on Somali vocabulary, particularly in religious and legal contexts.

3. Development of the Somali Latin Script During the Colonial Period

Beginning in 1827[10], with the signing of the first treaty between British colonizers and Somali tribal chiefs, Western colonizers arbitrarily divided one of Africa's few

[5] Sheikh Uwais was born in 1847 in Barawe, a small town in southern Somalia. He was a famous Somali poet and writer, as well as a fighter against colonial rule and an important leader of the famous anti-colonial armed group "Brotherhood" at that time.

[6] In 1933, he created the "Gadabursiga" alphabet named after his tribe to write Somali. He also invented 7 new alphabets to write Somali, which are said to meet the needs of Somali for vowels that are not found in the Arabic alphabet.

[7] He created the Kadariya alphabet in 1954 to write Somali.

[8] Dr. Ibrahim Hashim Mohammed wrote and published "Al Suamliyah bi Lughat al Qur'an" in 1963, which explains how to read and write the Qur'an using the Somali Arabic script.

[9] He is the only European recorded to have used Arabic script to write Somali. After him, Europeans began to write Somali in Latin script.

[10] The treaty signed by the Somali chiefs was also signed in the context of legal experts from European countries unilaterally drafting such treaties in their native languages and then convincing African chiefs to sign such agreements without them knowing the contents.

homogenous regions - Somali territory - into five separate parts[11]. Somalia entered a brutal colonial history, during which Western scholars including linguists, colonial officials stationed in the colonies, missionaries, and travelers conducted over 200 years of continuous research on the Latin script of the Somali language[12]. It is said that when Europeans first arrived in Somalia and found that the region had a language but no script, they invented a Latin-based script to write Somali based on their own writing systems. Reportedly, the initial purpose was to help Western religious priests spread Christian doctrine in Somali society at the time[13]. During colonial rule in Somalia, Western scholars played an important role in promoting the development of the Somali Latin script. They used their self-created Latin-based Somali script to write dozens of textbooks and books on the Somali language. Among the more influential works were missionary De Larajasse's 1897 publications in London: "Somali-English and English-Somali Dictionary", and "Practical Grammar of the Somali Language with a Manual of the Sentences". The terminology in these two books for writing Somali in Latin script served as models for a long time.

Next was the renowned scholar and writer Leo Reinisch, who in 1900 published two volumes in Vienna written in Latin script. The first volume, from the perspective of a Somali named Heinrich Bensch, tells the story of a Western traveler named Dr. Walter Adolf Schleicher. The first part of the volume discusses Schleicher's work and experiences in many parts of East Africa and his great interest in the Somali language. The second part includes many Somali oral stories and histories, told in different ways to illustrate Somalia's social history. The third part is an English vocabulary dictionary translated into Somali. The first part of the second volume contains Islamic religious stories within Somali culture. The second part includes Somali proverbs, folktales, legends, and fables. The third part consists of Somali social customs and some traditional Somali linguistic records.

Later, German linguist Maria von Til wrote a book in 1918 titled "The Vowels of the Definite Article in Somali" (Die Vokale Des Bestimmten Artikels Im Soma), and in 1925 she published another book[14] in Berlin titled "Somali Texts – and Studies on Somali Phonetics" (Somali-Texte Und Untersuchungen Zur Somali-Lautlehre). At the time, [15]this

[11] Italian Somalia (Somalia), British Somalia (Somaliland), French Somalia (Djibouti, which became independent in 1977), the northern border region (now the Northeastern Province of Kenya, parts of the former Jubaland of Somalia) and eastern Ethiopia (Ogaden region), which is also one of the historical roots of the conflict in the Horn of Africa. The discussion here is based on the example of North and South Somalia (Mogadishu and Hargeisa).

[12] According to statistics, foreign languages written in Latin script in Somali include English, Italian, German, Austrian and French.

[13] Currently, 99% of Somalia's residents believe in Islam, and most of them are Sunnis. In 1974, Somalia also joined the Arab League.

[14] It mainly introduces her knowledge of Somali grammar and pronunciation. Maria has never been to Somalia, but she collected research on Somali in German and interviewed a Somali man named Mohmed Nur .

[15] It consists of three parts, the first part is a survey and definition of the Somali language and its pronunciation, as well as the origin and nature of these pronunciations. The second part is a survey report by a Somali, Mohamed Noor, talking about his personal life and the general life and culture of Somalis.

book was considered the most advanced for learning the Somali language. [16]Other contributors included Italian scholars Mario Maino, Enrico Cerulli, Martino Moreno, and Bruno Panza. Among the English-speaking researchers were C.R.V. Bell, Liliad E. Armstrong, I.M. Lewis, Bogumi Witalis Andrzejewski, and John Drysdale. German scholars A. Klingnheben and Carl Lang, and Austrian scholar Reinisch also contributed.

Somali scholars involved included Halimo Mohamed Ali, Abdi Kheyre Awaate, Abdullahi Haji Mohamed, Musa Haji Ismail Galal, Shire Jama Ahmed, [17]as well as Joseph Pia, Jeanne Contini, and Dr. Castagno. It can be said that starting in the late 19th century, as European colonial powers fully entered Somalia, the linguistic environment in Somalia became increasingly complex. [18]Western scholars' research into the Somali Latin script also contributed to this complexity to some extent. Colonizers prioritized foreign languages and neglected the development of Somali, limiting its use in written and educational fields. Additionally, the spread of Somali was confined to oral communication within families and clans, and a unified written script failed to develop. Therefore, during the colonial period, the Somali national language was marginalized while colonial languages became dominant, and Somali's status in formal contexts was suppressed. However, as a mother tongue, spoken Somali remained the core of people's daily lives and cultural communication. The Somali Latin script studied by Western scholars failed to gain broader influence.

4. Exploration and Attempts of Indigenous Scripts

The earliest recorded Somali indigenous scripts appeared in the 1920s. After World War II, the national independence and liberation movements in Africa spread from North Africa across the entire continent. In this context, the Somali people experienced a rise in national consciousness, and the indigenous creation of the Somali national language saw unprecedented development. As a result, during the period leading up to Somali independence and the early years following independence, many outstanding works using indigenous Somali scripts emerged.

Somali scholars, based on the characteristics of the Somali language, independently created various indigenous Somali scripts. These scripts best reflect the sounds and meanings of the Somali language and played a very important role in its development. However, Somalia's nearly thirty years of civil war also caused the loss of many materials related to these self-created Somali scripts. Here, the author selects three of the most influential independently created Somali scripts for introduction.

[16] Ibraahin Yuusuf Axmed Hawd. Dadaalkii Reer Yurub Ee Far Soomaalida. [R] (2014-05) [2023-01-01].
[17] The current Somali script is based on the Latin Somali script that he modified and edited.
[18] British Colony (Northern Somalia): English was introduced into the education and administrative systems. Italian Colony (Southern Somalia): Italian became the main official language in the south. French Colony (Djibouti): French dominated the language environment in the Djibouti region.

4.1 Osmanya Script

In the 1920s, Osman Yusuf Kenadid created the [19]"Osmanya alphabet," named after himself, to write the Somali language. The Osmanya script is written from left to right and consists of 22 consonants and 8 vowels, capable of representing all the phonemes and letters of Somali. The emergence of the Osmanya script not only made a significant contribution to the development of indigenous Somali writing at the time but also played a decisive role in the Somali people's resistance against colonialism.

In 1971, members of the Osman clan published a Somali language textbook written in Osmanya script, titled "Our Language and Its Script". The book provided detailed instructions on learning the Somali language using the Osmanya script. Osmanya is the earliest and most influential indigenous script created by Somalis for recording their language. Although it ultimately did not become the official writing system for Somali, it is estimated that about 50,000 people used it before the Latin alphabet was adopted as the official script[20].

The Osmanya alphabet is a native writing system specifically designed for the Somali language and effectively represents its phonetic features. However, due to limited resources and restricted usage, it ultimately did not become a nationally adopted script.

4.2 Gadabursi Script (Gadabursiga)

The Gadabursi script was created in 1933 by Musa Haji Ismail Galal. He was fluent in both English and Arabic, born into the Gadabursi clan in a northern Somali city. Galal was an Islamic elder and a teacher of English and Islam at the Ministry of Education in northern Somalia. The script is named after his clan.

The Gadabursi script is phonetically accurate and incorporated strengths from both the Arabic and Latin scripts used for Somali. However, its close association with a specific religious sect limited its dissemination and acceptance.[21]

4.3 Kadare Script (Kadare)

This script consists of 41 letters and four writing styles[22], written from left to right. It was invented in 1952 by Sheikh Ahmed Kadare and named after himself[23]. During the 42nd anniversary celebration of the establishment of the Somali written language, he was the only living creator among the three indigenous Somali scripts. He also won first place for his indigenous script at the first Somali Language Commission.

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[19] Osman Yusuf Knadid was born in 1898. He was fluent in Arabic and Italian and was a writer and poet. At first, Osman also wrote Somali in Arabic, but later he found the defects of writing Somali in Arabic. Therefore, a new script was created based on the pronunciation characteristics of Somali to write Somali.

[20] Cabdirashid M. Ismaaciil, Cabdalla C. Mansuur, Saynab A. Sharci. Afmaal[M].Djibouti: Akadeemiye-Goboleedka af-Soomaaliga.2015

[21] This is Somali written in Gadabursiga script Cabdirashid M. Ismaaciil, Cabdalla C. Mansuur, Saynab A. Sharci. Afmaal[M].Djibouti: Akadeemiye-Goboleedka af-Soomaaliga.2015

[22] In the 1961 report of the Somali Language Commission, it was assessed as second , with Sher Jamal Ahmed's revised Latin-script Somali being ranked first.

[23] He was a young staff member at the Mogadishu radio station at the time.

In the early 20th century, as Somali intellectuals explored writing systems suitable for the Somali language, the Gadabursi and Kadare scripts were both limited to local experimentation and failed to achieve widespread adoption. Although the Osmanya script achieved significant progress, it ultimately lost the opportunity to become the official writing system for Somali. Thus, all attempts to establish a native Somali script ended in failure.

5. Introduction and Standardization of the Latin Alphabet

5.1 The Struggle for Somali Script Led to the Introduction of the Latin Alphabet

British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland gained independence on June 26 and July 1, 1960, respectively, and merged into the Somali Republic on July 1, 1960. During the early period of independence, the wave of revolution sweeping across Africa awakened Somali national consciousness, and Somali scholars began to recognize the importance of a national language and script. At that time, Somalia lacked its own writing system. The education system still followed the colonial tradition, and to facilitate governance, the government used Italian, English, and Arabic as official languages, while Somali continued to be used orally. During this period, Somali scholars created many indigenous scripts based on the linguistic features of the Somali language. However, due to various factors, the Somali government had yet to establish an effective language policy, and multiple scripts and languages continued to coexist in Somali society. This situation further reinforced the government's resolve to develop a national language and script. To accelerate the development of politics, economy, and culture, the Somali Republic established the Somali Language Commission during the early days of independence.

In 1961, then Minister of Education Ali Garad Jama appointed a nine-member Somali Language Commission to assess the feasibility of a Somali writing system[24]. The commission set 17 basic criteria and [25]evaluated 18 candidate scripts—11 was newly created by Somali scholars, 4 were variants of Arabic script used for Somali, and 3 were Latin-based scripts. After analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of each, the commission produced a comprehensive 76-page report. On page 74, a modified Latin-based Somali script developed by Shire Jama Ahmed ranked first, while the indigenous Kadare script created by Hussein Sheikh Ahmed Kadare was ranked second. However, before the report could be submitted, internal disagreements emerged. Yasin Osman

[24] Musa Haji Ismail Galal Chairman 2.Yasin Osman Kenadid 3.Mohamud Saleh (Ladane) 4.Dr. Ibrahim Hashi Mohamud Member 5.Khalifa Saudi 6.Mustafa Sheikh Hassan 7.Shire Jama Ahmed 8.Hussein Sheikh Ahmed (Kadare) 9 .Yusuf Meygaag Samatar

[25] Waa inay xuruuftu cod leedahay 2.Waa in qoraalka xurufteedu sahlan yahay 3.Waa in aysan lahayn calaamado gaar ah oo codka kala saara(diacritics) 4.Waa in aysan lahayn calaamado hal wax ka badan loo isticmaalo 5.Waa in aysan lahayn laba ama caalamado ka badan oo codadka keliya kala saara 6.Waa in aysan lahayn calaamado laftoodu cod u taagan ama leh 7.Waa inay leedahay qalabka wax lagu daabaco oo hada waddanka laga heli karo 8.Waa inay nidaamka Calaamadaha Caalamiga ah waafaqsan tahay 9.Waa inay habbeysan tahay (standarised) 10.Waa inay hab

Kennadid, [26]a key advocate of the Osmanya script, withdrew from the evaluation process. Influential members Ibrahim Hashi Mohamed and Mohamed Jama Afbara also resigned before the report was finalized. Eventually, six commission members signed and submitted the report. Prime Minister Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke and Education Minister Ali Garad Jama rejected the report[27]. It was neither discussed at a cabinet meeting nor submitted to parliament and was instead archived in the Ministry of Education. The first Somali Language Commission was subsequently dissolved.

In 1965, the Somali Language Commission was re-established. UNESCO sent renowned Somali experts Bogumił Witalis Andrzejewski, Stefan Strelcyn, and Joseph Tubiana to participate. This second commission reviewed seven scripts based on the 1961 report and eventually narrowed the discussion to three[28]: the Osmanya script, a Latin-based Somali script, and an Arabic-based Somali script. Each script had its own supporters within the commission, and the debates centered on why one was more suitable than the others. The final report listed all three options but made no definitive choice, as societal divisions over the Somali script had become politically charged.

The establishment of the Somali Language Commission reflected a national urgency to unify the Somali language and script. Despite extensive efforts by both commissions, no effective policy emerged. The various scripts that had appeared throughout Somali history failed to gain widespread recognition due to deeply rooted clan-based ideologies and interests. Consequently, the Somali Republic's Constitution did not specify an official language or script. Article 3 of the Somali Republic Constitution “Equality of Citizens” only addressed language in the context of equal rights and obligations regardless of ethnicity, origin, nationality, language, region, gender, economic status, or social/political identity.

Religious education has also become an essential part of compulsory schooling[29]. Most Somali children were sent to Quranic schools before formal education to learn reading and writing in Arabic. Islam had become an inseparable part of Somali culture, and Arabic, as the language of religion, could not be overlooked. Since independence, Arabic was one of Somalia’s official languages. The Somali Republic also declared Islam as the state religion.

During Somalia’s long colonial history, Italian and English served as administrative and working languages and were widely used in education. These combined factors contributed to the stagnation of Somali language policy during this period. The government continued to favor foreign languages, and there was even a time when

[26] He is the nephew of Osman Yusuf al-Kennadid, the creator of the "Ottoman script"

[27] bdirashid Ali Sharmarke, also known as Abdirashid Shermarke, was Prime Minister of the Somali Republic from July 12, 1960 to June 14, 1964, and President of the Somali Republic from July 6, 1967 until his assassination on October 15, 1969.

[28] native Somali scripts, one Latin script and one Arabic script

[29] Original SINNAANTA MUWAADINIINTA: Dhammaan muwaadiniinta Dalka iyagoon loo kale soocin xag jinsiyadeed, Dal uu asal ahaan ka soo jeedo, dhalasho, luuqad, Gobal, jinsi (lab/dheddig), dhaqaale ama heerka aqoonsi ee uu Bulshada ku dhex leeyahay ama aragti/rayi, waxay yeelanayaan xuquuq iyo waajibaad simman/isla eg sharciga hortiisa.

multiple foreign languages held official status. The coexistence of multiple languages and scripts was the defining feature of Somali language policy at the time, reflecting the political and societal fragmentation of the era.

5.2 The Reform of Somali Script Promoted the Standardization of the Somali Latin Alphabet

In 1969, the Somali military government came to power and established the Somali Democratic Republic. The Siad Barre government recognized that the Somali language was the mother tongue and national language of the Somali people, and that its greatest current problem was the lack of a unified script. Seizing this difficult issue, the Somali Language Commission was reinitiated in 1970. This time, the Somali Language Commission consisted of 21 well-known language experts and scholars of the time. It was a massive and highly influential effort. The experts of the Somali Language Commission were required to each write a grammar book, a 5,000-word scientific terminology dictionary, and textbooks for all school grades in Somali, based on the three scripts selected in the second report of the previous Somali Language Commission. The Somali Language Commission had no authority to decide which script would become the final Somali script, as only the script that completed the task the fastest would be adopted as the official Somali script. By the third anniversary of the founding of the Somali Democratic Republic, only the Somali Latin script had completed the assigned tasks. On October 21, 1972, President Mohamed Siad Barre of the Somali Democratic Republic announced the use of the Latin script to write Somali. [30]This decision not only officially gave the national language Somali its own spelling system but also resolved the long-standing controversy over language and script, and marked Somalia's first major ontological planning of the national language. This script includes 21 consonants and five vowels and is still used as the Somali script today[31]. To further amplify the influence of the Somali language and script, the Siad Barre government soon launched a top-down, massive "literacy campaign".

In January 1973, the government of the Somali Democratic Republic began promoting the Somali script nationwide. Primary schools began using Somali-language textbooks, and by 1975, middle schools and universities also began using Somali textbooks. In addition, the first newspapers written entirely in the new Somali script were launched. On March 7, 1974, the Somali Democratic Republic government launched a mass literacy campaign targeting all rural areas. The literacy campaign raised Somalia's literacy rate from 2% before independence to 60% during the Somali Democratic Republic period.

The Somali Democratic Republic government also stipulated that all levels of civil servants must pass a written and reading test in the new Somali script within three months or be dismissed; later, the time limit was extended to six months. Meanwhile,

[30] In 1972, the government promulgated the Somali Orthography, which stipulates the official writing method.

[31] Later, a glottal consonant was added, so most scholars now recognize that Somali has 22 consonants.

in a short period, the new Somali script spread to other Somali-speaking regions such as Western Somalia (Ogaden), Djibouti (French Somaliland), and northeastern Kenya (NFD). As the influence of the Somali language and script expanded, the Siad Barre government, in the 1979 "Constitution of the Somali Democratic Republic", officially designated Somali and Arabic as the official languages for the first time[32].

During this period, the Siad Barre government deliberately promoted the national language and Somali script in Somalis' daily communication, business communication, and education. The Somali script quickly spread and was widely used in Somali-inhabited areas in neighboring countries and among the Somali diaspora and was also used by Somali minority groups.

6. Somali Language and Script Development and Challenges

6.1 Interruption of Language Development Due to Civil War

In January 1991, the government of the Somali Democratic Republic fell, and the country was left fragmented, with various institutions facing a vacuum. The turbulent society not only hindered the continued development of the Somali language but also severely impacted the national education system and language promotion efforts. Schools were closed, and there was a lack of educational resources, leading to the suspension of literacy campaigns.

Despite this, the Somali diaspora communities continued to use and spread the Somali language, and the Somali script was preserved within Somali communities in North America, Europe, and the Middle East. Especially in the modern era, with technological advancements and digitization, technology has driven language development. As technology advanced, modern applications emerged, and Somali began to enter the digital realm. Somali language learning platforms and language processing technologies were developed, further promoting the modernization of Somali script.

As the standard writing system for Somali, the Latin alphabet became the most popular medium for international communication of the Somali language. Many social media platforms developed Somali language input methods and translation tools, and Somali was actively promoted in the media and on online education platforms. This was one of the key factors that allowed the Somali language and script to continue to thrive and spread during the decades of civil war in Somalia.

[32] Original text(Diinta iyo Afka)1 Diinta Islaamku waa Diinta Qaranka2. Af Soomaaligu waa afka kaliya ee Shacbiga Soomaaliyeed ku wada hadlo iskuna wada garto,Afka Carabiguna waa afka Shacbiga Soomaaliyeed waana midka ku xiriiriya Ummada Carbeed oo uu ka midka yahay, Labadubana waa Afafka rasmiga ah ee Jamuuriyada Dimoqraadiga Soomaaliya http://somalitalk.com/dastuur/dastuurkii_1979.pdf In Chapter 3 Religion and Language and Description of the Constitution: 1 Islam is the state religion 2. Somali is the only language that the Somali people communicate and recognize among themselves, Arabic is the language of the Somali people and is the language that connects the Arab society, Somali is one of them, and both are official languages of the Somali Democratic Republic.

6.2 Further Development of the Somali Language and Script

In 2012, the Federal Republic of Somalia was established. Subsequently, the national constitution passed by the Constituent Assembly in its Chapter 1, Article 5, stipulates: "The official language of the Federal Republic of Somalia is Somali (with the southern dialect as Maay and the northern dialect as Maxaa), and Arabic is the second language[33]". [34]This constitution further clarified the status of Somali as the official language and changed the term "language" to "dialect" in the section on equal rights for citizens, affirming that the only differences are between dialects, not languages.

The President and other government officials have continuously called for the development of Somali, especially in the educational field. The Ministry of Education of the Federal Government of Somalia, in the National Education Plan (Qorshaha Waxbarashada Qaranka), made Somali the national teaching language, with the goal of making it the language used in schools across the country. The education policy also indicates that the Federal Government of Somalia is working to incorporate Somali into education, administration, and communication, in an effort to reduce the influence of foreign languages like English and Arabic in Somali society.

On January 21, 2015, on the 42nd anniversary of Somali script usage, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud announced the use of Somali in all official documents across Somalia, prohibiting the use of foreign languages in official documents. On February 21, 2015, President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia jointly laid the foundation for the Somali Language Institute (The Regional Somali Language Academy) in Mogadishu. This was the first regulatory body for the Somali language, dedicated to preserving and developing Somali.

In January 2016, Mayor of Banaadir, Yusuf Hussein Jimaale, ordered that all advertisements in Mogadishu be published in Somali, with permits being denied for ads not in Somali. On January 21, 2016, Presidents Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia and Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti commemorated the second anniversary of the Somali Language Institute's establishment. This reflects the Federal Government of Somalia's attitude and determination in promoting the national language and the stability of its plans for the language's status.

The Somali diaspora has strengthened language education and ensured the transmission of Somali to younger generations. This measure has further promoted Somali in diaspora communities and globally, continuing to expand its influence. Somali scholars have also used literature, film, and music to advocate for the revival of Somali culture.

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[33] The famous scholar Bogumił Witalis Andrzejewski divides Somali dialects into northern dialects (Af-Maxaad Tiri or Maxaad Tiri), southern dialects (Maay or Af-maay) and coastal dialects, while John I. Saeed divides Somali dialects into northern dialects , southern dialects and Benadir dialects . This is recognized by the international academic community , but Somali scholars tend to divide Somali dialects into northern dialects and southern dialects.

[34] Original Qodobka 5aad. Afafka Rasmiga ahAfka rasmiga ah ee Jamhuuriyadda Federaalka Soomaaliya waa Af-soomaaliga (Maay iyo Maxaatiri), af Carabigana waa luqadda labaad. https://docs.voanews.eu/so-SO/2012/08/02/db7a18b3-f965-4201-9172-43511a5615dd.pdf

6.3 Challenges Encountered by the Somali Language and Script

Since the collapse of the Somali Democratic Republic, Somalia's political landscape has been complex and ever-changing. The prolonged civil war and economic difficulties have affected the normal functioning of the education system, which has limited the spread of the Somali language. The dominance of English and Arabic in government, international affairs, and business has had an impact on the scope of Somali language use. The dialectical differences of Somali and the social turmoil may weaken the unity and promotion of Somali.

Furthermore, after the civil war, the Somali government failed to establish unified standards and policies for language education. Currently, Somalia's primary language policies are reflected in the constitution's provisions on official languages and in the educational strategic plans, which outline teaching languages and related pedagogical content. However, a specific language law or script law has not yet been formulated, and there are no detailed policies to ensure the implementation of an overall language plan. For example, the teaching language, educational structure, language curriculum planning, and management systems are still not unified across Somalia. There is also a significant difference between public and private schools, and multilingualism is common in school teaching languages. These issues reflect the lack of systematic execution of government policies, ineffective policymaking, and a lack of synchronization and coordination in their implementation. Consequently, the linguistic ecosystem of Somalia once again features a coexistence of colonial languages, religious languages, and indigenous languages.

During this period, multilingual education and religious education remain key features of Somalia. English has become the lingua franca and one of Somalia's diplomatic languages. [35]Although the Somali government continues to emphasize the official status of the Somali language and calls for the development and maintenance of its status, the primary goal is to increase the Somali people's sense of identification with the Federal Government of Somalia.

It is evident that since the establishment of Somali script, Somalia's linguistic ecology has undergone a significant transformation, transitioning from a society dominated by foreign languages to a society developing through its indigenous national language. From the first clear acknowledgment of Somali as the official language in the constitution to the emphasis by successive post-civil war governments on the official status of Somali, while Somali language planning is still in its early stages and remains a rough overall framework, the status of Somali in Somali society is unshakable. This is closely tied to the critical role Somali plays in building national and ethnic identity. However, for Somalia to truly achieve the comprehensive popularization and dominance of Somali in all fields of society, the Federal Government of Somalia needs to put in more effort,

[35] During the period of the Federal Republic of Somalia, a large number of Somali "elites" returned to their country, which also promoted the development of English in Somalia.

develop more comprehensive and specific language policies, and ensure their effective implementation.

7. Conclusion

The development of the Somali national language and script has undergone a long process of exploration, transitioning from an oral culture with no written system to various attempts at different writing systems, and eventually to the standardization of the Latin alphabet. It is not only a symbol of Somali national culture but also an important medium for social cohesion and national identity. Looking ahead, the potential for the development of the Somali national language is vast, but continuous effort is required, especially in education, policy, technological innovation, and cultural heritage.

Through mother-tongue education and government policy support, increasing literacy rates in Somali and enhancing its social application, modern technology can be utilized to develop more digital tools for the Somali language, adapting to the demands of the globalized era. It is also crucial to protect and promote Somali poetry, literature, and traditional arts, which will strengthen national pride. In the future, Somali will continue to develop into a more dynamic language with the dual support of technology and culture, contributing to national unity and cultural inheritance.

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

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Book review: John Mwangi Githigaro, Countering Violent Extremism in Kenya: Community, State, and Security Perspectives[1][2]

Richárd Schneider[3]

In the post-9/11 period, security threats posed by violent extremism (VE) and terrorism have been growing globally. In the meantime, however, developing counterterrorism strategies and making efforts to prevent radicalisation have also gained traction. The 9/11 attacks in the United States (US) were followed by the spread of terrorist attacks also in Africa. Though the continent was "scarcely a generator of jihadi violence at the dawn of the 21st century" (Bacon and Warner, 2021, p. 76), today it has become the global epicentre of jihadist violence and terrorism. The securitisation of weak and failed states as responsible for terrorist threats all over the world laid the ground for international operations with multifaceted approaches. Accordingly, African governments have started to address domestic radicalisation and terrorism by utilising governmental responses with hard power and military priorities.

African security and the political stability of African states have always been a key priority for the international community not only because important maritime trade routes along coastal countries are connecting various regions in the global economy, but also since economic and social insecurity, political instability, the spread of violent extremism, and youth radicalisation have significant implications for global peace and security. The Horn of Africa has long been struggling with economic, political, and social challenges associated with complex ethnic and tribal tensions. The instability of the broader region in the Gulf of Aden has serious consequences for regional as well as international security. Kenya is among the relatively most stable countries in terms of governance and economic productivity not only in East-Africa and the Horn of Africa, but in the continent too. Violent extremism and terrorism, however, pose significant risks to the country's social, economic and political stability: "Kenya has since the late 1990s struggled with terrorism threats" (Githigaro, 2024, p. 7). Al-Shabaab, a terrorist organisation is Somalia, and its affiliates in Kenya (see Githigaro, 2024, p. 108) have since the mid-2000s been constituting some of the most significant security concerns to the region, including Kenya. Therefore, a particular concern should be devoted to examining the security threats, possible countermeasures, and regional security dynamics

[1] DOI:

[2] John Mwangi Githigaro, Countering Violent Extremism in Kenya: Community, State, and Security Perspectives (London: Lexington Books, 2024, 131pp, $90.00. Cloth. ISBN: 9781793644749.).

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in East-Africa.

In his book 'Countering Violent Extremism in Kenya: Community, State, and Security Perspectives,' John Mwangi Githigaro (2024) interrogates the dynamics between radicalisation, violent extremism, terrorism, and potential countermeasures in Kenya, critically examining their relations through a multi-theoretical perspective supported by precise definitional background. The author assembled a diverse group of stakeholders from Nairobi and Mombasa, two hotspots for VE and terrorist recruitment in Kenya, who certainly deliver valuable interdisciplinary perspectives to the topic. With an extensive secondary and primary research methods, including interviews, focus group discussions and observations, the book puts an emphasis to examine how different stakeholders such as security actors, society organisations, academics, and community members present the threats of radicalisation, extremism, terrorism, and the associated effects of countermeasures.

Since the early 2000s, academic literature on conflict resolution and peace operations has suggested to develop new, community-based approaches that focus more on the potential roles of local communities in building capacities for long-term peace (Colletta and Muggah, 2009; Özerdem, 2012). For disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes, the United Nations (UN) Department of Peacebuilding Operation (2010) acknowledged the need to revise past conflict resolution practice and integrate the community approach. Moreover, the UN Development Programme (2012), recognising the key role of communities in conflict resolution, drew attention to the contributions that affected families, traditional leaders, religious authorities, women and young people can make. Though community-based approaches put a greater emphasis on reintegration processes and community-level reconciliation and decision-making compared to past experiences in conflict resolution (Verkoren et al., 2010), their practical efficacy, at least in the 2010s, has yet to be fully attested. The community-based perspective based upon soft power priorities was, however, an inevitable response to the increased awareness about strengthening and reforming the traditional views on radicalisation and the associated countermeasures focusing on hard power initiatives such as military intervention, intelligence, surveillance and punitive strategies (Githigaro, 2024, p. 3). The book applies such a community-oriented perspective as a relatively new approach to the scholarly debate on countering terrorism and VE. Accordingly, strengthening community resilience as an indispensable pillar of counterterrorism strategies and an alternative to past research agendas only focusing on individual pathways to radicalisation and traditional counterterrorism responses (Githigaro, 2024) is at the heart of this work. By contextualising the roles that communities may take in a broader counterterrorism and counter-radicalisation strategy, and adopting a community-based approach, this book challenges existing literature on conflict resolution and terrorism focusing primarily on state- and individual level analysis and offer a roadmap to study local communities' contributions to effectively countering radicalisation, extremism and terrorism.

With presenting detailed definitional, methodological, theoretical considerations, in

the Introduction, the author contextualises the topic by discussing some aspects of the global counterterrorism agenda after the 9/11 attacks as well as the concept of community resilience in the US and the United Kingdom (UK). Additionally, it is highlighted to what extent historical inequalities, racism, religious and ideological narratives predispose predominantly young Muslims to radicalisation globally and especially in Kenya, where homegrown radicalisation has since the mid-2000s been on the rise. Relatedly, it is also shown, and further detailed in Chapter 1, how Kenya's intervention in Somalia in 2011, porous borders for terrorist militias, corruption, weak governance, diplomatic relations with the West, economic inequalities, religious indoctrination, and the crisis of national identity all generate conducive environment in Kenya for terrorist activity (Githigaro, 2024).

In Chapter 1, Kenya's historical experiences with terrorism in the pre- and post-9/11 periods is detailed, tough sometimes it may be found to be arranged thematically rather than strictly chronologically. The author illustrates changing dynamics in terms of the targets and committing organisations of terrorist attacks. While early experiences with terrorism in Kenya dates to the 1970s and 1980, terrorism, according to the author, had not been presented as a significant security threat until the late 1990s when the bombing attacks against the US embassy in Nairobi in 1998 led to the complete revision of existing approaches to counterterrorism in the country. The book therefore thoroughly reviews anti-terror legislation and institutionalisation processes throughout the 2000s and 2010s.

In 2011, Kenya under Operation Linda Nchi intervened in Somalia to respond the incursion of Al-Shabaab militias into Kenyan territory (Githigaro, 2024). The intervention reportedly led to Kenya's Westgate shopping mall siege in Nairobi in 2013 committed by local militants associated with Al-Shabaab. The subsequent securitisation of ethnic Somali identity as well as Islam, operations such as Usalama Watch initiated in 2014 and targeting predominantly Somali citizens, and the stereotyping of refugees as enemies provided further grounds for recruitment amongst disillusioned youth. The complex social dynamics associated with the operation and its implications for radicalisation processes in Kenya are thus also well-examined.

Chapter 2 presents security officials' practical experiences and insights about how to address potential challenges associated with radicalisation. The author investigates radicalisation as a process and how extreme political ideals, faith and indoctrination contribute to that process. It is also analysed to what extent Kenyan involvement in Somalia in 2011 and refugee camps in Kenya have contributed to radicalisation, and thus potentially generated security threats. Additionally, it is also examined how online technologies are utilised and facilitate recruitment and the spread of radical ideologies to persuade users to join violent extremist groups. By addressing potential challenges mentioned above and revealing social marginalisation and counterproductive state responses as additional pillars of radicalisation, based on vast amount of quantitative data, the author provides recommendations on how to best develop effective counter-radicalisation strategies in Kenya, adding further values to the book in the policymaking domain.

In Chapter 3 and 4, the author provides insights into local perspectives toward radicalisation, extremism, and community-oriented strategies in dealing with them. Amongst such strategies are the Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE) campaign, the Likoni Community Development Program (LICODEP), and the *Nyumba Kumi* community policing platform, to mention a few. Through the lenses of various state and nonstate actors from Nairobi and Mombasa Counties, it is presented, on the one hand, how communities have been engaged in preventing radicalisation and countering violent extremism (CVE) in the past, and on the other, how local approaches have the immense potential to become alternatives to state-centric strategies.

The community-based perspective dates to Kenya's National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism of 2016 (Githigaro, 2024) which advocated community engagement as part of CVE and counterterrorism strategies. The role of nonstate actors and communities in preventing individuals to be radicalised and recruited into terrorist groups has since then fully acknowledged. In tackling complex and emerging threats, the book, through grounded fieldwork in Eastleight and Majengo in Nairobi County and Likoni in Mombasa County, examines community dialogues, responsible parenting, community-based counternarratives in the civil and religious spheres, preemptive strategies to marginalisation, economic empowerment, and their potential contributions to crime prevention and community resilience. With regard to community policing, trust deficits between state authorities and communities as elemental to effective CVE strategies are also addressed. The author devotes a particular concern to investigate how improved state-community relations and confidence-building mechanisms may result in better information sharing, collective problem-solving and early-warning mechanisms. The author found counternarratives particularly valuable in the Coastal part of Kenya and their potential in deconstructing misleading ideologies is stressed and well-illustrated. Even some practical, participatory models such as drama and creative arts as alternatives or complementary techniques to ongoing initiatives are discussed. Since *madaris* religious schools might have been used as entry points to youth radicalisation according to the data collected in Mombasa County, their role in reducing risks of radicalisation was also scrutinised in the local context.

While community-based initiatives and community-state partnerships are key to effective CVE strategies, they are, however, not without shortcomings. Personal safety and confidentiality concerns are just a few amongst the serious human rights violations that threaten those who join community policing efforts and cooperate with the police and other state authorities. The author dedicates Chapter 4 to examining existing dilemmas in CVE and how past experiences with extrajudicial killings, disappearances and human rights violations by the authorities had led to trust deficits and negative perceptions about the police. Since police authorities could have never been fully trusted according to data presented in the book, national government structures have become more important to local citizens in communication and cooperation. As a result of the police being easily compromised in the past, fearing from reprisals by terrorist groups and being labelled as "traitors" or "spoilers" for information sharing, individuals have

also become hesitant to engage directly with the police (Githigaro, 2024, p. 97). Adopting the securitisation theory developed by Buzan and Waever (2009), the author details how historically linking Islam and Muslim citizens by the state with VE and terrorist activities since Kenya's independence in 1963 as a narrative has been utilised to the securitisation of the Somali identity and to justify counterterrorism interventions against Somali citizens.[4] Moreover, it is also illustrated how all this paved the way for intercommunity social distances and trust deficits between the state and local communities (Githigaro, 2024, p. 101).

The book demonstrates how Kenya's counterterrorism strategy has historically shifted from hard power to soft power realities and helps to achieve synergies between the academic work and policymaking. It definitely contributes to the progressive debate in both fields by investigating the potential explanations for radicalisation and VE in an African context, presenting the evolution of counterterrorism interventions in Kenya, and revealing how different stakeholders perceive their social implications. It further reflects to the changing global security landscape by recognising the essential contribution of multiple actors in the security domain such as nonstate actors, individuals and communities. It provides practical insights to policymakers that seek to end insecurity and promote inclusive governance in Kenya. This academically well-grounded book is timely and relevant which makes a worthwhile contribution to the academic and policy debate, especially in times of the changing Somalian security landscape stemming from the transition from the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) to the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM). This book's real value lies, amongst others, in acknowledging the crucial role of communities in tackling complex social phenomena such as radicalisation and VE.

This book is primarily for scholars and policymakers, but anyone interested in violent extremism and terrorism in Africa will greatly profit from reading this book. It provides a comprehensive and well-grounded analysis on the subject and offers sound explanations for radicalisation pathways. It presents the multiple pillars of counterterrorism strategies developed in Kenya, how they fit in the 'Global War on Terror' agenda and how they are being shaped by regional and global dynamics.

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[4] The securitization theory has been also applied in other contexts where the referent objects of the securitization process were also the traditionally defined "community" and its individuals (see Besenyő, 2019).

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Spanish Republicans against the Nazis in World War II[1]

Book Review: Churchill's Spaniards: Continuing the Fight in the British Army 1939-46[2]

János Besenyő[3]

My attention was recently drawn to Séan F. Scullion's book "Churchill's Spaniards", with the excuse that as a military historian myself I had done research on the former Spanish colony of Western Sahara and the Spanish Foreign Legion. According to the historian I know, who is a historian of Spain, Scullion[4] has a military background like mine, currently working in the Netherlands as a NATO officer, and has done an unconventional study of the fate of soldiers who fought for the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and later fought as members of the British Army against Nazi Germany and its allies in World War II. I looked into the subject and found that very few books/studies have dealt with this issue, and this is the first book in English about Spaniards serving in the British Army.[5] Perhaps the reason why there has not been much attention paid to this subject is that most historians believe that the Spanish, although officially neutral in World War II, supported Germany, which helped Franco's regime to power, politically, diplomatically, economically and even militarily, and that a Spanish division (Blue Division), officially made up of volunteers, fought alongside the

[1] DOI:

[2] Séan F. Scullion, Churchill's Spaniards: Continuing the Fight in the British Army 1939-46, Warwick: Helion / Philadelphia: Casemate, 2024. Pp. 368. Illus., maps, chron., gloss., appends., notes, biblio., index. £29.95 / $49.95. ISBN:1804515337.

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[4] Séan F. Scullion is a bi-lingual Spanish/English speaker and an officer (Lt. Colonel) in the British Army serving in the Royal Engineers. Brought up in Spain during the later years of the Franco Regime and Spain's transition to democracy, he studied Spanish at the University of Nottingham. He has written widely on military matters and was a Spanish writer for Collins and Oxford University Press. Séan is the Secretary of the Royal Engineers Historical Society and was previously Secretary of Peninsular War 200. He leads a number of battlefield tours and is a speaker at conferences and festivals as well as on podcasts in English, Spanish and French.

[5] The most important of these are: Arasa, D. (1991). *Los españoles de Churchill* (Armonía).; Arasa, D. (1995). *Exiliados y enfrentados: Los españoles en Inglaterra de 1936 a 1945* (Ediciones de la Tempestad).; Postigo J. M. (2022). *Españoles en el Ejército Británico en la II Guerra Mundial* (Magase.); Coale, R. S. (2020). "From Internees to liberators: Spanish Republican Exikes in France, 1939-1945." in Sara J. Brenneis & Gina Herrmann (eds.): *Spain, the Second World War, and the Holocaust: History and Representation* (University of Toronto Press), 199–213.

Germans in the Soviet Union.[6] However, this is not the whole truth.[7] It is a topos like the one in Hungary, where, when the Spanish Civil War is mentioned, everyone knows and is proud of the fact that more than 1,000 Hungarian volunteers fought in the ranks of the International Brigades, half of whom lost their lives in the fighting. No one has mentioned that at least 200 Hungarians also served on the Nationalist side. Partly it did not fit in with the historical perspective of the communist period, and partly they did not know about it. When I was researching the activities of the Spanish Foreign Legion in Western Sahara, I came across the names of several legionnaires of Hungarian origin, and over the course of several years of research I managed to compile a (probably incomplete) list of Hungarians who served in the Legion and wrote several academic publications about their activities. I sent the first two articles on this topic[8] to Professor Iván Harsányi (1930-2018), whose main research area was the Spanish Civil War, and who was also internationally renowned. According to the professor, only one pilot, Gyula Gunda, served on the Nationalist side, and Rudolf Andorka, the military attaché of the Kingdom of Hungary, shared intelligence information with the Spanish about Hungarians fighting on the Republican side.[9] After reading the article and checking the references, he called me and, after a lengthy conversation, acknowledged the article's validity and called it a niche paper. He also commended me for having spent several years as a young historian doing research whose effectiveness was questionable to many. In his opinion, a historian should explore and publish the subject he is researching as thoroughly as possible, regardless of his opinions or worldview. In this light, I found Scullion's research and the book that resulted from it particularly interesting, as it broke with the common perception that Spaniards supported rather than fought fascist regimes. Reading the book convinced me that there were indeed Spaniards, some 1,050 according to the book, who not only criticised fascist Germany and its allies as they attempted to conquer much of Europe, but also took up arms against them in defence of democratic values between 1939 and 1946. This is interesting because there have been several publications about the foreign volunteers who fought on the side of the Allies, especially the British,[10] but almost no one knew about the Spanish, except a select

[6] Payne, S. G. (2008). *Franco and Hitler: Spain, Germany, and World War II* (Yale University Press).; Cerdá, J. A. & Martínez, E. M. G. (2023). *The 'Blue Squadrons' The Spanish in the Luftwaffe, 1941-1944* (Helion Company).; Stahel, D. (2018). *Joining Hitler's Crusade* (Cambridge University Press).; Bowen, W. H. (2000). *Spaniards and Nazi Germany: Collaboration in the New Order* (University of Missouri Press).

[7] While the Germans were saying how much they trusted the Spanish, they were preparing to take the Spanish-held Spanish Sahara, which they needed as a logistical base for their submarine warfare and to which the Spanish would not give them access, even by force of arms. Besenyő, J. (2009). *Western Sahara* (Publikon Publishers)., 60.; "Spanisch-West Sahara, Rio de Oro mit Spanisch Sahara und Spanisch-Süd-Marokko." *Generalstab des Heeres, Abtellung für Kriegskarten und Vermessungswesen*, Berlin, 1942.

[8] Besenyő, J. (2019). "Magyarok a Spanyol polgárháborúban." *Századok 153*(4), 803–827.; Besenyő, J. (2019). "Hungarians in the Spanish Legion?: Węgrzy w Legionie Hiszpańskim?" *Studia Politicae Universitatis Silesiensis 26,* 25–44.,

[9] Andorka, R. (1978). *A madridi követségtől Mauthusenig* (Kossuth).

[10] Prazmowska, A. (1995). *Britain and Poland 1939-1943: The Betrayed Ally* (Cambridge University Press).; Peszke, M. A. (2005). *The Polish Underground Army, the Western Allies, and the Failure of Strategic Unity in World War II* (McFarland).; Baczkowski, T. (2019). *In Peace and War 1933-1948. Memoirs of an Exiled Polish Cavalry Officer* (Helion & Company).; O'Connor, S. & Piketty, G. (2022). *Foreign Fighters*

few. Partly because the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had done his utmost to prevent Spain from entering the war on the side of Germany, the recruitment and implementation of Spanish Republicans was done in secret, and a significant number of them fought under aliases to conceal their Spanish identity (p. 194). This was important not only for the foregoing reasons, but also so that any Spanish volunteers captured would be handed over to Franco's Spain, where they would most likely face death sentences or long prison terms for their previous activities in the civil war. Since most of the Spaniards spoke little or no English, they pretended to be Gibraltarians or French when they were captured. In this way, not only were they avoided extradition to Spain, but also deportation to German concentration camps (pp. 143, 247).

The author's book, the culmination of eight years of research, describes the fate of the Republicans who fled Spain, how they scattered around the world, how they tried to make their way and how they joined first the French and later the British forces to fight against their former enemy, Nazi Germany.[11] We can follow how they were recruited, trained and then where and in what military operations they took part against Germany and its allies. It can be said that as members of various formations (Infantry units, Navy, Air Force, Pioneer Corps, SAS, commando units and even in the Special Operations Executive/SOE), Spaniards were deployed and sacrificed themselves at almost every front (France, Norway, Italy, Germany, North Africa, Middle East, etc.) in order to win.

The activities and experiences of these people in Africa were particularly interesting to me. After Franco's victory in 1939, many of them fled to France, where the French refused to accept them. As they did not dare to return to their homeland, the French forced them into internment camps, where they lived in very poor conditions, to 'make them easier to control' (pp. 42-47).[12] When the Germans occupied Poland in 1939, Britain and France began to put their military forces on alert. The French then made an offer to Spaniards and other foreigners fighting on the side of the Republicans that if they joined the French labour companies (Compagnies de Travailleurs Étrangers/CTE), which were under the control of the army and carried out military fortification work, and the French Foreign Legion (Légion Étrangère), they would be released from the internment camps. This offer was accepted by thousands of Spaniards. Partly to escape

and Multinational Armies: From Civil Conflicts to Coalition Wars, 1848-2015 (Routledge).

[11] During the Spanish Civil War, Nazi Germany provided Franco with substantial financial and military aid, even sending the Condor Legion to Spain, whose members took part in several military operations against the Republican forces. More on this: Beevor, A. (2006). *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (Penguin Books).

[12] In these camps, besides the Spaniards, there were other nationalities fighting on the side of the Republicans, such as Hungarians, Germans and Austrians. Some of them also joined the French Foreign Legion, but many of them escaped from the camps in adventurous ways and returned to their own countries. Ötvös, I. (2007). "A katonai főperek Magyarországon A koncepció felépítése az 1949-50-dik évi törvénysértő katonai perekben." *Doktori Disszertáció, Eötvös Lóránd Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar Történelemtudományok Doktori Iskola, Budapest*, 103. http://www.sze.hu/~kallay/letolt/2011/marcius/disszert.pdf (Accessed 17 June 2025); Erdős, A. (2020). "Egy nagykövet emlékei: magyarok Algériában." *Infovilág*, 18.05.2020, https://infovilag.hu/egy-nagykovet-emlekei-magyarok-algeriaban/ (Accessed 17 June 2025).

the miserable conditions of the camps, and partly to fight again against Germany, which had played such a major role in the fall of the Spanish Republic (pp. 47-56). This soon happened, as the Germans invaded Denmark and then attacked Norway, which asked the British and French for help. Nearly a third of the 3,600-strong legionary contingent sent by the French was made up of Spaniards, whose efficiency and heroism surprised their French officers (pp. 68-72). After the Germans attacked France, the Spanish fought them as they had promised but were overwhelmed. The Germans invaded surrendered France, some of the Spanish survivors were not treated as prisoners of war but were taken to the concentration camps of Mauthausen and Gusen, where most of them later perished (pp. 56, 247). The others remained in France under Vichy or were sent to the Foreign Legion bases in North Africa. Many of them, because they were not treated well by the French, left the Legion and joined the British armed forces to continue the fight against the Germans and their allies.[13] One of them was Rafael Ramos Masens from Barcelona, who was captured by Franco forces at the Battle of the Ebro but managed to escape and then joined the French Foreign Legion and was sent to Morocco. From there he joined the British SAS Corps, where he took part in various covert operations, such as Operation Tombola in Italy (pp. 190, 191, 292). After initial reluctance, the British military leadership welcomed the Spanish volunteers, who had considerable combat experience compared to ordinary British soldiers, which the British forces were able to put to good use almost immediately. Their value was recognised by their commanding officers, who, although they considered the Spaniards to be 'hot-headed', had a very positive opinion of their military ability and courage. They were considered particularly suitable for service in the various commando units and for participation in special operations (p. 129).

Nearly 100 men from the No.1 Spanish Company of the Auxiliary Military Pioneer Corps (AMPC), all Spanish but led by British officers, with plans written by Ian Fleming and training carried out by Kim Philby, were to be returned to Spain as undercover (sleeper) agents as part of a series of operations linked to Operation Goldeneye. This is where the Allies believed there was a real risk of the Germans, with Spanish support, taking Gibraltar from British hands, with unforeseeable consequences (p. 94). That this did not happen was partly due to the Spanish volunteers. In 1940 in Egypt, 75 Spanish

[13] These included the 300 Spanish legionnaires serving in the French Foreign Legion who rebelled against the French in the town of Avonmouth and refused to fight for Vichy France, allied with the Germans. The French High Command wanted to execute every third legionnaire for the mutiny, but the British intervened and saved the Spaniards' lives and allowed them to remain in England. Many of them joined the British armed forces. Scullion, XV, 73. There were also Spaniards left in the ranks of the "Free French", such as the 9th Company of the Régiment de marche du Tchad, known as "La Nueve", which was the subject of a documentary. Coale, R. S. (2020). "From Internees to liberators: Spanish Republican Exikes in France, 1939-1945." in Sara J. Brenneis & Gina Herrmann (eds.): *Spain, the Second World War, and the Holocaust: History and Representation* (University of Toronto Press), 199–213.; „La Nueve, The Forgotten Men of the 9th Company" *P-OLife*, https://anglophone-direct.com/la-nueve-the-forgotten-men-of-the-9th-company-argeles/ (Accessed 17 June 2025).; Hird, A. (2021). "Paris honours the forgotten Spanish fighters who liberated the French capital." *Radio France Internationale*, 25.08.2021, https://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20210825-paris-honours-the-forgotten-spanish-fighters-la-nueve-who-liberated-the-capital-liberation-world-war-2-nazi-general-charles-de-gaulle (Accessed 17 June 2025).

volunteers, previously serving in the French Foreign Legion, joined the commando units in the Middle East theatre of operations, many of whom were captured in the Battle of Crete. Among those captured was Francisco Geronimo, who escaped and was rescued after 11 months in hiding. He then joined the 2nd SAS Regiment and fought with them throughout the rest of the war (pp. 141, 199-201). Few people know, but among the participants in the "Operation Flipper", the plan to capture - or eliminate - the desert fox, the leader of the German forces in Africa, Lieutenant General Erwin Rommel, were Spanish volunteers, two of whom are mentioned by name (p. 185).

As a historian, Scullion not only describes the successes of the Spanish, but also their failures, such as José Bosque, who had to be removed from the army (p. 107), or the Spaniard Private López, who murdered a French officer in the heat of an argument and was therefore put before a firing squad (pp. 177-178). Also, about how one of them, Fernando Casabayo, who was very well thought of by SOE recruiters, betrayed his comrades and reported directly to Franco's Spanish secret service through the Spanish embassy in London, who shared their information with Nazi Germany and even Japan (pp. 107-109). Despite this, the achievements of the Spanish volunteers are not to be questioned, and they performed as well as any British soldier during the war. What remains a question for me is how many and who of the Spaniards served in the Air Force and Navy, as they are not mentioned by the author, who has written primarily the story of those in the Army. It would be worthwhile to include the history of Spaniards serving in the other services to complete the research.

The author also deals, albeit briefly, with the fate of the Spaniards after the war, how they were disappointed by the Allies, who did not remove the Franco regime and later collaborated with it. Thus, the more than 500 Spaniards who settled in England formed their own organisation, the Spanish Ex-Servicemen's Association, and through it tried to weaken the Franco regime by any means at their disposal.

The book is a niche work, made even more valuable by the fact that the author has used previously unpublished material from British, French and Spanish archives in his research, and in accordance with the requirements of "oral history", he has also conducted interviews with family members and descendants of the former republicans. Published by Helion & Co., this extremely detailed and well-documented 268-page book contains tables, lists and photographs that make the stories of the Spaniards even more understandable and personal. And the index of names and objects makes the work of researchers easier.

I can heartily recommend Scullion's book to anyone interested in the events of World War II, not just through "dry data" but through real, actual and exciting human stories. The book will also be of interest to those who are interested in special operations and the history and military history of the 20th century.

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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Spanisch-West Sahara, Rio de Oro mit Spanisch Sahara und Spanisch-Süd-Marokko. (1942). In *Generalstab des Heeres, Abtellung für Kriegskarten und Vermessungswesen*.

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Milton Shain, Fascists, Fabricators and Fantasists: Anti-Semitism in South Africa from 1948 to the Present[1][2]

Willem du Plessis[3]

Milton Shain opens his latest work by declaring that his purpose is "to investigate, trace and unpack hostile attitudes towards Jews and irrational fantasies about them in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa," not to provide an encyclopaedia of every slight since 1948.[4] That mission frames four broadly chronological chapters running from the National Party's 1948 triumph to the dawn of democracy.

Shain's first thread—the **fascist** element—is illustrated through DF Malan's 1948 claim that South Africa "belongs to us once more[5]" and his warnings about "Communist Jews."[6] The **fantasists** are "conspiracists whose worldview is laced with beliefs in secret plots and international cabals" and who circulated *The Protocol of the Elders of Zion*, a "Tsarist Forgery," in slim pamphlets and cheap booklets. **Fabricators**, finally, are the ideologues and institutions that kept the poison in public view: newspapers such as *Die Afrikaner*, *South African Observer* and *Behind the News* ensured that "derisory accusations against Jews" lingered well into the 1960s.[7]

From a psychology-of-conspiracy angle, Chapter 2 is the strongest. Pamphleteers, Shain shows, offered "simple answers to complicated social, economic and political questions," harnessing the frustrations of déclassé "poor whites" and those "inclined to paranoia." The Protocols' survival—despite a 1934 Supreme Court judgment branding it a forgery—proves how such fantasies shrug off legal refutation.[8]

Up to the late 1960s the narrative is almost entirely white. Shain justifies this by noting that Jews "had never been a specific political concern for the black majority" fighting white domination.[9] Only in Chapter 4 does he address black African and Coloured attitudes, quoting Soweto school surveys and AZAPO's Saths Cooper, who labelled any exploiter "in the Shylock mould."[10] These pages complicate the notion that antisemitism was solely a white-right fixation.

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[1] DOI:
[2] Milton Shain, Fascists, Fabricators and Fantasists: Anti-Semitism in South Africa from 1948 to the Present. Jacana Media, 2023, xix + 226 pp., $17,92 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-4314-3358-2
[3] Department of Military History, Stellenbosch University, Cape Town, South Africa; ORCID: 0009-0005-9627-9249; wdpzyl@gmail.com.
[4] Milton Shain, *Fascists, Fabricators and Fantasists: Antisemitism in South Africa from 1948 to the Present.* Johannesburg: Jacanda Media, 2023, xix.
[5] *Ibid., 17.*
[6] *Ibid., 22.*
[7] *Ibid., 86.*
[8] *Ibid., 51.*
[9] *Ibid., 120.*
[10] *Ibid., 120-121.*

Shain demonstrates that overt Jew-baiting drew scant mass support after 1948, yet the ideas endured by mutating. 1950s prosperity dulled the "Jewish problem", but 1970s anxiety gave exclusivists a fresh target in "a small international moneyed elite."[11] In the democratic era the trope resurfaced on 1994 strike placards attacking "Jewish capitalists" at Pick n Pay and, in the campus, hate mail catalogued under "The 'New' South Africa."[12]

His earlier volume, *The Roots of Antisemitism in South Africa*, showed how a "wide band of anti-Jewish feeling" was already "well established" by 1930 and that by 1937 the "Jewish Question was … firmly entrenched within mainstream white politics." *Fascists, Fabricators and Fantasists* takes up the baton: marginal fascists push *The Protocols*[13] anew; state-aligned fabricators revive myths of Jewish economic domination in the 1960s–70s[14]; post-1994 fantasists aim the trope at "Jewish capitalists" during labour unrest.[15] *Roots* explains the forging of the stereotype; the new book traces its adaptations under apartheid, decolonisation and identity politics.

Where Shain maps the external sources of hostility, Gideon Shimoni's *Community and Conscience* looks inward, asking how a "privileged white minority" of Jews weighed apartheid's moral dilemmas.[16] Shimoni analyses the Board of Deputies' instinct for political non-involvement[17], shows orthodox caution muting radical voices, and argues that Jews were "more liberal than other whites" yet wary of endangering communal security. Shain's thematic lens—fascists, fabricators, fantasists—tracks the evolving threat; Shimoni chronicles the community's calculations as apartheid fell and a new order took shape.[18] The durability of these tropes is no academic curiosity; it is visible in today's discourse.

Shain's work lands with fresh urgency. In the aftermath of the 7 October 2023 Hamas attacks and Israel's response in Gaza, South African social-media feeds have again echoed with reheated myths of Jewish omnipotence, altered only by the hashtags of the day. The repertoire first catalogued in 1948 remains intact: whispers of "foreign money" and the ever-useful spectre of George Soros. By tracing anti-Semitism through the decades, Shain equips journalists, educators and security analysts to spot these mutations in real time. His analysis thus illuminates the past while offering a diagnostic lens for the febrile politics of 2025. Recent data from the South African Jewish Board of Deputies sharpen the point: of the 182 anti-Semitic incidents logged between January and November 2023, almost two-thirds—63 percent—occurred after 7 October, and, for the first time this century, roughly six percent involved outright violence, including assault and

[11] *Ibid., 87.*
[12] *Ibid., 121-122.*
[13] Milton Shain, *Fascists, Fabricators and Fantasists: Antisemitism in South Africa from 1948 to the Present.* Johannesburg: Jacanda Media, 2023, 50-52.
[14] *Ibid.*, 86-87.
[15] *Ibid.*, 121-122.
[16] Gideon Shimoni, *Community and Conscience: The Jews in Apartheid South Africa*. Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2003, 13.
[17] *Ibid.*, 1.
[18] *Ibid.*, 241-242.

vandalism.[19] This spike turns Shain's historical mapping into a field manual for the present, demonstrating that yesterday's pamphlets have merely migrated to today's timelines while the animating script remains much the same.

Archival depth, furthermore, bolsters Shain's study: parliamentary speeches, *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk* (NGK) synod resolutions, strike-era placards and obscure pamphlets give it texture. The triptych prevents the narrative from dissolving into bare chronology. Still, the nuts-and-bolts of state or party information machines receive less attention than a military-history readership might wish, and the treatment of black South African perspectives, while welcome, remains brief.

Drawing on a formidable source base, Shain shows that antisemitism in South Africa never stands still. Fascists, fabricators and fantasists recycle the same stock myths to suit poor-white anxiety, apartheid's crisis of legitimacy and post-1994 identity politics. Though the study might probe information-warfare mechanics and non-white voices more deeply, it remains essential reading for historians, intelligence analysts and anyone tracking how extremist ideas mutate across regimes and media. His closing warning, with a nudge towards historian David Nirenburg—that "fabrications and conspiratorial fantasies offer simple explanations for fearful complexity"[20]—is as relevant to the digital present as to the pamphlet wars of the past.

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[20] Milton Shain, *Fascists, Fabricators and Fantasists: Antisemitism in South Africa from 1948 to the Present.* Johannesburg: Jacanda Media, 2023, 157.

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