Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies

ISSN 2786-1902 (Online)
ISSN 3094.1717 (Print)

Volume 6 Number 1 2026

Africa Research Institute

Óbuda University Doctoral School on Safety and Security Sciences
Africa Research Institute
JOURNAL OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN AFRICAN STUDIES

Dear Fellow Africanists/Researchers,

The 2026/1 issue of the Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies is finally out, and I believe the articles and reviews provide a diverse overview. The original plan was to offer a wide range of papers which, however, are related to each other. The main idea was to give a comprehensive overview of the current African geopolitical, political and historical themes that coincide rather frequently. I honestly think that the fresh copy of the journal contains very interesting issues about the recent problems of the continent, and it is readable both to those who are researching the topic in a scientific way and to those who are only interested in the modern developments of Africa on a broader scale. This year, the journal continues to maintain the high publication standards it has followed since its beginning. The authors come from various backgrounds as well (Africa, Eastern Europe, Far East and so on). The topics are so diverse and entertaining that we come to understand the scientific opinion on Africa from different regions of the world, which is an inspiring thought. That is why I think the current issue of the journal can become a favourite among the readers and it also can contribute significantly to the scientific world of Africanism as well.

The first research is conducted by Regina Szegedi, who chose a special topic on the "psycho-ecological" interpretation of African conflicts. She claims that the economic changes, crisis and problems reflect clearly in the human grouping structures and their hostility degrees. This unusual choice of topic sets the tone for the issue of the journal and gives the author lots of space to explore the topic in depth that undoubtedly provides the Africanist science with new ideas to analyse. The article is certainly an interesting interpretation on the special side of the African conflicts thus it is worth a reading.

The second paper by Dawit Mezgebe Tsegaye is an analysis of African citizenship as a concept. The author is African as well, so it is a thorough examination of the notion from the African point of view. The post-independence design or meaning of the word has a special character, thus the author gives particular attention to the formation and application of the concept. This theoretical approach is unique in its place which is why it is interesting to evaluate.

Our third article is written by a Japanese researcher, Yusaku Fukuhara who touches upon a phenomenon that is fundamental for research in the academic community. He argues that the European Union's Security and Defence Initiative in support of West African countries of the Gulf of Guinea (EUSDI GoG) is a program that provides actual reflections for the UN peacekeeping methods and gives important insights that could help the UN improve its operational and logistical capacities. If he is right, the peacekeeping operations of the UN could be amended in a positive way.

The next author, Christopher Griffin has decided to interpret a very important theme in the present African political landscape. He analyses the French influence in the Sub-Saharan Africa between 2022 and 2025, when a lot of military camps and diplomatic structures of the country have been closed or expelled. He aims at researching the politics of France on how it will distribute its military forces in the future regarding that the Russian-Ukrainian war will withdraw sources from the country.

The fifth work by Allan Okeyo and Garnet Okeyo aims at highlighting the injustices concerning the COVID-19 vaccine distribution worldwide compared to the African example of Kenya. The authors claim that an advantage enjoyed by Euro-American healthcare systems existed when the vaccine was handed out to the citizens. According to the article, in Kenya, for example, the Western NGOs like USAID and so on had better positions for distributing the medicine, then African or other companies. The result of the research therefore is worth considering for evaluation.

The sixth article is due to András Málnássy, who is specializing in the Turco-African relations in his works. In this paper, he examines the interesting issue of drone-warfare and trade between the two regions. He emphasizes the current importance and role of the UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) regarding Turkey's export mechanisms. In this work, he enlightens the reader about the relevance of drone-trade in relation to African import, and he thus sheds light on one of the most relevant topics in modern day arms traffic.

The seventh study was made by Bahlbi Malk, who endeavors to interpret a remarkable theme: he examines the legitimacy of the role of the sacred power of the Ethiopian emperor in the Ethio-Eritrean Federation, and comes to a conclusion, that the federation was a hierarchical and centralized entity that in reality preferred the Ethiopian community over the suppressed Eritrean people. His point of view is another interesting addition to the scientific research on the historic relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Eighthly, the following researcher, Olukayode Bakare delved deep into the subject of the Guinean political insecurity from 1984 to 2021. He argues that the current undemocratic rule of the country cannot be derived from ethnic considerations, rather the insufficiency of the bureaucratic functioning of the Guinean state. He insists that for further development the country needs to change from military rule to an egalitarian democratic nation that is concerned by the well-being of its citizens.

Ninthly we can observe the analysis of four authors: Frank Ahimbisibwe, Samuel Opono, Specioza Twinamasiko and Kabasiita Maria Goretti. The rare study concerns the elderly South Sudanese refugees forcibly displaced from their country into Uganda. The four writers agree that the elderly people living in new habitat can be integrated into the new society, and thus they can give important contribution to the Ugandan society.

The last, tenth article written by Attila Tokai concerns the living conditions and customs of Algerian vocational students in Hungary in the last part of the 20th century. The life of the pupils who lived in the rural town of Jászberény is examined in this paper, which seeks to find the answer to the question of how far the integration of these Algerians went in the rural world of the 70s Hungary? The author used for the work lots of archival sources, thus the article provides several new data on the social and educational life of the locally living Arabs, which may serve as a source for future research.

The first review of the journal is provided by Gábor Sinkó, who is interpreting the story of the book *Beyond Black Hawk Down: Intervention, Nation-Building, and Insurgency in Somalia, 1992–1995* about the Somalian interference. The work not only records the events of international military

action but provides a historic background as well for the Somali incidents that became famous on many media platforms. He recommends the book due to its relevance to African studies.

The second review is by Scott N. Romaniuk, who examines a book entitled: *Security-Development Nexus in Africa: Progress Towards the Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals* about the potential for development in Africa in the security field until 2063. He argues that security and progression are inseparable and together they can create a better atmosphere for the poor countries now in Africa.

In the third work, Mariann Tánczos analyzes the political influence of China at the East-African coast, interpreting *China and East Africa: Ancient Ties, Contemporary Flows*. According to the author, the book concerns the relation between East Africa and China regarding their trade conjunctions. The work relies mostly on archeological evidence, and it compares the ancient Chinese influence with the modern neocolonialism that seems to unfold in recent years.

Finally, in the fourth review, Marcell Pintér examines the book entitled *The New Silk Road Grand Strategy and the Maghreb – China and North Africa*. The topic is somewhat related to the previous work, but it investigates rather the Chinese influence in the Maghreb, which is also a very relevant topic. For those who are interested in the situation of the relations between the two areas, this review is ideal to read.

Concluding the introduction of this issue of the journal, I would like to add that it was very pleasant for me and the editors of the journal to consider such high-quality articles and reviews. It was always the goal and strategy of our editorial team to publish works that are relevant and related to topics new to the research community of this field, thus we were very enthusiastic that such well-written papers can be presented by us to the scientific world. I sincerely hope that fellow Africanists or just enthusiasts will enjoy both the interesting and relevant phenomena and themes that the recent issue contains. Therefore, I fully recommend reading the work for anyone interested in Africa-related issues.

Prof. Dr. János Besenyő

Head of the Africa Research Institute

Óbuda University, Doctoral School on Safety and Security Sciences

Africa Research Institute

Chief Editor at the Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies (JCEEAS)

Volume 6 Number 1 2026

Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies

Table of Contents

The Psychoecological Dimensions of Intergroup Conflict in the African Context[1]

Regina Szegedi[2]

Abstract:

Climate change and broader forms of environmental degradation act as a complex stressor contributing to political instability and conflict, particularly in vulnerable regions such as Africa. While political science has long explored links between environmental degradation and armed conflict, the psychological mechanisms remain underexamined. This paper introduces a "psychoecological" framework, emphasizing the interaction between psychological functioning and ecological conditions. Within this framework, psychoterratic emotions and processes such as identity threat, in-group bias, and resource competition can transform environmental concerns into conflict dynamics. Drawing on theories of intergroup conflict—including Social Identity Theory, Realistic Conflict Theory, and Terror Management Theory—we show how environmental insecurity reinforces in-group cohesion and fosters out-group hostility. Case studies from sub-Saharan Africa illustrate how climate variability intersects with ethnic, political, and historical fault lines. We also examine how climate change, psychological vulnerability, and migration interact under conditions of insecurity. Integrating psychological insights into climate-related defence and development strategies is crucial for resilience. The psychoecological lens highlights the human dimensions of climate change, urging interdisciplinary approaches to address its impacts on security and peace.

Keywords:
Psychoecology; Climate Change; Climate Migration; Intergroup Conflict; Collective Trauma; Africa.

[1] DOI: https://10.12700/jceeas.2026.6.1.429

[2] PhD Candidate (Doctoral School of Human Sciences), and Teaching Assistant (Department of Social and Work Psychology, Institute of Psychology), University of Debrecen, Hungary; ORCID: 0009-0001-0403-7850; szegedi.regina@arts.unideb.hu.

1. Introduction

We live in an era of polycrises — a period marked by multiple, interacting global stressors whose cumulative effects exceed the sum of their parts. Climate change and related forms of environmental degradation — such as global warming, increased climate variability, and more frequent extreme weather events — do not act in isolation (Lawrence et al., 2024). Instead, they amplify other destabilizing forces such as intergroup conflict, forced migration, and global health crises like pandemics. As part of these converging crises, the world also faces a mental health crisis linked to the ecological emergency (Kumar et al., 2023). Together, these processes generate what can be conceptualized as a form of *collective trauma* for humankind: humanity is simultaneously suffering the psychosocial consequences of escalating insecurity, while also contributing — whether actively or passively — to the environmental and geopolitical conditions that sustain it (Woodbury, 2019).

In security studies, climate change is widely described as a "threat multiplier" (CNA Military Advisory Board, 2007; Tesfaye, 2022) — a factor that heightens existing vulnerabilities, socio-political tensions, and resource inequalities, while also exerting psychological pressure at both individual and collective levels This is especially evident in Sub-Saharan Africa, where climate-sensitive livelihoods and histories of intercommunal tension create high exposure to risk (Treszkai, 2019). Farmland disputes have long fuelled communal tensions; climate change now intensifies these pressures, making instability more likely (Raleigh & Kniveton, 2012; Scheffran et al., 2019). Recent research and assessments (IPCC, 2018) conclude with medium confidence that climate change indirectly increases conflict risk by worsening known drivers of conflict such as economic shocks and resource competition. Thus, climate stress interacts with existing fault lines—undermining security, straining coping capacity, and fuelling identity threat and intergroup distrust that can escalate conflict.

While existing research has mapped climate–conflict correlations and material pathways (e.g., drought, livelihoods, governance) and documented mental-health impacts, the psychological conduits linking ecological stress to intergroup dynamics in Africa remain under-specified. In this article, the term *intergroup* refers broadly to relations between social groups defined by ethnicity, communal affiliation, political identity, or economic interests, which are often intertwined in the African contexts examined here. This paper addresses that gap by synthesizing the mechanisms through which climate stress can amplify grievance, ethnocentrism, and violence — or, alternatively, foster cooperation.

2.The Psychoecological Dimensions of Intergroup Conflict

2.2.Scope and Methodology

This section integrates insights from a range of psychological and structural theories that help explain how climate stress can shape intergroup conflict. Classic frameworks such

as Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Hogg, 2007), Realistic Conflict Theory (Sherif, 1966), and the General Aggression Model (Anderson, 2001) are complemented by other foundational and recent literature such as Terror Management Theory (Greenberg et al., 1997), the Social Identity Model of Pro-Environmental Action (Fritsche et al., 2018), and research on collective trauma (Hirschberger, 2018). Each of these frameworks offers a distinct lens on how ecological stressors may erode control, sharpen identities, or escalate grievances. *Figure 1.* provides a concise overview of these theories, summarizing their core mechanisms, relevance to climate–conflict contexts, and their role within the psychoecological synthesis. In the subsections that follow, we discuss them in more detail.

Theory / Model	Authors / Year	Core Mechanism(s)	Relevance to Climate–Conflict Context	Role in Psychoecological Synthesis
General Aggression Model (GAM), The heat Hypothesis	Anderson, 2001; Anderson & DeLisi, 2011	Environmental stressors (heat, noise, crowding) increase arousal and aggression; situational and individual factors interact to shape aggressive behaviour	Predicts that rising global temperatures will directly increase aggressive impulses and indirectly heighten aggression via displacement, poverty, and social strain	Connects climate-induced environmental stress (heat, discomfort) to micro-level aggression processes that scale up into intergroup violence, complementing SIT, RCT, and TMT in the psychoecological framework
Social Identity Theory (SIT)	Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Hogg, 2007	Individuals derive self-concept from group membership; motivated to maintain positive in-group distinctiveness	Ecological threat strengthens in-group cohesion and fosters out-group bias or scapegoating	Explains how climate stress catalyzes identity protection → fuels palliative pathway
Social Comparison Theory (SCT)	Festinger, 1954	Individuals/groups compare themselves with others; relative deprivation fuels resentment	Under climate stress, intergroup comparisons sharpen grievances (e.g., who	Explains mediating role of perceived injustice → conflict escalation

			gets aid/resources)	
Theory of Relative Deprivation	Runciman, 1966; Stouffer et al., 1949	Individuals/groups assess well-being relative to others; perceived disadvantage fuels resentment and grievance rather than absolute deprivation.	Under ecological stress, relative deprivation sharpens perceptions of unfairness (e.g., who gains/loses resources, aid, or land access), intensifying intergroup resentment	Explains how subjective injustice and social comparisons mediate the link between climate stress and conflict → grievance amplification pathway
Uncertainty-Identity Theory (UIT)	Hogg, 2007; 2021	People reduce self-uncertainty by identifying with groups that provide clear norms.	Climate variability undermines predictability → drives individuals to seek security in cohesive groups	Shows how loss of control under climate stress promotes group entitativity and defensive responses.
Realistic Conflict Theory (RCT)	Sherif, 1966	Competition over scarce resources fuels intergroup hostility.	Climate stress intensifies competition over land, water, and food.	Links ecological scarcity to direct intergroup aggression (conflict over material resources).
Group Entitativity	Campbell, 1958; Gaertner & Schopler, 1998	Threat fosters group cohesion and uniformity; high entitativity also increases competitiveness and hostility toward out-groups	In climate crises, groups "close ranks," strengthening solidarity but also exclusionary tendencies	Explains both resilience (ingroup cohesion) and aggression (outgroup hostility)
Terror Management Theory (TMT)	Greenberg et al., 1997	Mortality salience increases defence of cultural worldviews and in-group values	Climate change evokes existential	Explains existential dimension of eco-anxiety → connects to

			threat → motivates in-group defence and out-group derogation	defensive/palliative pathway.
Theory of Group-Based Control	Fritsche et al., 2011; Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2016; Scheffran et al., 2019	When personal control is undermined, individuals seek collective agency through stronger group identification	Ecological stress undermines personal control → boosts identification with powerful or entitative groups, armed groups may restore a sense of agency and identity	Shows how climate stress shifts locus of control to collective → intensifies group-based coping responses, pushes individuals toward collective responses, sometimes violent, to regain a sense of control
Anxiety-to-Approach Model	Jonas et al., 2014	Anxious uncertainty can motivate both avoidance (ingroup bias) and approach (constructive action).	Climate threat induces uncertainty → can trigger either antisocial defences or prosocial collective action.	Provides micro-level psychological pathways (approach *vs.* palliative) for climate-induced emotions.
Dual-Pathway Model of Climate Threat Responses	Stollberg & Jonas, 2021	Existential threats elicit either approach-oriented (direct) or palliative (symbolic) regulation strategies.	Climate threat → triggers eco-anxiety → responses may either mitigate conflict (collective action) or exacerbate it (ingroup defence)	Forms the core of the psychoecological synthesis; integrates psychological regulation with climate–conflict pathways

Existential Threat & Collective Trauma Frameworks	Jonas & Fritsche, 2013; Hirschberger, 2018	Threat and trauma can escalate violence (grievance/victimhood) or foster resilience and solidarity (shared fate, meaning-making)	Climate change as collective trauma in Africa: can fuel anti-Western resentment or rally communal coping	Highlights dual trajectories of grievance vs. resilience; critical mediator in psychoecological synthesis
Climate–Conflict Framework	Scheffran et al., 2019	Climate stress interacts with socio-political mediators (poverty, governance, migration) to shape conflict risk.	Climate stress is a "threat multiplier" that exacerbates vulnerabilities in fragile contexts	Provides macro-level structure; combined with psychological pathways to explain escalation/resilience dynamics.
Common Ingroup Identity Model (CIIM)	Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; see also IPCC, 2022; Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2016	Reframing "us" vs. "them" as a superordinate "we" reduces intergroup bias and hostility	African adaptation strategies (water-sharing, regional solidarity) show inclusive identities can reduce climate–conflict risk	Highlights cooperative framings as buffers: reframing threat in terms of shared humanity promotes resilience over division
Social Identity Model of Pro-Environmental Action (SIMPEA)	Fritsche et al., 2018	Ingroup identity, efficacy beliefs, and norms guide whether ecological threat leads to collective action	Explains variation: climate threat can mobilize pro-social cooperation if efficacy and inclusive norms are salient, or defensive exclusion if norms stress	Bridges identity processes with pathways of action, clarifying why similar threats yield divergent collective outcomes

			ingroup closure	

Figure 1: Summary of psychological and structural theories integrated into the psychoecological synthesis.

The above outline sets the stage for our inquiry. In what follows, we undertake to explore how climate change functions not only as an environmental and economic challenge but also as a psychological stressor that shapes intergroup dynamics. To address this, we review key themes at the climate–psychology nexus. We examine the psychological impacts of climate stressors on individuals and communities, focusing on emotions[3] and states such as eco-anxiety, uncertainty, and loss of control. We then draw on social psychology theories — including Social Identity Theory, Realistic Conflict Theory, and Terror Management Theory — to explore how climate stress catalyses intergroup conflict. Subsequent sections consider entitativity, identity protection, and group cohesion under threat, before turning to climate migration and collective trauma, illustrated with African case studies. Together, these themes provide the basis for a *psychoecological framework*[4] of how ecological stress shapes intergroup dynamics.

The methodology follows a qualitative desk review approach, synthesizing peer-reviewed research, case studies, and policy analyses from international organizations (e.g., IPCC, UNHCR), regional bodies, and independent research institutes. Sources published between 2000 and 2025 were prioritized to balance foundational theory with contemporary evidence. A desk review was chosen because the paper is conceptual and integrative rather than empirical. The aim is to collate, compare, and connect existing strands of evidence into a psychoecological framework that can guide both future research and policy.

2.2.Psychological Impacts: Emotions and Existential Threat

In recent years, the mental health impacts of climate change and related environmental stressors have garnered increasing scholarly attention, as the threats posed by a warming world become ever harder to ignore. Climate change—particularly in its human-driven dimensions—is not only an environmental or economic problem; it is fundamentally a psychological stressor, and as such, has become a major focus in psychological and public

[3] The article uses "emotions" as an umbrella term for related affective phenomena (cf. Izard, 2010; Russell, 2003), specifying more narrowly where needed.

[4] "Psychoecology" was introduced by Greenway to describe psyche–ecology interdependence (Greenway, 1995). While the term "ecopsychology" has since become more widely used (Roszak, 1992; Roszak et al., 1999), here, the term denotes the multi-level integration of psychological processes with ecological stressors and conflict dynamics, moving beyond the therapeutic or spiritual connotations of ecopsychology. Although it could more precisely be called "socio-psychoecology," we adopt the simpler "psychoecology."

health research over the past decade (Clayton et al., 2021). The escalating frequency and intensity of extreme weather events have rendered the once abstract notion of climate change far more tangible: while gradual increases in global temperature may be imperceptible, catastrophic hurricanes, destructive floods, prolonged droughts, and intensified wildfires are acutely experienced (Scheffran et al., 2019). Scientific projections, such as those of the IPCC (2018), and rising alarm about future risks exert an increasing toll on mental well-being. To describe this disruption, scholars have introduced the concept of psychoterratic emotions (Albrecht, 2005, 2011): forms of ecological distress including eco-anxiety, eco-grief, eco-guilt, solastalgia, helplessness, and anger. These emotions articulate experiences of uncertainty, loss, and disruption that threaten human needs for safety, predictability, and control.

Eco-anxiety[5] has received particular attention, defined as persistent worry and dread about environmental collapse (Ágoston et al., 2022a; Pihkala, 2020b). It is increasingly understood within an eco-existential perspective (Rehling, 2022), as it amplifies fundamental existential concerns—mortality, meaning, and control (Passmore et al., 2023). Eco-anxiety often co-occurs with grief, helplessness, guilt, and anger at perceived responsibility (Ágoston et al., 2022b; Clayton, 2020; Pihkala, 2018).[6] While not diagnostic categories (cf. Kőváry, 2019), these phenomena are valuable lenses for understanding ecological stress. Defensive responses also arise: *climate denial* (Cipriani et al., 2024) may buffer distress but delay adaptation (Norgaard, 2011), while *eco-apathy* reflects disengagement under overwhelm, reducing short-term anxiety but undermining long-term cooperation (Clayton et al., 2021; Pihkala, 2020a).

These emotions are not only private experiences; they reverberate socially. Eco-anxiety and eco-anger can mobilize activism (Stanley et al., 2021; Hickman, 2020), while solastalgia or helplessness may foster withdrawal. Guilt can promote reconciliation but may also trigger defensive denial when group identities are implicated (Fritsche et al., 2018).

In African contexts, such emotions intersect with material vulnerabilities: grief over lost lands can intensify migration pressures, while anger at perceived injustices may heighten intergroup hostility. Psychoterratic emotions thus mediate the link between ecological stress and collective dynamics, sometimes fuelling cooperation, at other times escalating conflict. *Figure 2*. provides an extended overview, grouping these processes by psychological function to highlight their ambivalent roles in vulnerability and resilience.

[5] Climate (or eco-) anxiety has been interpreted by some scholars as a contemporary form of well-known anxieties, such as separation or death anxiety. What distinguishes it, however, is that neither the persistence of the world nor cultural resources that typically sustain meaning (e.g., religion, science, art) can fully mitigate the threat, since they are themselves implicated in the crisis. Stolorow (2013) refers to this as "apocalyptic anxiety," framing climate anxiety as an emotional response arising from our "ecological unconscious" (Roszak, 2019) to the destruction of the natural environment (Kőváry, 2019).

[6] Such reactions are not necessarily pathological. Clinicians increasingly emphasize that anxiety or grief in response to real ecological threats is a rational response, and that coping involves finding meaning and agency despite looming risks (Kőváry, 2019).

Category	Emotion / Process	Valence	Definition	Nuanced Role	Key References
Affective bonds	Biophilia (ecophilia)	Positive (affinity)	Innate emotional affiliation with life and ecosystems.	Motivates care, stewardship, and restoration of nature.	Albrecht, 2005; Pihkala, 2020a; Wilson, 1984
	Topophilia	Positive (belonging)	Affective bond between people and place.	Provides belonging and resilience but may increase vulnerability when places are lost.	Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Tuan, 1974
Distress responses	Solastalgia	Negative (loss, sadness)	Distress when one's home environment is degraded without leaving it ("homesickness without leaving home").	Signals environmental loss; can foster awareness and political mobilization.	Albrecht, 2005; Pihkala, 2020a
	Eco-anxiety	Negative (fear, worry)	Chronic worry/dread about climate and ecological collapse.	Distressing, but can motivate collective action if channeled constructively.	Ágoston et al., 2022a; Clayton et al., 2017; Pihkala, 2020
	Eco-grief / Ecological grief	Negative (grief, mourning)	Grief in response to ecological losses (species, ecosystems, landscapes).	Can paralyze, but also catalyze activism, rituals, and solidarity.	Ágoston et al., 2022b; Cunsolo & Ellis, 2018; Pihkala, 2020
	Environmental melancholia	Negative (inhibition, unresolved grief)	A form of unresolved mourning in response to ecological loss, marked by paralysis, guilt, and difficulty translating	reflects deep care for the environment, but can inhibit adaptive coping or activism. May also foster denial or	Lertzman, 2015

			concern into action.	disengagement if unresolved.	
	Eco-guilt	Negative (guilt) / ambivalent	Guilt over one's environmental footprint or complicity in degradation.	May lead to paralysis or blame, but also motivates sustainable behavior.	Ágoston et al., 2022b; Fritsche et al., 2018; Pihkala, 2020;
	Eco-anger / Climate anger	Negative (aggression), can be adaptive, "fight"(engagement) reaction	Emotional response to perceived injustice, irresponsibility, or harm to the environment.	Can escalate into hostility or aggression, but also fuel climate activism and collective mobilization.	Contreras et al., 2023; Hickman, 2020; Stanley et al., 2021;
	Ecoparalysis	Negative (helplessness), "freeze" reaction	Feeling helpless to respond to environmental problems.	Risk of inaction; can be reframed into collective efficacy.	Albrecht, 2011; Pihkala, 2020
Coping mechanisms	Eco-coping	Mixed (adaptive)	Strategies to regulate eco-anxiety, grief, and guilt (problem-focused, emotion-focused, meaning-focused).	Critical for transforming distress into resilience and pro-environmental behavior.	Ágoston et al., 2022a; Kőváry, 2019; Pihkala, 2020
Cognitive shifts / defensive processes	Generational/ Baseline amnesia / Shifting baseline syndrome	Neutral (cognitive bias)	Each generation normalizes current degraded environmental conditions as the "new normal."	Masks cumulative ecological loss; reduces urgency of response.	Pauly, 1995; Pihkala, 2020
	Eco-apathy / Disengagement	Typically negative (avoidance, passive defence)	A psychological state of indifference or detachment toward environmental problems, often arising from overwhelm, perceived helplessness, or habituation to	While disengagement can reduce immediate distress, it undermines collective efficacy and civic action, reinforcing vulnerability to ecological risks.	Clayton et al., 2021; Pihkala, 2020

			constant climate threat messaging.		
	Climate denial	Typically framed as negative (distortion of reality), "flight" (avoidance, active defence)	The refusal to accept or minimize the reality, severity, or anthropogenic causes of climate change, often as a defence against anxiety or guilt.	While denial can delay adaptive responses and fuel polarization, in the short term it may reduce existential distress and preserve psychological functioning.	Björnberg et al., 2017; Cipriani et al., 2024; Mendy et al., 2024; Norgaard, 2011; Fritsche et al., 2018
	Meaning-making, eco-cultural identity	Positive (growth, resilience)	Reframing ecological disruption into meaningful narratives or identities.	Expands self-concept, fosters resilience, solidarity	Clayton et al., 2017; Hirschberger, 2018
	Nature-Deficit Disorder	Negative (deprivation, alienation)	Reduced psychological and developmental well-being linked to diminished direct contact with nature.	Highlights costs of disconnection from natural environments; though not a clinical category, has raised awareness of the developmental and ecological value of nature contact.	Louv, 2005
	Anthropocene disorder	Negative (syndrome, existential malaise)	Broad psychological syndromes linked to living under human-driven global disruption.	Frames diffuse ecological stress as a chronic, epochal condition.	Albrecht, 2011; Rehling, 2022

Figure 2: Psychoterratic Emotions and Related Processes in the Context of Climate Change. Building on Albrecht's (2005, 2011) original notion of psychoterratic emotions and subsequent extensions that introduced eco-anxiety, eco-guilt, eco-grief, and eco-coping (e.g., Pihkala, 2020; Ágoston et al., 2022), we systematize these phenomena into four functional categories:

affective bonds, distress responses, coping mechanisms, and cognitive shifts. While earlier accounts often described these experiences in terms of positive or negative valence (Clayton et al., 2017; Koger, 2011), such dichotomies risk obscuring their ambivalent and sometimes adaptive roles (Pihkala, 2020; Ágoston et al., 2022a). For example, emotions such as eco-anxiety or eco-guilt can be distressing, yet they may also serve as catalysts for collective action or sustainable behaviour. This functional reframing clarifies how climate-related psychological phenomena can exacerbate vulnerability or foster resilience within a psychoecological framework of climate–conflict dynamics.

Note. Adapted from Albrecht (2005, 2011), Pihkala (2018, 2020), Ágoston et al. (2022a, 2022b), Clayton et al. (2017), Hirschberger (2018), Rehling (2022), and others. This table summarizes climate-related emotions and defensive processes (e.g., denial, apathy) grouped by psychological function rather than valence.

2.3.Aggression, Uncertainty, and Intergroup Responses

Importantly, social reactions to environmental change often depend less on the objective causes of ecological disruption than on how affected communities perceive these changes and attribute responsibility for them. Ecological stresses that heighten uncertainty, fear, or loss of control can lead to more *ethnocentric attitudes and behaviours*. These, in turn, often spur intergroup tension and aggression. Evidence across psychology, sociology, and political science shows that global warming heightens the incidence of violent behaviour. Laboratory and field studies demonstrate that stressors such as extreme heat, cold, crowding, noise, and poor air quality increase aggressiveness (Berkowitz & Harmon-Jones, 2004; Graham et al., 2006), and violent crime rises during hot periods (Anderson, 2001).[7] This micro-level evidence is reflected in Anderson's General Aggression Model, which Anderson and DeLisi (2011) extend to climate change: warming amplifies aggression both directly (via discomfort) and indirectly through processes such as displacement, poverty, and resource strain, which may intensify social tensions. These mechanisms connect environmental stress not only to individual aggression but also to intergroup conflict, situating climate change as a potential systemic catalyst for violence.

At the macro level, climate stress intensifies resource competition and exacerbates social divisions. As Xie et al. (2024) summarize, climate stress can shape conflict risk through multiple pathways, a pattern echoed in African studies (Burke et al., 2015; Raleigh & Kniveton, 2012). Realistic Conflict Theory (Sherif, 1966) predicts that scarcity pushes groups into rivalry, as, for instance in Africa, where prolonged droughts and shifting rainfall have sparked farmer–herder conflicts over land and water (Mertz et al., 2016). In the Sahel, desertification and erratic rains have intensified clashes in Nigeria, Mali, and Sudan—a classic setup for intergroup rivalry. [8] A meta-analysis estimates that

[7] Additional evidence includes Ranson (2014) and Bushman et al. (2005), who confirm increased violent offenses during hotter periods.

[8] In Nigeria, desertification and drought have driven herders south into farming zones, intensifying clashes that since 2011 have caused over 10,000 deaths (Eboreime et al., 2025). Similar dynamics occurred in

deviations from typical historical climate conditions (e.g., drought, heat) increase intergroup conflict risk by about 11% (Burke et al., 2015).[9]

Psychological processes mediate these dynamics: *Social Identity Theory* (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Hogg, 2007, 2021) reminds us that people derive a sense of self from group memberships, and they are motivated to maintain a positive distinctiveness for their in-group. In times of crisis or insecurity, group boundaries often harden: individuals latch onto group identity more tightly as a source of certainty and support. Environmental threats can heighten an "us vs. them" mindset, especially if another group is seen as the cause of or competitor in the crisis. For example, if a devastating drought strikes and one ethnic community suffers more, its members might blame neighbouring groups (or the government, or foreign countries) for their plight, rather than attributing it purely to natural forces. This search for *scapegoats* is a common psychological defence when faced with hardship — it externalizes the threat and provides a target for frustration. Unfortunately, scapegoating often aligns with pre-existing social fault lines (ethnicity, religion, nationality), thereby inflaming intergroup animosities. In addition, *Social Comparison Theory* (Festinger, 1954) and the *Theory of Relative Deprivation* (Runciman, 1966; Stouffer et al., 1949) emphasize that perceptions of relative disadvantage under climate stress intensify resentment and salient injustice rather than absolute conditions as the driver of grievance and conflict.

Terror Management Theory (Greenberg et al., 1997) offers another lens for understanding climate-era aggression and defensiveness. It proposes that *mortality salience* (reminders of human mortality) leads individuals to cling more firmly to cultural worldviews and in-group identities, which function as psychological buffers against existential anxiety. In laboratory experiments, making death salient has led participants to show greater prejudice toward out-groups and more defence of in-group values, as a way to attain symbolic immortality through one's group or culture (Fritsche et al., 2012) and fostered ethnocentric attitudes (Uhl et al., 2017).[10] These outcomes show how climate threat can activate *symbolic defences* — nationalism, group pride — rather than direct problem-solving, thereby fuelling group biases. Climate change, while distinct from immediate personal death, represents a diffuse *existential threat* — it portends the possible demise of entire communities or even humanity. Thus, climate threats can evoke a kind of mortality salience on a collective scale. People fearful of climate-driven apocalypse may, consciously or unconsciously, seek refuge in worldview defence:

Darfur, where reduced vegetation forced nomadic herders into conflict with settled farmers. Across the Sahel, access to land and water remains a frequent trigger of disputes (Climate Diplomacy).

[9] While correlations between climate variability and violence in Africa are well documented, causation remains debated. In Lake Chad, environmental decline disrupted livelihoods, but Boko Haram's rise also reflected governance deficits and political violence (Okpara et al., 2015; Raleigh & Urdal, 2007). In Ethiopia's Somali and Oromia regions, recurrent drought contributed to clashes, but land policies and ethnic federalism shaped conflict intensity (Kefale, 2013; Meier et al., 2007). Climate change is thus best seen as a *threat multiplier*, interacting with social and political vulnerabilities (CNA, 2007).

10 Uhl et al. (2017) found that participants exposed to alarming climate reports showed greater ethnocentrism and less willingness to act pro-environmentally, with stronger effects in Austria than Argentina—highlighting the role of cultural context.

doubling down on ideological commitments, idealizing their in-group, and devaluing those who seem outside or opposed to that in-group. In essence, the looming spectre of environmental collapse can activate the same defences as any life-and-death threat. It leads individuals to "circle the wagons" around their group identity.

These processes intersect with *honour-based cultures*, where approach-oriented norms of retaliation legitimize aggression as reputation defence. Although widely documented in the U.S. South (Nisbett & Cohen, 1996), honour-based logics also shape African pastoralist and clan societies, where defending group pride and reputation can escalate local disputes into cycles of intergroup violence (Blench, 2004).

In fragile African contexts, where colonial-era divides and ethnic tensions sometimes persist just beneath the surface, the addition of climate stress can be particularly combustible. Imagine a scenario of prolonged drought in a fragile state: herders and farmers skirmish over a shrinking water source (a realistic conflict over resources), politicians exploit the crisis by blaming a rival ethnic group for mismanaging relief efforts (scapegoating and ethnopolitical manoeuvring), and rumours spread that "outsiders" (perhaps refugees or a neighbouring country) caused or are taking advantage of the disaster (an anxiety-driven conspiracy). All these narratives feed into intergroup fear and aggression. Militant groups and extremists can also capitalize on climate chaos: for example, non-state armed groups in the Sahel have recruited disenfranchised youths by playing on their grievances over resource scarcity and government neglect, effectively channelling climate anxiety into violent action. (Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2016; Scheffran et al., 2019; Tesfaye, 2022).[11] In Nigeria, analysts have linked worsening desertification in the Lake Chad region to the rise of Boko Haram insurgency, as traditional livelihoods collapsed and young men faced existential insecurity, although multiple factors are at play, including ideology and state failures (Serdeczny et al., 2017).

To summarize: under ecological threat, aggression is driven not only by material scarcity but also by psychological reactions to that scarcity and uncertainty. The convergence of Realistic Conflict Theory's resource competition, Social Identity Theory's ingroup bolstering, and Terror Management Theory's existential defence creates a "perfect storm" where climate stress acts less as a root cause and more as a *psychological accelerant of existing conflict dynamics.* These outcomes, however, are not inevitable. They depend on how threats are appraised and what coping avenues exist. As later sections show, inclusive framings of *common humanity* or cooperative problem-solving can mitigate conflictual responses (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Fritsche et al., 2018). African examples demonstrate that adaptation strategies and regional solidarity can reduce climate-related conflict risk (IPCC, 2022; Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2016).

2.4.Identity Processes Under Climate Stress

Particularly relevant in African contexts is how climate stressors undermine a *sense of control and stability* for communities dependent on natural resources. Repeated

[11] For a recent overview on climaSte-related security risks in the Sahel, see Bonner (2025).

droughts, erratic rainfall, or advancing desertification introduce *chronic uncertainty* into daily life – farmers do not know if rains will come, pastoralists must range farther for grazing, and families wonder if the next season will bring hardship. Such climatic instability not only threatens agricultural yields and pastoral livelihoods but also erodes the predictability that underpins social and economic planning. This fosters pervasive uncertainty in rural communities (IPCC, 2022; World Bank, 2021), which in turn fuels psychological stress and a search for ways to regain control. Social psychologists note that when personal control is undermined, people often turn to collective structures for support.

For example, *Uncertainty-Identity Theory* (Hogg, 2007) posits that under self-uncertainty, individuals more strongly identify with distinctive groups, as shared identity reduces ambiguity. A farmer facing climate-induced chaos may find security in tighter-knit community or religious groups that offer meaning amidst upheaval. Climate change also erodes *place-based identity*: many African cultures link identity to ancestral lands and ecosystems (Nyong et al., 2007). As these degrade, people may experience *solastalgia* (Albrecht, 2011)— the emotional distress of witnessing one's home environment deteriorate while remaining physically in place. The loss of farmlands to drought, or villages to encroaching deserts or sea-level rise is not merely an economic loss but a psychosocial one, disrupting residents' sense of continuity and belonging. Such loss of place can be deeply destabilizing: it threatens cultural practices, community cohesion, and individual identity, all of which depend on the continuity of place and environment (Niang et al., 2014; Serdeczny et al., 2017). In Africa, where identity and livelihood are often closely tied to the land, the trauma of environmental loss can reverberate through generations.

One striking social consequence of perceived threat is the tendency for groups to become more cohesive, uniform, and tightly bound. Under such conditions, individuals often set aside internal differences and increase *group entitativity* — perceiving and behaving as part of a unified whole with a common purpose (Campbell, 1958; Lickel et al., 2000). Crucially, higher perceived entitativity not only strengthens cohesion but also heightens competitiveness and hostility toward out-groups (Gaertner & Schopler, 1998; Rutchick et al., 2008). In the context of climate stress, this dynamic can enhance solidarity within groups while sharpening boundaries toward outsiders. The same cohesion that offers certainty and belonging under threat can simultaneously raise the risk of intergroup aggression. Environmental threats can indeed trigger such "closing of ranks." Barth et al. (2018), for example, found that exposure to information emphasizing climate change threats increased conformity to in-group norms and more punitive attitudes toward deviants. In other words, climate threat reduced tolerance for dissent within their own group — a hallmark of heightened cohesion. Strikingly, this effect occurred even in politically left-leaning groups, showing that climate threat does not induce a uniform conservative shift. Instead, it amplifies whatever values are salient within the in-group. Thus, environmentalist groups may double down on egalitarian values, whereas nationalist groups may intensify exclusionary norms (Jonas & Fritsche,

2013; Fritsche et al., 2018). Overall, climate threat appears to magnify "groupness" itself — fostering conformity and homogeneity — which can strengthen resilience internally but also sharpen intergroup divisions.

Belonging to a strongly entitative group can also restore a sense of collective control that offsets personal helplessness. *Group-based control theory* (Fritsche et al., 2011) argues that when individuals feel a lack of personal control, they may compensate by identifying more with groups that offer a sense of agency and order. Fritsche and colleagues (2011, 2012) presented evidence that threats to personal control lead people to seek greater group identification and display more ethnocentrism, as the group allows them to feel efficacious again. Climate change, being a global force beyond any one person's control, can easily induce such feelings of helplessness. Joining a powerful in-group (be it a militant movement, a fundamentalist sect, or even an authoritarian political party) might psychologically function to *regain a feeling of control* in turbulent times. For example, youths facing joblessness due to climate-related economic hardship may be drawn to armed groups that offer not only material rewards but also a sense of identity and agency — a way to flip the script from victim to actor, albeit through violence (Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2016; Scheffran et al., 2019).

Collective action research in social psychology emphasizes the role of perceived collective deprivation and disadvantage — often attributed to crises such as climate change (Fritsche et al., 2018) or unjust intergroup relations — as a driver of efforts to improve the ingroup's situation. While traditional approaches focus on how collectives explicitly address problems, *threat-and-defence research* offers a broader perspective by examining how individuals respond to crises at both personal and collective levels of the self. These responses often bear no direct relation to solving the crisis; for example, climate crisis information can trigger hostile intergroup attitudes (Uhl et al., 2017; Uenal et al., 2021). *Threat-and-defence theory* explains such reactions through *palliation* — defences that alleviate threat-induced anxiety without addressing the root cause (Stollberg & Jonas, 2021). The existential threat posed by climate change does not simply trigger practical responses like material adaptation or migration — it also activates powerful emotional and cognitive mechanisms that shape intergroup dynamics. According to Stollberg and Jonas's (2021) *dual pathway model*, people respond either through emotionally charged *approach-oriented* direct *engagement* (e.g., collective action spurred by emotions such as guilt, anger, or moral elevation) or through *palliative, symbolic strategies* that offer short-term relief, like in-group defence or identification with nature.[12] Indeed, climate threat has been shown to heighten ethnocentrism and racism, especially among those with nationalist worldviews (Uenal

[12] These pathways parallel classic distinctions in coping research: approach-oriented responses resemble *problem-focused or proactive coping*, while palliative strategies mirror *emotion-focused or avoidant coping* (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Heppner & Lee, 2002). This analogy highlights that groups, like individuals, can regulate existential threat through either adaptive engagement or defensive avoidance (Stollberg & Jonas, 2021; Fritsche et al., 2018).

et al., 2021). While palliation reduces distress, it can block problem-focused coping and collective action.

Fritsche et al.'s (2018) *Social Identity Model of Pro-Environmental Action* emphasizes that collective responses to ecological crises depend on perceived efficacy and salient group norms. While developed in the context of environmental behaviour, its principles apply more broadly to collective mobilization under climate stress, clarifying why some groups engage in cooperative adaptation while others turn defensive: Groups cooperate when they feel capable and when cooperation is normative; they turn defensive when efficacy is absent or exclusionary norms dominate.

Together, these theories clarify how climate stress reshapes identity processes—sometimes bolstering solidarity and resilience, sometimes fuelling hostility and division. *Figure 1.* summarizes their contributions to the psychoecological framework.

2.5.Migration and Collective Trauma

Climate change is uprooting millions worldwide, with Africa among the most affected regions (IPCC, 2022). Droughts, desertification, floods, and other disruptions force people to abandon ancestral lands (Niang et al., 2014). Climate migration is not only a humanitarian and developmental challenge (Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2016) but also a psychological and sociopolitical one — a phenomenon with deep historical antecedents, not merely a contemporary challenge (Rácz, 2019). It also intersects with broader migration dynamics, including the risks of exploitation and insecurity along migration routes (Prantner, 2019) and reshapes identities and intergroup relations on both sides—among migrants and hosts.

For migrants, the psychological toll is profound. Leaving one's ancestral land is fraught with trauma: it entails the loss of home, community, and identity (Bhugra & Becker, 2005). Migrants often carry a sense of loss, survivor's guilt, and anxiety about uncertain futures, while struggling with marginalization in refugee camps or urban slums. Such conditions can foster collective frustration, which, especially among youth, can fuel radicalization, as in Somalia and Kenya, where climate-linked displacement has been tied to recruitment by militant groups offering identity and redemption (Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2016).

Hosts also face pressures. Sudden influxes strain resources and heighten perceptions of threat—competition for jobs, rising prices, and fears of instability. These perceptions can spark xenophobia, especially when politicized. Migration can fragment communities, upset ethnic balances, or revive old feuds (Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2016; Charlson et al., 2021).[13] Narratives matter: empathy and solidarity foster acceptance, while scapegoating fosters hostility (Esses et al., 2013). Terminology also shapes

[13] In Darfur, desertification pushed nomadic herders into farming lands, intensifying inter-ethnic tensions that later escalated into the 2003 conflict (Raleigh & Kniveton, 2012). In the Lake Chad Basin, the lake's 90% shrinkage displaced livelihoods and indirectly contributed to Boko Haram's rise (von Uexkull et al., 2016). In West Africa, coastal erosion and flooding drive relocations to cities such as Accra and Lagos, straining infrastructure and ethnic relations (Serdeczny et al., 2017).

reactions. Research shows that the term *"refugee"* can elicit greater compassion but also more fear than *"migrant,"* as refugees are often viewed as victims carrying trauma or foreign politics (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018). For climate migrants, terminology remains contested— "climate refugees," "environmental migrants," or otherwise—and the lack of official recognition in international law[14] leaves many without protection, reinforcing both vulnerability and perceptions of illegitimacy (Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2016).

Africa provides a paradoxical case of climate migration: it is simultaneously a major *point of origin* and a key *destination*. Countries such as Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Malawi illustrate how recurrent droughts, cyclones, and agricultural collapse undermine livelihoods and food security, driving outward migration (IPCC, 2022; FAO, 2019), while South Africa—less climate-vulnerable in relative terms—functions as a regional pole of attraction. Yet this dynamic also produces acute tensions: migrants escaping environmental insecurity encounter xenophobia and precarious livelihoods in the host society (Bamidele, 2025). Thus, the continent exemplifies both the drivers and the challenges of climate-induced displacement.

Divisions also arise *within* migrant groups. Diasporas may develop new identities abroad, sometimes financing rebel movements back home, as in Somali and Sudanese cases (Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2016). Displacement abroad may reinforce victimhood narratives that feed homeland conflicts. Conversely, inclusive narratives and strong institutions can mitigate tensions. Traditional mechanisms, such as elders' councils in the Sahel, or pan-African solidarity, have supported peaceful integration (Adepoju, 2010).

From a psychological standpoint, migration challenges *social identity boundaries*. Interventions that foster *shared in-group identity*—as members of a nation, a region, or humanity confronting climate change—can reduce bias (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Joint farming projects between South Sudanese refugees and Ugandan hosts illustrate how cooperation can transform relations (Betts et al., 2017).

These dynamics unfold within what scholars describe as a *global collective trauma* (Woodbury, 2019). Unlike a discrete event such as a war or disaster, the climate emergency is a slow-moving, pervasive process that humanity experiences together, though unevenly. In Africa, communities on the frontlines of climate change—from villages losing land to desertification to coastal towns facing rising seas—are undergoing upheavals that leave lasting psychological scars (Hirschberger, 2018; Alexander, 2012). Viewing these experiences through the lens of collective trauma illuminates how environmental insecurity is processed and shared within groups. Repeated droughts in Kenyan pastoralist communities devastate cattle herds and cultural practices, weakening identity transmission and fostering hopelessness (Augustinavicius et al., 2021). Unresolved trauma can entrench grievances and cycles of violence, while meaning-making and solidarity can foster resilience (Jonas & Fritsche, 2013; Hirschberger, 2018).

[14] The 1951 Geneva Convention does not cover climate-displaced persons; refugee status applies only to persecution for race, religion, nationality, group, or political opinion (McAdam, 2012). The UNHCR (2020) confirms that "climate refugees" lack legal recognition under current law.

Responses depend on framing. Trauma cast as *victimhood* entrenches conflict; trauma framed as *challenge* can rally resilience (Serdeczny et al., 2017; Niang et al., 2014).[15] *Eco-cultural identities*, where communities reframe themselves as "guardians of nature," can empower activism (Clayton, 2003; Clayton et al., 2021). African youth movements exemplify this resilience. Yet drought-exacerbated cattle raids also perpetuate intergenerational grievances (Mkutu, 2008; Witsenburg & Adano, 2009). Breaking such cycles requires peacebuilding, trauma healing, and psychosocial support, blending traditional rituals with therapy. Resilience depends on *collective efficacy*: groups with stronger trust and organizational experience recover more effectively and are less prone to conflict (Norris et al., 2008).[16]

In sum, migration and trauma illustrate how ecological stress reshapes not only material conditions but also *identity, belonging, and intergroup relations*. When internalized as hopeless trauma, insecurity fosters grievance and division. When reframed through meaning-making, solidarity, and collective efficacy, it can cultivate resilience.

2.6. Toward a Psychoecological Synthesis

While existing research has examined the psychological consequences of identity threat (Lüders et al., 2016), the emotional regulation of climate threat (Stollberg & Jonas, 2021), and the systemic pathways from climate stress to conflict (Scheffran et al., 2019), these perspectives have rarely been integrated. We propose a *psychoecological synthesis* that connects *micro-level affect regulation* with *macro-level conflict dynamics*, illustrating how existential ecological threats translate into intergroup outcomes. These outcomes—cooperation or conflict—are mediated by social-psychological factors such as group efficacy and norms (Fritsche et al., 2018) (see *Figure 3.*).

[15] Li et al. (2023) show that framing past trauma as a challenge fosters constructive outlooks, while framing it as threat entrenches mistrust and aggression.

[16] Local peace committees and early-warning systems in the Sahel mediate disputes before escalation (Issifu, 2016). Regional initiatives, such as African Union adaptation strategies, extend this sense of efficacy continentally (Niang et al., 2014).

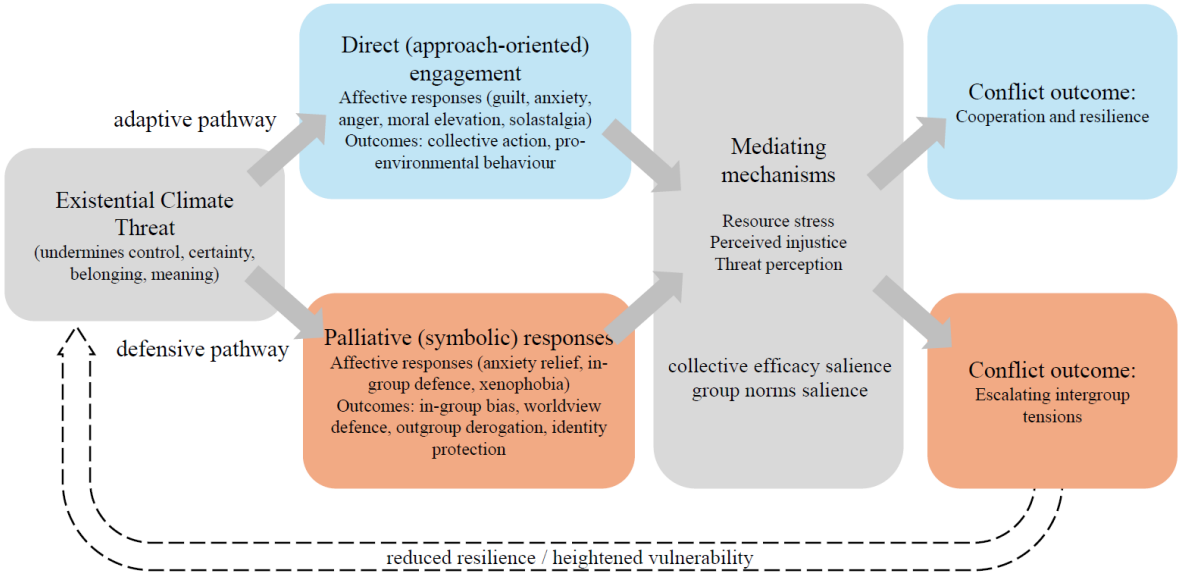

Figure 3: Psychoecological Pathways from Climate Threat to Conflict
Conceptual model of existential climate threat and intergroup conflict outcomes. Adaptive (approach-oriented) engagement fosters cooperation and resilience, whereas palliative (defensive) responses escalate intergroup tensions. Mediating mechanisms include resource stress, perceived injustice, and group norms. The dashed feedback loop indicates reduced resilience and heightened vulnerability to renewed climate stress. Adapted from Stollberg & Jonas (2021), Jonas et al. (2014), Lüders et al. (2016), Fritsche et al. (2018), and Scheffran et al. (2019); expanded by the author.

Conceptual model of existential climate threat and intergroup conflict outcomes. Adaptive (approach-oriented) engagement fosters cooperation and resilience, whereas palliative (defensive) responses escalate intergroup tensions. Mediating mechanisms include resource stress, perceived injustice, and group norms. The dashed feedback loop indicates reduced resilience and heightened vulnerability to renewed climate stress. Adapted from Stollberg & Jonas (2021), Jonas et al. (2014), Lüders et al. (2016), Fritsche et al. (2018), and Scheffran et al. (2019); expanded by the author.

In this synthesis, *existential climate threats* undermine needs for control, certainty, belonging, and meaning. Individuals and groups regulate distress along two pathways. *Approach-oriented responses* (e.g., guilt, anger, moral elevation, solastalgia) can foster collective action and pro-environmental behaviour, while *palliative (symbolic or defensive) responses* (e.g., anxiety relief, in-group defence, xenophobia) may restore short-term control but heighten exclusion and hostility. These pathways shape *mediating mechanisms* that link micro-level emotions to systemic conflict: resource stress, perceived injustice, distrust, and the salience of collective efficacy and norms (Fritsche et al., 2018). In turn, they feed into *conflict outcomes* identified by Scheffran et al. (2019): cooperation and resilience, or escalation of intergroup tensions. The *feedback*

loop underscores that violent conflict reduces resilience, leaving communities more vulnerable to future climate stress.

This integrative perspective highlights climate change as both a *psychological stressor* and a *systemic risk factor.* The synthesis highlights that pathways from climate stress to conflict are non-linear and are shaped by the interplay of emotions, identity processes, and structural vulnerabilities.

3. Discussion

The psychoecological lens developed in this paper highlights that climate–conflict linkages are not simply material or structural, but also deeply psychological. By foregrounding processes such as identity threat, meaning-making, and collective efficacy, we can see how ecological stressors are translated into either cooperative or conflictual social dynamics. This section discusses the theoretical contributions of this approach, its implications for resilience and adaptation strategies, and the limitations and avenues for future research.

3.1. Contributions to Theory

The central contribution of this paper is to *conceptualize climate change as a psychoecological stressor*: a force that destabilizes basic needs for control, certainty, belonging, and meaning, and channels these insecurities into intergroup relations. This reframing highlights that climate–conflict linkages are not only material or structural but also *symbolic and emotional*.

By integrating theories of *social identity*, *group-based control*, *terror management*, *and collective trauma,* the psychoecological perspective shows how climate stress can lead either to grievance-driven conflict or resilience-based cooperation. *Meaning-making* emerges as a crucial mediator, shaping whether insecurity is experienced as hopeless trauma or reframed as solidarity and agency.

This synthesis extends climate–conflict research by bridging *micro-level affect regulation*, *meso-level narratives*, and *macro-level resource dynamics.* It therefore connects environmental psychology and conflict studies, offering a holistic account of how climate stress can both fuel instability and inspire resilience. In doing so, it positions climate change not only as an environmental or political challenge, but as a *psycho-social phenomenon at the heart of intergroup relations.*

3.2.Policy and Resilience Integration

The psychoecological lens highlights that climate change in Africa is not only an environmental or economic issue but also a *psychological and social one*. Droughts, floods, and heatwaves unsettle minds and communities, fuelling anxiety, threatening identities, and reshaping intergroup relations. Left unaddressed, these responses can drive conflict: eco-anxiety may push people toward narrow identities, helplessness may

morph into aggression, and unresolved trauma may harden into cycles of violence or radicalization. Yet these same dynamics create opportunities for *intervention and resilience*. Recognizing the psychological dimensions of climate stress opens new avenues for prevention and peacebuilding. The following implications for security, defence, and resilience strategies build directly on this theoretical exploration:

- *Integrate Mental Health into Adaptation*. Climate stress fuels anxiety, depression, and trauma. Adaptation policies should include psychosocial support, trained facilitators, and post-disaster counselling to channel emotions constructively (Clayton et al., 2021).

- *Foster Inclusive Identities and Narratives*. Unity narratives and cooperative projects expand the circle of "us," countering scapegoating and ethnocentric bias under stress (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Fritsche et al., 2018).

- *Promote Conflict-Sensitive Resource Management*. Anticipate flashpoints in water, grazing, and fisheries. Transparent sharing and local mediation prevent scarcity rivalries from escalating (Sherif, 1966; Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2016).

- *Address Grievances and Justice*. Climate stress magnifies injustices over land, governance, and exclusion. Fair processes and acknowledgement of past harms prevent grievances from becoming conflict drivers (Serdeczny et al., 2017; Hirschberger, 2018).

- *Train Security Actors*. Security forces should recognize that climate-related violence may stem from trauma and fear. Culturally sensitive, de-escalatory training avoids heavy-handed responses that deepen mistrust (Clayton et al., 2021).

- *Facilitate Collective Healing*. Rituals, memorials, and shared histories can transform trauma into solidarity. Emphasizing collective loss reduces segmented victimhood and cycles of retribution (Hirschberger, 2018).

- *Support Climate-Resilient Meaning Systems*. Preserving cultural anchors and eco-cultural identities enables communities to reframe loss as guardianship of nature, fostering resilience (Albrecht, 2011; Hirschberger, 2018).

- *Engage Youth as a Psychoecological Resource*. Eco-anxiety can mobilize. Empowering youth leadership in adaptation and peacebuilding channels this energy toward resilience rather than radicalization (Hickman, 2020).

3.3.Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this paper advances a psychoecological framework for climate–conflict linkages, several limitations warrant mention. First, the analysis is largely theoretical: although supported by empirical illustrations, systematic testing of the proposed pathways is limited. Future studies should operationalize constructs such as eco-anxiety, collective trauma, and group-based control in relation to climate stressors and intergroup outcomes, employing both qualitative and quantitative designs across African contexts.

Second, much of the psychological evidence cited here derives from laboratory experiments or Western samples. More cross-cultural research is needed to assess whether frameworks like Terror Management Theory, Social Identity Theory, or the Common Ingroup Identity Model apply under African sociocultural conditions, where indigenous coping strategies and collective spiritual frameworks may shape responses differently.

Third, the model presented here highlights dual trajectories of grievance versus resilience, but the boundary conditions remain underexplored. When does collective trauma fuel violence, and when does it foster solidarity? Longitudinal, community-based studies could clarify how leadership, meaning-making, and institutional trust shape these divergent outcomes.

Finally, while this paper foregrounds psychological mediators, it does not suggest that structural and material factors are secondary. Future work should integrate psychoecological insights with political economy, security studies, and development research to capture the full complexity of climate–conflict dynamics.

4.Conclusion

This paper has argued that climate change must be understood not only as an environmental and economic challenge but also as a *psychological and social one*. Ecological stressors reshape African intergroup dynamics, driving both conflict and cooperation. Crucially, outcomes are not predetermined by climate pressures but mediated by how individuals and communities *interpret, regulate, and respond* to them.

Scheffran et al. (2019) remind us that climate–conflict linkages are not simple cause–effect chains but complex, indirect pathways. Human psychology animates these patterns: perceptions of threat, feelings of injustice, and tightening group identities can steer communities toward either cooperation or confrontation. Research shows that perceived threat and relative deprivation (Barth et al., 2018; Brzoska & Fröhlich, 2016) often emerge before material scarcity reaches crisis levels. In other words, *interpretations of environmental change may be as decisive as the changes themselves.*

Psychology can do more than describe the problem. Building resilience at individual and community levels can weaken the pathways from climate stress to conflict (Clayton et al., 2021). Strengthening collective efficacy redirects existential anxiety into constructive engagement (Stollberg & Jonas, 2021), while fostering trust, empathy, and fairness prevents adaptation measures such as migration or resource-

sharing from becoming flashpoints. Inclusive, culturally sensitive adaptation reinforces cohesion, whereas imposed measures risk hardening group boundaries (Leidner et al., 2010). Linking *psychological resilience with structural adaptation* reframes climate policy as both an environmental necessity and a peacebuilding strategy.

As climate change unfolds across Africa, intergroup conflict is not inevitable. Outcomes hinge on *psychological and social mediators* — how threats are perceived and how leaders frame them. African traditions of resilience, solidarity, and spiritual connection to nature can be harnessed to foster peace under new climatic conditions. If climate change is a *threat multiplier*, human empathy and collective wisdom can serve as *response multipliers*. A psychoecological approach shows where to intervene: reduce existential threat, strengthen collective efficacy, and steer adaptation away from conflict toward resilience.

Notes on Contributors

Regina Szegedi holds an MA in Psychology and Sociology and is a PhD candidate at the Doctoral School of Human Sciences, University of Debrecen. Her research focuses on environmental change, eco-emotions, climate-related trauma, and the psychoecological dimensions of intergroup conflict. Her broader interests include environmental psychology, human–nature relations, and the role of emotions and identity in conflict dynamics. She has contributed to applied projects on environmental adaptation and well-being and regularly presents her work at international conferences. Her work integrates psychological, ecological, and security perspectives to better understand and address climate-related risks and resilience.

Conflict of Interest

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

References

Adepoju, A. (2010). *International migration within, to and from Africa in a globalised world*. Sub-Saharan Publishers.

Albrecht, G. (2005). Solastalgia: A new concept in health and identity. *PAN: Philosophy Activism Nature*, *3*, 41–55. https://bridges.monash.edu/articles/journal_contribution/_Solastalgia_a_new_concept_in_health_and_identity/4311905?file=7031096

Albrecht, G. (2011). Chronic environmental change: Emerging "psychoterratic" syndromes. In I. Weissbecker (Ed.), *Climate change and human well-being: Global challenges and opportunities* (pp. 43–56). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-9742-5_3

Ágoston, C., Csaba, B., Nagy, B., Kőváry, Z., Dúll, A., Rácz, J., & Demetrovics, Z. (2022a). Identifying Types of Eco-Anxiety, Eco-Guilt, Eco-Grief, and Eco-Coping in a Climate-Sensitive Population: A Qualitative Study. *International Journal of*

Environmental Research and Public Health, *19*(4), 2461. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19042461

Ágoston, Cs., Urbán, R., Nagy, B., Benedek, Cs., Kőváry, Z., Kovács, K., Varga, A., Dúll, A., Mónus, F., Shaw, C., & Demetrovics, Zs. (2022b). The psychological consequences of the ecological crisis: Three new questionnaires to assess eco-anxiety, eco-guilt, and ecological grief. *Climate Risk Management, 37.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crm.2022.100441

Alexander, J. C. (2012). *Trauma: A social theory.* Polity Press.

Anderson, C. A. (2001). Heat and violence. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 10*(1), 33–38. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8721.00109

Anderson, C. A., & DeLisi, M. (2011). Implications of global climate change for violence in developed and developing countries. In J. P. Forgas, A. W. Kruglanski, & K. D. Williams (Eds.), *The psychology of social conflict and aggression* (pp. 249–265). Psychology Press.

Augustinavicius, J. L., Lowe, S. R., Massazza, A., Hayes, K., Denckla, C., White, R. G., Cabán-Alemán, C., Clayton, S., Verdeli, L., & Berry, H. (2021). *Global climate change and trauma: An International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies briefing paper.* International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies. https://ISTSS-Briefing-Paper_Climate-Change-Final.pdf

Bamidele, S. (2025). Navigating xenophobia: The vulnerabilities and resilience of African immigrant informal traders in South Africa's informal economy. *The Indian Economic Journal.* Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/00194662251332869

Barth, M., Masson, T., Fritsche, I., & Ziemer, C.-T. (2018). Closing ranks: Ingroup norm conformity as a subtle response to threatening climate change. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 21*(3), 497–512. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430217733119

Berkowitz, L., & Harmon-Jones, E. (2004). Toward an understanding of the determinants of anger. *Emotion, 4*(2), 107–130. https://doi.org/10.1037/1528-3542.4.2.107

Betts, A., Bloom, L., Kaplan, J., & Omata, N. (2017). *Refugee economies: Forced displacement and development.* Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198795681.001.0001

Bhugra, D., & Becker, M. A. (2005). Migration, cultural bereavement and cultural identity. *World Psychiatry, 4*(1), 18–24. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Migration%2C-cultural-bereavement-and-cultural-Bhugra Becker/0adbc0712e22b88d66343ab5ed1d14351d92e365

Björnberg, K. E., Karlsson, M., Gilek, M., & Hansson, S. O. (2017). Climate and environmental science denial: A review of the scientific literature published in 1990–2015. *Journal of Cleaner Production, 167*, 229–241. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.08.066

Blench, R. (2004). *Natural Resource Conflicts in North-Central Nigeria: A handbook.* Mandaras Publishing.

Bonner, I. (2025). Climate-related security risks in the Sahel. *Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies*, *5*(2), 72–90. https://doi.org/10.12700/jceeas.2025.5.2.317

Brzoska, M., & Fröhlich, C. (2016). Climate change, migration and violent conflict: Vulnerabilities, pathways and adaptation strategies. *Migration and Development*, *5*(2), 190–210. https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2015.1022973

Burke, M., Hsiang, S. M., & Miguel, E. (2015). Climate and conflict. *Annual Review of Economics*, *7*(1), 577–617. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-economics-080614-115430

Bushman, B. J., Wang, M. C., & Anderson, C. A. (2005). Is the Curve Relating Temperature to Aggression Linear or Curvilinear? Assaults and Temperature in Minneapolis Reexamined. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *89*(1), 62–66. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.89.1.62

Campbell, D. T. (1958). Common fate, similarity, and other indices of the status of aggregates of persons as social entities. *Behavioral Science*, *3*(1), 14–25. https://doi.org/10.1002/bs.3830030103

Charlson, F., Ali, S., Benmarhnia, T., Pearl, M., Massazza, A., Augustinavicius, J., & Scott, J. G. (2021). Climate Change and Mental Health: A Scoping Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(9), 4486. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18094486

Cipriani, E., Gemignani, A., & Menicucci, D. (2024). Awareness of everyday effects of climate change: The climate change perceptual awareness scale (CCPAS). *Heliyon*, *10*(19), e38461. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e38461

Clayton, S. (2003). Environmental Identity: A Conceptual and an Operational Definition. In S. Clayton & S. Opotow (Eds.), *Identity and the natural environment: The psychological significance of nature* (pp. 45–65). Boston Review.

Clayton S. (2020). Climate anxiety: Psychological responses to climate change. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, *74*, 102263. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2020.102263

Clayton, S., Manning, C. M., Speiser, M., & Hill, A. N. (2021). *Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Inequities, Responses.* Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, & ecoAmerica. https://doi.org/10.1037/e507892021-001

Climate Diplomacy. (n.d.). *Pastoralist and farmer-herder conflicts in the Sahel.* https://climate-diplomacy.org/case-studies/pastoralist-and-farmer-herder-conflicts-sahel

CNA Military Advisory Board (2007). *National Security and the Accelerating Risks of Climate Change*. Alexandria, VA: CNA Corporation

Contreras, A., Blanchard, A., Daouda, C. M., & Heeren, A. (2023). *When eco-anger (but not eco-anxiety nor eco-sadness) makes you change! A temporal network*

approach to the emotional experience of climate change [Preprint]. OSF. https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/sp8hn

Crawley, H., & Skleparis, D. (2018). Refugees, migrants, neither, both: Categorical fetishism and the politics of bounding in Europe's "migration crisis." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 44*(1), 48–64. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1348224

Cunsolo, A., & Ellis, N. R. (2018). Ecological grief as a mental health response to climate change–related loss. *Nature Climate Change, 8*(4), 275–281. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-018-0092-2

Eboreime, E., Anjorin, O., Obi-Jeff, C., Ojo, T. M., & Hertelendy, A. (2025). Climate, conflict and displacement in the Sahel. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 103*(4), 230-230A. http://dx.doi.org/10.2471/BLT.24.292700

Esses, V. M., Medianu, S., & Lawson, A. S. (2013). Uncertainty, threat, and the role of the media in promoting the dehumanization of immigrants and refugees. *Journal of Social Issues, 69*(3), 518–536. https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12027

Ferguson, M.A., McDonald, R.I., & Branscombe, N.R. (2016). Global climate change: A social identity perspective on informational and structural interventions. In McKeown, S., Haji, R., & Ferguson, N. (Eds.), *Understanding Peace and Conflict Through Social Identity Theory. Peace Psychology Book Series.* Springer International Publishing. (pp. 145-164). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29869-6_10

Festinger, L. (1954). A theory of social comparison processes. *Human Relations, 7,* 117–140. https://doi.org/10.1177/001872675400700202

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2019). The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2019: Safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns. FAO. https://doi.org/10.4060/CA5162EN

Fritsche, I., Barth, M., Jugert, P., Masson, T., & Reese, G. (2018). A social identity model of pro-environmental action (SIMPEA). *Psychological Review, 125*(2), 245–269. https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000090

Fritsche, I., Cohrs, J. C., Kessler, T., & Bauer, J. (2012). Global warming is breeding social conflict: The subtle impact of climate change threat on authoritarian tendencies. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 32*(1), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2011.10.002

Fritsche, I., Jonas, E., & Kessler, T. (2011). Collective reactions to threat: Implications for intergroup conflict and for solving societal crises. *Social Issues and Policy Review, 5*(1), 101–136. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-2409.2011.01027.x

Gaertner, S. L., & Dovidio, J. F. (2000). *Reducing intergroup bias: The common ingroup identity model.* Psychology Press.

Gaertner, L., & Schopler, J. (1998). Perceived ingroup entitativity and intergroup bias: An interconnection of self and others. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 28*(6), 963–980. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-0992(1998110)28:6<963::AID-EJSP905>3.0.CO;2-S

Graham, K., Bernards, S., Osgood, D. W., & Wells, S. (2006). Bad nights or bad bars? Multi-level analysis of environmental predictors of aggression in late-night large-capacity bars and clubs. *Addiction, 101*(11), 1569–1580. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2006.01608.x.

Greenberg, J., Pyszczynski, T., & Solomon, S. (1997). Terror management theory of self-esteem and cultural worldviews: Empirical assessments and conceptual refinements. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 29*, 61–139. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60016-7

Greenway, R. (1995). The wilderness effect and ecopsychology. In T. Roszak, M. Gomes, & A. Kanner (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth, healing the mind* (pp. 122–135). Sierra Club Books.

Heppner, P. P., & Lee, D.-G. (2002). Problem-solving appraisal and psychological adjustment. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 288–298). Oxford University Press.

Hickman, C. (2020). We need to (find a way to) talk about… eco-anxiety. *Journal of Social Work Practice, 34*(4), 411–424. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650533.2020.1844166

Hirschberger, G. (2018). Collective trauma and the social construction of meaning. *Frontiers in Psychology, 9*, 1441. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01441

Hogg, M. A. (2007). Uncertainty–identity theory. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 39*, 69–126. Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(06)39002-8

Hogg, M. A. (2021). Self-uncertainty and group identification: Consequences for social identity, group behavior, intergroup relations, and society. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 64, 263–316. https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.aesp.2021.04.004

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2018). Global warming of 1.5°C: An IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty (V. Masson-Delmotte, P. Zhai, H.-O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P. R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J. B. R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M. I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, & T. Waterfield, Eds.). Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. (2022). Africa. In H.-O. Pörtner, D. C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E. S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Löschke, V. Möller, A. Okem, & B. Rama (Eds.), *Climate change 2022: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (pp. 2113–2221). Cambridge University Press. https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/?utm

Issifu, A. K. (2016). Local peace committees in Africa: The unseen role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies, 9*(1), 141–158. https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=3692607

Izard, C. E. (2010). The many meanings/aspects of emotion: Definitions, functions, activation, and regulation. *Emotion Review, 2*(4), 363–370. https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073910374661

Jonas, E., & Fritsche, I. (2013). Destined to die but not to wage war: How existential threat can contribute to escalation or de-escalation of violent intergroup conflict. *American Psychologist, 68*(7), 543–558. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033052

Jonas, E., McGregor, I., Klackl, J., Agroskin, D., Fritsche, I., Holbrook, C., Greenberg, J., & Pyszczynski, T. (2014). Threat and defense: From anxiety to approach. In J. M. Olson & M. P. Zanna (Eds.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 49, pp. 219–286). Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-800052-6.00004-4

Koger, S. M. (2011). *The psychology of environmental problems: Psychology for sustainability* (3rd ed.). Psychology Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203847978

Kőváry, Z., (2019). Bevezetés: Föld és lélek – klímaválság és pszichológia. *Imágó Budapest 8 (4),* 3–10. https://imagobudapest.hu/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/IB_2019_4sz_pp003-10_Bevezetes.pdf

Kumar, P., Brander, L., Kumar, M., Cuijpers, P. (2023) Planetary Health and Mental Health Nexus: Benefit of Environmental Management. *Annals of Global Health.* 2023; 89(1): 49, 1–18. https://annalsofglobalhealth.org/articles/10.5334/aogh.4079

Lawrence, M., Homer-Dixon, T., Janzwood, S., Rockström, J., Renn, O., Donges, J.F. (2024). Global polycrisis: the causal mechanisms of crisis entanglement. Global Sustainability. 2024;7:e6. https://doi.org/10.1017/sus.2024.1 https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/global-sustainability/article/global-polycrisis-the-causal-mechanisms-of-crisis-entanglement/06F0F8F3B993A221971151E3CB054B5E

Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer Publishing Company.

Leidner, B., Castano, E., Zaiser, E., & Giner-Sorolla, R. (2010). Ingroup glorification, moral disengagement, and justice in the context of collective violence. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 36*(8), 1115–1129. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167210376391

Lertzman, R. (2015). *Environmental melancholia. Psychoanalytic dimensions of engagement.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315851853

Li, M., Leidner, B., Hirschberger, G., & Park, J. (2023). From threat to challenge: Understanding the impact of historical collective trauma on contemporary

intergroup conflict. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 18*(1), 190–209. https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916221094540

Lickel, B., Hamilton, D. L., Wieczorkowska, G., Lewis, A., Sherman, S. J., & Uhles, A. N. (2000). Varieties of groups and the perception of group entitativity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78*(2), 223–246. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.78.2.223

Louv, R. (2005). *Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature-deficit disorder*. Algonquin Books.

Lüders, A., Jonas, E., Fritsche, I., & Agroskin, D. (2016). Between the lines of us and them: Identity threat, anxious uncertainty, and reactive ingroup affirmation: How can antisocial outcomes be prevented? In S. McKeown, R. Haji, & N. Ferguson (Eds.), *Understanding Peace and Conflict Through Social Identity Theory.* Peace Psychology Book Series. Springer, Cham. (pp. 33–53). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-29869-6_3

McAdam, J. (2012). *Climate change, forced migration, and international law*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199587087.001.0001

Mendy, L., Karlsson, M., & Lindvall, D. (2024). Counteracting climate denial: A systematic review. *Public Understanding of Science, 33*(4), 504–520. https://doi.org/10.1177/09636625231223425

Mertz, O., Rasmussen, K., & Rasmussen, L. V. (2016). Weather and resource information as tools for dealing with farmer–pastoralist conflicts in the Sahel. *Earth System Dynamics*, *7*, 409–422. https://doi.org/10.5194/esd-7-409-2016

Mkutu, K. (2008). *Guns and governance in the Rift Valley: Pastoralist conflict and small arms.* James Currey.

Niang, I., Ruppel, O. C., Abdrabo, M. A., Essel, A., Lennard, C., Padgham, J., & Urquhart, P. (2014). Africa. In V. R. Barros, C. B. Field, D. J. Dokken, et al. (Eds.), *Climate change 2014: Impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability. Part B: Regional aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (pp. 1199–1265). Cambridge University Press. https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg2/

Nisbett, R. E., & Cohen, D. (1996). *Culture of Honor: The Psychology of Violence in the South.* Westview Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429501142

Norgaard, K. M. (2011). *Living in denial: Climate change, emotions, and everyday life.* MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/9780262015448.001.0001

Norris, F. H., Stevens, S. P., Pfefferbaum, B., Wyche, K. F., & Pfefferbaum, R. L. (2008). Community resilience as a metaphor, theory, set of capacities, and strategy for disaster readiness. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 41*(1–2), 127–150. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-007-9156-6

Nyong, A., Adesina, F. & Osman Elasha, B. (2007) The value of indigenous knowledge in climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies in the African Sahel. *Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change, 12*(5), 787-797. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11027-007-9099-0

Passmore, H.-A., Lutz, P. K., & Howell, A. J. (2023). Eco-anxiety: A cascade of fundamental existential anxieties. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology, 36*(2), 138–153. https://doi.org/10.1080/10720537.2022.2068706

Pauly, D. (1995). Anecdotes and the shifting baseline syndrome of fisheries. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution, 10*(10), 430. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0169-5347(00)89171-5

Pihkala P. (2018). Eco-anxiety, tragedy, and hope: Psychological and spiritual dimensions of climate change. *Zygon, 53*(2), 545–569. https://doi.org/10.1111/zygo.12407

Pihkala, P. (2020a). Anxiety and the ecological crisis: An analysis of eco-anxiety and climate anxiety. *Sustainability, 12*(19), 7836. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12197836

Pihkala, P. (2020b). Eco-anxiety and environmental education. *Sustainability, 12(23), 10149.* https://doi.org/10.3390/su122310149

Prantner Z. (2019). Embercsempészet és migráció [Human smuggling and migration]. In J. Besenyő, P. Miletics, & B. Orbán (Eds.), *Európa és a migráció* (pp. 102–119). Zrínyi Kiadó.

Rácz L. (2019). *A klímamigráció mint történelmi jelenség* [Climate migration as a historical phenomenon]. In J. Besenyő, P. Miletics, & B. Orbán (Eds.), *Európa és a migráció* (pp. 209–228.). Zrínyi Kiadó.

Raleigh, C., & Kniveton, D. (2012). Come rain or shine: An analysis of conflict and climate variability in East Africa. *Journal of Peace Research, 49*(1), 51–64. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343311427754

Raleigh, C., & Urdal, H. (2007). Climate change, environmental degradation and armed conflict. *Political Geography, 26*(6), 674–694. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2007.06.005

Ranson, M. (2014). Crime, weather, and climate change. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management, 67*(3), 274–302. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeem.2013.11.008

Rehling, J. T. (2022). Conceptualising eco-anxiety using an existential framework. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 4(52). 472-485. https://doi.org/10.1177/00812463221130898

Roszak, T. (1992). *The voice of the earth.* Simon & Schuster.

Roszak, T. (2019). Ahol Psyché és Gaia találkozik. [Where Psyche and Gaia meet]. *Imágó Budapest 8* (4), 3–10.

Roszak, T., Gomes, M. E. & Kanner, A. D (Eds.). (1999). *Ecopsychology: Restoring the earth, healing the mind.* Sierra Club Books.

Runciman, W. G. (1966). *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice: A Study of Attitudes to Social Inequality in Twentieth-century England.* University of California Press.

Russell, J. A. (2003). Core affect and the psychological construction of emotion. *Psychological Review, 110*(1), 145–172. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.110.1.145

Scannell, L., & Gifford, R. (2010). Defining place attachment: A tripartite organizing framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 30*(1), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2009.09.006

Scheffran, J., Link, P., & Schilling, J. (2019). Climate and conflict in Africa. In M. C. Nisbet (Ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Climate Science*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228620.013.557

Serdeczny, O., Adams, S., Baarsch, F., Coumou, D., Robinson, A., Hare, W., Schaeffer, M., Perrette, M., & Reinhardt, J. (2017). Climate change impacts in Sub-Saharan Africa: From physical changes to their social repercussions. *Regional Environmental Change, 17*(6), 1585–1600. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-015-0910-2

Sherif, M. (1966). *In common predicament: Social psychology of intergroup conflict and cooperation.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Stanley, S. K., Hogg, T. L., Leviston, Z., & Walker, I. (2021). From anger to action: Differential impacts of eco-anxiety, eco-depression, and eco-anger on climate action and wellbeing. *The Journal of Climate Change and Health, 1*, 100003. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joclim.2021.100003

Stollberg, J., & Jonas, E. (2021). Existential threat as a challenge for individual and collective engagement: Climate change and the motivation to act. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 42*, 145–150. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2021.10.004

Stolorow, R. D. (2013). Death, afterlife, and doomsday scenario: Why do we evade the extreme dangers of climate change? *Psychology Today.* https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/feeling-relating-existing/201312/death-afterlife-and-doomsday-scenario

Stouffer, S. A., Suchman, E. A., Devinney, L. C., Star, S. A., & Williams, R. M., Jr. (1949). *The American Soldier: Adjustment During Army Life. (Studies in Social Psychology in World War II)*. Princeton University Press.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin, & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33-37). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Tesfaye, B. (2022). *Climate change and conflict in the Sahel* (Center for Preventive Action Discussion Paper Series on Managing Global Disorder No. 11). Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved February 25, 2026 from https://www.cfr.org/reports/climate-change-and-conflict-sahel

Treszkai, Á. (2019). Az éghajlatváltozás biztonsági hatásai a szubszaharai térségben. *Honvédségi Szemle, 147*(4), 65–76. https://honvedelem.hu/files/files/116701/hsz_2019_4_065_076.pdf

Tuan, Y.-F. (1974). *Topophilia: A study of environmental perception, attitudes, and values*. Columbia University Press.

Uenal, F., Sidanius, J., Roozenbeek, J., & van der Linden, S. (2021). Climate change threats increase modern racism as a function of social dominance orientation and

ingroup identification. *Journal* of Experimental Social Psychology, *97*, 104228. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2021.104228

Uhl, I., Klackl, J., Hansen, N., & Jonas, E. (2017). Undesirable effects of threatening climate change information: A cross-cultural study. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 21*(3), 513–529. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430217735577

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2020). Legal considerations regarding claims for international protection made in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and disasters. UNHCR. https://www.refworld.org/docid/5f75f2734.html

von Uexkull, N., Croicu, M., Fjelde, H., & Buhaug, H. (2016). Civil conflict sensitivity to growing-season drought. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 113*(44), 12391–12396. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1607542113

Witsenburg, K. M., & Adano, W. R. (2009). Of rain and raids: Violent livestock raiding in northern Kenya. *Civil Wars, 11(*4), 514–538. https://doi.org/10.1080/13698240903403915

Woodbury, Z. (2019). Climate trauma: Toward a new taxonomy of trauma. *Ecopsychology, 11*, 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1089/eco.2018.0021

World Bank. (2021). *Groundswell Part II: Acting on internal climate migration. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.* The World Bank. https://doi.org/10.1596/36248

Xie, X., Hao, M., Ding, F., Scheffran, J., Ide, T., Maystadt, J.-F., Qian, Y., Wang, Q., Chen, S., Wu, J., Sun, K., Ma, T., & Jiang, D. (2024). The impacts of climate change on violent conflict risk: A review of causal pathways. *Environmental Research Communications, 6*(11), 112002. https://doi.org/10.1088/2515-7620/ad8a21

Citizenship in Post-Independence Africa: A Theoretical Review[1]

Dawit Mezgebe Tsegaye[2]

Abstract:

Citizenship can be conceptualized from various eras of African history which include pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods (Lonsdale, 2019). This study is committed to appraise the status and practice of post-independence citizenship through the classical theories of citizenship, namely: Liberal, Republican, and Communitarian. Methodologically, a desk-based approach with the critical-analytical method is employed, and qualitative data is collected from secondary sources. Data analysis was conducted using qualitative data analysis techniques. In post-independence Africa citizenship re-emerged with the formation of new states in the early 1960s (Melber, et. al., 2020), and the study found that the bizarre and deleterious form and substance of citizenship has made theorizing citizenship in post-independence Africa very challenging, because in most African states the ruling classes are insulated from the masses with cumulative sins and malpractices of injustice accompanied by deep-rooted neopatrimonialism (Cooper, 2005). Hence, the study recommended a form of citizenship that accommodates both rights-based and ethnic identities in Africa.

Keywords:

Citizenship; Classical Theories of Citizenship; Post-Independence Africa; Theoretical Appraisal.

[1] DOI: https://10.12700/jceeas.2026.6.1.471

[2] Senior Lecturer Dilla University, Dilla, Ethiopia; ORCID: 0009-0007-9395-2236; dawitmezgebe@gmail.com.

Introduction

Citizenship is a very progressive concept; hence it is very dynamic when examined from historical (time) and geographic (regional) perspectives (Ulrich, 2019).When examined from an African perspective, citizenship can be explored and conceptualized from various eras of African history which include pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. According to Lonsdale (2019), there are enough scholarly evidences in the existence of the practice and status of citizenship derived from the social capital of belongingness of householders in pre-colonial Africa, and it is witnessed by the earliest history and discovery of pre-colonial constitution of various African kingdoms. The status and practice of citizenship in pre-colonial Africa is identified and defined by being the member in the state either through "descent, actual or fictional in lineage based units, or series of progressively more inclusive units…Citizenship means primarily membership in the national state through loyalty to the king" (Fallers, 1973:81). Citizenship incorporates the rights to own property by individuals and households' thorough lineage based units and structures.

According to Cooper (2005), since the era of slave trade and then colonialism, Africa has been the prey of Western imperialism and its contemporary globalization, and this has disrupted the organic practice and status of citizenship in Africa having everlasting noxious consequences politically, economically, and socially. The European colonialism massively destroyed pre-colonial political, economic, social institutions, value and system of Africa in which it intentionally dismantled the oldest pre-colonial way of relations between the rulers and ruled, severing the existing practice and status of citizenship through the formation of artificial externally imposed states deliberately separating oldest society and community into different artificially organized entities (Nafziger, 1988; Manby, 2010).

Citizenship practice and status has also been changed with the formation of a post-independence African state (Ndegwa, 1997; Melber, et. al., 2020). In post-independence Africa citizenship[3] re-emerged with the formation of new states in the early 1960s (Melber, et. al., 2020), and as a practice and a status "citizenship is both acquired and acknowledged through the ability to demonstrate the values that guide life and living within the community and society" (Biao, 2024:287). Post-colonial African citizenship has faced major political, economic, and social challenges in fairly entertaining and meeting the vital political, economic and social expectations and demands of members, and in deciding who to include and exclude in actively participating politically, economically, and socially (as a member/ citizen[4]). This is

[3] When compared with the Western perspective of citizenship, it is very complicated having blurred meaning and definition as a status and a practice since the nature, organization and institutional structure of post-independence African states are scholarly explored and examined with the specific emphasis given to colonialism and its legacy.

[4]In post-independence African context, this study employs the term "individual" that clearly denotes the existing political, economic and social membership and relation taking place with the state rather than the term "citizen".

accompanied by debating what the benefits and responsibilities are, and privileges of citizens should be in the state? – The core demands in understanding citizenship in post-independence Africa (Barbalet, 1988, cited in Kanyinga, 2000).

This study has the major objective of analyzing whether citizenship is accorded as a status, and exercised as a practice in post-independence Africa or not, and if so it deemed very vital to appraise post-independence African citizenship through each of the three classical theories of citizenship by endeavoring to answer the following questions in this study context: Can citizenship in post-independence Africa as a status and a practice be theorized classically? And, what are the major political, economic and social rationales that made classically theorizing the status and practice of citizenship a challenging endeavor in post-colonial Africa?

This study is intended to fill the existing knowledge gap through theorizing and analyzing the prevailing practice of post-colonial citizenship in Africa by employing the three classical theories of citizenship[5] namely: Liberal, Republican, and Communitarian by exploring, examining and describing the roles and contributions of various key political actors (Colonialism, independent African states and their authoritarian political systems), and factors (colonial legacy, and post-colonial individual- state relation). This study found that the status and practice of citizenship in post-colonial Africa when theoretically reviewed by employing one of these classical theories could not fit any one of the three classical theories when examined from multiple socio-political perspectives, including the following two interrelated rationales:-citizenship in Africa has still-unsettled meanings informed and misinformed by pasts of [Africans] (Lonsdale, 2019), and, theorizing citizenship in post-colonial Africa is very challenging scholarly endeavor, because the political nature and structure of post-colonial African state (form and substance of citizenship) is not the same as the Western state, and its politics are marked by the existence of two contrasting and contentious publics: amoral civic realm (state level); and a moral primordial realm or the 'native'/ ethnic segment where membership is attached with tribe, clan and race (Hunter, 2016), which directly clash/oppose with the ideals of modern citizenship.

Methodology

This study has employed a desk-based methodological approach with the application of critical-analytical methods. Qualitative data is collected from secondary sources of data, which are gathered from desk-based reviews and examination of essential and key documents, including research reports, various academic writings, national and international journals, plus public and private publications, and electronic sources. Data analysis was conducted using qualitative data analysis techniques. By employing desk-based methodological approach with the critical-analytical method, this study has

[5]Authoritative and dominant theories of citizenship have their roots since the classical period of Greco-Roman civilization which are having long established forms.

achieved its major task of "exploring a problem and developing a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon [of theoretically appraising post-independence African citizenship through the classical theories of citizenship]" (Creswell, 2012:8). This paper has five major parts, and part one dealt with the introduction of the study, part two mainly focused on methodology, part three meticulously discussed results and discussion beginning with theories of citizenship: Liberal, Republican and Communitarian theories of citizenship separately, and then part four briefly analyzed the conception and practice of post-colonial African citizenship, and part five emphasized in theoretically appraising post-colonial African citizenship through the three classical theories of citizenship, and the conclusion is drawn with the references at the end.

Results And Discussion

What is Citizenship?

Modern citizenship is the Western laden concept having ancient reference "to a state of belonging to and being accepted as belonging to a city" (Biao, 2024:287), and it has become very important political issue, enjoying its revival through granting membership or belonging by guaranteeing security within the state (Kanyinga, 2000), and this is identified as the modern (Gothic) citizenship (Skinner, 1993). According to Harrington, modern (Gothic[6]) citizenship is "the product of a long and melancholy slide away from classical values" (Skinner, 1993:404) which include new values of liberty and equality. Citizenship is considered as a type of "socio-political identity" derived from membership devoted with a legal status granted by a political community (nation-state), and it is associated with rights, liberties, and obligations it accords. Citizenship bonds members not only to their government and state, but it also recognizes diversity and treats equally other fellow members of diverse social classes and identities that can be ethnic, religious, or cultural (Heater, 2004; Stokke, 2017 ; Alemayehu, 2019 ; Lonsdale, 2019). Modern citizenship is both a status and a practice enjoyed by citizens of a state, incorporating vital democratic political, economic, and social rights and responsibilities individually and collectively (Kanyinga, 2000).

Theories of Citizenship

According to Bellamy (2008), citizenship theories are classified into normative and empirical theories based on values and mechanisms (procedures) attached with the possession of rights and duties of citizens. The theory of citizenship that mainly focuses on setting out the rights and duties citizens ought to have is identified as normative, and this theory has its origin in the ancient Greece and Roman civilization, and the empirical

[6]This term sometimes refers to the belief held by 17th-century English constitutionalists that their "ancient constitution" (often described as "Gothic") protected them against the arbitrary will of a monarch, ensuring they lived under laws they helped make, rather than under the will of a ruler.

theories of citizenship (democratic citizenship[7] of the West) are dedicated to describe and explain how citizens are made able to possess and practice their rights and duties within the state actively participating as legal-political members. This study mainly focused on setting out what rights and duties citizens ought to have, or the normative aspect of citizenship, that describes the relationship between individuals and the state. In theorizing citizenship the central components of citizenship (substantive membership, legal status; rights and participation) can be examined through various schools of thought or theories (Stokke, 2017), for example, Alemayehu (2019), identified liberal, social democratic, socialist or republican theories of citizenship. But, this study emphasized on dealing with the three classical theories of citizenship: Liberal, Republican and Communitarian (Ndegwa, 1997; Lister, 2008).

Classical Theories of Citizenship

These are major theories of citizenship which are very vital to clearly understand the status, role, rule, right and duty of an individual (he/she) bestowed upon and assigned for being a legal member/citizen within a particular state or community, and these theories are very fundamental and useful in explicitly defining the existing legal and political relations between the individual and the state (Lister, 2008). There are three categories of classical theories of citizenship: Liberal, Republican and Communitarian, and each of these theories are identified by their key tenets consecutively dealing with and emphasizing on: - individual freedom, active political participation of citizens, and collective membership and participation in shared communal affairs respectively (Lister, 2008; Dagger 2002; Delanty, 2002; Shuck 2002, cited in Stokke: 2017). The upcoming section is dedicated to explore and examine these three classical conceptions of citizenship separately to provide readers with the basic arguments they mainly relied on defining the rules, roles, rights, and duties individuals/ members/citizens must adhere to and play within a given state as political and legal members.

Liberal / Contractarian Theory of Citizenship

According to Skinner (1993), liberal theory of citizenship has its root in the political philosophy of Hobbesian social contract[8] which is the origin and source of modern political authority and citizenship. According to Lieres, (1999), the modern liberal

[7]It is derived from European unification, and defined by a "common membership of a shared and imminent community" (1995, 75, emphasis in original). Such a citizenship is claimed and defined by political action launched from small communities of shared values and experience and enacted in the public sphere. This recognition of spheres of citizen formation other than the nation-state makes possible an analysis of ethnic groups as political communities in which citizenship can be formed and sustained" (Ndegwa, 1997:600).

[8] In reading the major philosophical and scholarly works of George H. Sabine (1963), Ebenstein (1970), Mukherjee and Ramaswamy (1999), I am convinced that Hobbesian Social contract has to be identified as ***Social Deal***, because it is a one-time political deal between the Absolute Sovereign and the subjects aiming to perpetual peace and stability not to be retracted to the Hobbesian State of Nature.

Western world has implemented and exercised the liberal theory of citizenship, which is an individual/ egoist/ private centric theory stressing on the liberal theory of individual freedom. According to the well-known liberal scholar John Rawls, the liberal society is composed of "free, rational and egoist persons devoted to furthering their own [private] interest" (Skinner, 1993:405), and the corresponding liberal political system is based on the respect of the individuals" civil rights which establish the foundations of citizenship.

Divergent with the other two classical theories of citizenship, the liberal theory underlines the equality of rights which each citizen/individual enjoys, and how these rights enable the individuals to pursue their own aims and goals within the state. Citizenship in the liberal theory is a legal status that deliberates certain rights to the individual protecting him/her from the state's meddling/intervention in his/her own private affair and life. According to Alemayehu (2019), liberal citizenship entails individual's membership to a given political community whose primary responsibility is to fairly distribute, secure and protect the basic liberties of each member in the state. Philosophically and practically, liberal theory of citizenship hugely emphasizes on maximizing individual liberty by minimizing the calls of social duty and responsibility in which a citizen is not obliged as a member of a modern state to participate in public/civic/communal engagements, because "citizenship is increasingly viewed as a matter of rights. Citizens not only have the right to participate in public life, but also the right to place private commitments ahead of political involvements" (Lieres, 1999:142).

In the liberal political system, there exists the status of liberal citizenship that declares and guarantees individual rights which are natural (inborn) with marginal duties of serving the public (Keller and Omwami, 2007). In the liberal theory of citizenship, liberty is equated with the absence of any obligation of the individual in serving the public/community; hence the status of liberal citizenship does not attach strings of duties on citizens in freely exercising their membership and citizenship rights within the state (Kanyinga, 2000). According to Skinner (1993), liberal citizenship guarantees the maximum liberty to the individual ensuring the non-interference of the state in his/her private life through the law, and it is irrational for the individual/citizen to morally prioritize the performance of civic/public/ communal engagements at the expense of his/her private desire. Liberal theory of citizenship is antagonistic with utilitarianism[9], and it is the best theoretical lens of understanding the selfish, egoist, irrational and immoral nature of an individual (Skinner, 1993). Liberal theory of citizenship strictly argues that individual liberty precedes public service, and this liberty has to be fundamentally protected by law. Even if liberal theory of citizenship is taken as superior and practically perfect by pro-Western

[9] "Bentham's philosophy that the government should do whatever would produce the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people" (Baradat, 2008:297). Baradat, Leon P. (2008). *Political Ideologies: Their Origins and Impact.* 9th edn. Prentice-Hall of India: New Delhi.

scholars (Lieres, 1999), in objective reality practical equality is missing in exercising liberal citizenship in liberal societies, because there are visible inconsistencies and biases of legal equality in terms of race, class and gender even today.

Civic-Republican Theory of Citizenship

Having its origin in the classical period, the civic-republican theory of citizenship is also known as the classical view of citizenship, and it precedes the emergence of individualistic liberalism emphasizing on the adherence to "virtue and civic equality" (Skinner, 1993:419). The earliest practice of civic-republican citizenship is found in the classical opposing philosophies of citizenship in the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, where the Hellenic conception gave emphasis to "the activity of collective self-rule and tends to be ethnically exclusive, and a Roman one that emphasizes legal status and privilege and is expansive" (Bauböck, 2007:3). Modern civic-republican theory of citizenship is salvaged from the earliest civic-republican citizenship status and practice during the Renaissance period in Italy, and the leading scholar is Machiavelli (Skinner, 1993).

Civic-Republican theory of citizenship contrasts the basic premises of liberal theory of citizenship, and it strongly argues that citizenship rights are not inborn /innate and they are derived from active political participation of citizens on carrying out their civic responsibilities to the public and the state (Keller and Omwami, 2007). Civic-Republican theory is the inverse of liberal theory, because it strongly claims that "maximizing of individual liberty to be seen not as the fruit of minimizing the calls of social duty, but rather of engaging in public service, and especially in participating actively in the business of government" (Skinner, 1993:409). Civic-Republican theory strongly argues that the political community sustains with the active participation of members/citizens in carrying out their civic duties, and this virtue is used in defending their citizenship rights (Ndegwa, 1997, cited in Kanyinga, 2000). According to Lister (2008), the basic tenet of civic-republican theory of citizenship is, citizens" have to be committed with active participation in public affairs which include deliberation, policy making, formulation and execution of laws which are the basis for civic self-rule, the advancement of the civic good, and the law is used "as a means of creating liberty by way of enforcing the performance of civic duties" (Skinner, 1993:409).

In the civic-republican theory, public service precedes liberty, and individual liberty has to be earned through active civic participation in politics, but it must not be secured by law. Citizenship in the civic-republican theory is the active involvement of citizens in governing their own polity by participating in vital public activities, and avenues of politics. For civic-republican theorists, citizenship is a uniting common civic identity shaped by common public culture as long as it is stronger on its influence than religion, race and ethnicity etc. Civic-republican citizenship with active participation, inclusion and recognition of various identities surpasses rights and norms by providing political culture which "fosters bonds of solidarity, preserving memories of past injustices as well as working out alternative

conceptions of the self and community" (Lieres, 1999:143). The republican ideal of citizenship is clearly stated by prominent political philosophers of the West including Aristotle, Machiavelli, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Hegel and Tocqueville.

Communitarian Theory of Citizenship

Communitarian theory of citizenship is a community centered practice and status of membership that prioritizes active participation of individuals who belong to the particular community (Dagger, 2002; Delanty, 2002; Shuck, 2002, cited in Stokke, 2017). According to Lister (2008), communitarian theory of citizenship is in sharp contrast with the liberal theory of citizenship concerning the individual, his/her liberty and responsibility, in which for communitarian theorists the existence of community precedes the existence of individual, and duty or loyalty to the community precedes individual's liberty. Scholars of communitarian theory firmly "argue that rather than stressing on maximizing individual liberty, theory of state must be based on shared meanings and common purposes" (Skinner, 1993:409). The major philosophical pillar of this theory elucidates that a citizen must identify her/himself with the community where he/she belongs as a member, and he/she must actively participate in the political life of the community for advancing the overall communal welfare, not the narrow egoist self-interest of the individual at the expense/cost of the community's benefit/advantage. The common theoretical feature of both civic-republican and communitarian theory of citizenship is, the precedence and emphasis both given to the public/communitarian/civic duty having its origin in the active participation of members of the community/citizens in advancing the common good of their community or polity. After the thorough examination of the distinct features of the three classical conceptions of citizenship separately, it is very vital to explore and revisit the key and common features of post-independence African citizenship before appraising it through the three classical theories of citizenship, and the next section of the study is devoted to this purpose.

Historical Overview of Citizenship in Africa

Citizenship is not a new phenomenon as a status and practice for Africa, and it can be explored and conceptualized from three eras of African history: pre-colonial, colonial and post- colonial periods (Nafziger, 1988; Herbst, 2014; Hunter, 2016). According to Lonsdale (2019), there are enough scholarly evidences on the existence of the practice and status of citizenship derived from the social capital of belongingness of householders in pre-colonial Africa, and it is witnessed by the earliest history and discovery of pre-colonial constitution of various African kingdoms. The status and practice of citizenship in pre-colonial Africa is identified and defined by being a member in the state either through "descent, actual or fictional in lineage-based units, or series of progressively more inclusive units…. Citizenship means primarily membership in the national state through loyalty to the

king" (Fallers, 1973:81). Citizenship in pre-colonial Africa incorporates the rights to own property by individuals and households" thorough lineage-based units and structures. According to Cooper (2005), since the era of slave trade and then colonialism, Africa has been the prey of Western imperialism and its contemporary globalization, and this has disrupted the organic practice and status of citizenship in Africa having never lasting consequences politically, economically, and socially even today.

During the colonial period, the European colonialism massively destroyed pre-colonial political, economic, social institutions, values and systems of Africa in which it intentionally dismantled the oldest pre-colonial way of relations between the rulers and ruled, severing the practice and status of citizenship through the formation of artificial externally imposed states deliberately separating oldest society and community into different newly created entities/ states (Nafziger, 1988; Manby, 2010). In the majority of colonized sub-Saharan Africa, the newly imposed European administrations clearly categorized the population as: citizens/settlers/ colonizers (minority) accorded with legal and political rights and responsibilities, and Black Africans as subjects /natives/ colonized (majority) being victims of oppression, and exploitation of cruel system of forced labor for more than seven decades (Ulrich, 2019; Melber, et al. 2020). According to Herbst (2014), colonialism made Africans the largest subjects in modern history, and it came to an end with Decolonization in the late 1950s.

In post-independence Africa citizenship re-emerged with the formation of new states in the early 1960s (Melber, et. al., 2020), and as a practice and a status "citizenship is both acquired and acknowledged through the ability to demonstrate the values that guide life and living within the community and society" (Biao, 2024:287). Post-colonial African citizenship has faced major political, economic, and social challenges in fairly entertaining and meeting the vital expectations and demands of members, and in deciding whom to include and exclude to actively participate politically, economically, and socially (as a citizen/member). This is accompanied by debating what the benefits, responsibilities, and privileges of citizens should be in the state? – The core demands in understanding citizenship in post-independence Africa (Barbalet, 1988, cited in Kanyinga, 2000). Then, to clearly understand citizenship as a practice and a status and theorize it in this study context, the most important concept that has to be defined is a "citizen". A citizen is an individual person who (he/she) is legally recognized member of the state, and a citizen is defined as "an abstract individual without identification and without particular qualifications (tribes, identities and ethnic groups), going beyond all concrete determinations" (Mutabazi, 2020/1:4-5).

The concept citizen in the contemporary global politics and international relations denotes "to an individual residing among a recognizable group of persons occupying a defined territorial space usually known as nation-state who owes allegiance to the said nation-state and who is in turn protected by the said nation-state (Biao, 2024:287), and it is defined as an individual who has a contractual relation with the state, and this

contractual relation "carries with it both rights and responsibilities" (Stokke, 2017: 6). A citizen is an individual person (he/she) "has full rights as a member of a country either by birth or by being granted such rights" (Hornby, 1989, cited in Akokpari, 2008:98). A citizen is also defined as an individual person (he/she) who has the "ability to break from the determinations that would lock him into a culture and destiny imposed by his birth" (Schnapper, 1994, cited in Mutabazi, 2020/1:5). Modern citizenship heavily relies on the fundamental principle that the state is the key actor, and it is primarily responsible in setting up "equal opportunities-political, economic and social-to every member of the state [citizen] or political community" (Akokpari, 2008:98)

Analysis of Post-Colonial African Citizenship: Conception and Practice (Theoretical Appraisal)

In theoretically appraising/evaluating the status and practice of post-independence African citizenship through the classical theoretical lens of citizenship, this section began by posing the question: - does the status and practice of post-independence African citizenship fit into the liberal theory of citizenship? The answer of this question mainly relied on examining the common features of the post-independence African state and its subsequent political system whether it is liberal or authoritarian. To begin with, the formation of post-independence African state is not based on Lockean social contract which is the origin and source of liberal convention based relation established between modern political authority (sovereign) and the individual in the West (Skinner, 1993), but post- independence African state is externally imposed artificial state (Tangari, 1985; Ndegwa, 1997; Biao,2024) which according to Lonsdale (1981), African independence is only the change of ruling elites color/ race from white to black, or briefly it is "Africanization" of the newly ruling elite that inherited the basic class (citizen-subject) relation and political character of the colonialists (Nafziger, 1988; Kanyinga, 2000).

Hence, the status and practice of citizenship in post-colonial Africa is different from the Western experience of rights oriented and duty engrossed liberal status and practice of citizenship (Lieres, 1999), because post-independence African governments are labeled as neopatrimonial, weak and dictatorial/authoritarian regimes of narrow class based selfish and self-serving ruling elite (Locust class) which are identified with and characterized as "hybrid, uncertain, unstable, and usually authoritarian regimes" (Williams, 2011:56). The narrow ruling elite in post-colonial African states have established exclusionary and extractive (political-economic) institutions which hugely advanced politics of citizenship through the neopatrimonial authoritarian form of governance with the rise of intense inequality among members/ citizens leading to domestic violence and war (Williams, 2011; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2013).

This study found that post-independence African citizenship doesn't fit in to the liberal theory of citizenship, because the status and practice of citizenship has become more multifarious with the majority of African governments being authoritarian which are well known in imposing strings of forced duties, harsh intimidating mechanisms with

excessively coercive institutions where members/citizens are not/ cannot freely exercise their membership/individual/ citizenship rights within the state. The authoritarian post-independence regimes in Africa accompanied by the absence of strong, viable democratic institutions and legal-political structures which lack room for the proper employment of liberal political practices including the realization of civil, political and social rights individually and collectively has made theorizing the status and practice of citizenship in post-colonial Africa through the classical theory of liberal citizenship impossible and unfeasible (Tangari, 1985; Nafziger, 1988).

The status and practice of post-independence African citizenship except the "Africanization" of its ruling elite is not liberal since members/citizens have no right to participate in civic and public life democratically, including the right to place their private commitments ahead of forced/imposed political subjugation. What makes post-independence African citizenship similar with the colonial period is the confines between the state and the subject remain the same, because substantive membership; legal status; rights and participation are preferential based on ethnicity, class and clientelism, and accessing the weakest, fragile, inefficient and illiberal state institutions and its political system is primordially exclusionary to the majority of Africans who are not close to political power making liberal theory of citizenship unfit in post-independence African context (Kanyinga, 2000).

In theoretically appraising the status and practice of post-independence African citizenship through the classical theoretical lens of citizenship, the second key question of this study was: - does the status and practice of post-independence African citizenship fit into the civic-republican theory of citizenship? The answer to this question is based on examining the institutional organization and participatory nature of the post-independence African state and its subsequent socio-political system whether it is duty/merit/professional based in granting a member/citizen access to participate freely in the affairs of the state? Or, is it exclusionary? Post-independence African state is well identified with its special closed (marginalizing) political bequest, and weak social marks it inherited from the colonial legacy where the “fundamental changes in many social practices as foreign languages, religions, and ideologies were introduced” (Herbst, 2014: 96) which seriously deconstructed the indigenous pre-colonial organic social fiber, network, interaction and political institutions with the formation of new artificial states having borders irresponsibly drawn by colonial masters separating identical social and identity groups deliberately (Nafziger, 1988; Cooper, 2005; Herbst, 2014).

Politically, the newly independent African state is the victim of a legitimacy deficit because the governments are forcefully imposed autocratic and authoritarian, and the state is alien and isolated from its members/ individuals/citizens barring access and imposing limitations on them from actively participating in the overall affairs of the state (Tangari, 1985; Nafziger, 1988; Kanyinga, 2000). This socio-political reality has adversely contributed on post-colonial African state-member /citizen relation which is the socio-political outcome associated with the lack of “embeddedness [within the society at large, and] its divorce from underlying norms and networks of social

organization" (Englebert, 1997:768). Hence, post-independence African citizenship doesn't fit in to the civic-republican theory of citizenship, because colonial legacy and the undemocratic/ authoritarian nature of the regimes within the independent African state severely and negatively deconstructed and denied the active engagement of Africans in practicing citizenship /membership (that is a uniting common civic identity shaped by common public culture) through weakening its strength highly influenced by ethnicity, religion, class and clientelism (Tangari,1985; Nafziger, 1988; Keller, 1991).

Post-independence African state can't employ and practice civic republican citizenship with genuine, inclusion and recognition of various diverse identities allowing active civic participation, because in the process of detribalizing the state, post-independence African state sidelining the formation of democratic institutions and form of governance "reproduced a despotic form of authoritarianism characteristic of the colonial situation" (Kanyinga, 2000:15), perpetuating the process and practice of exclusion of individuals, groups and society in actively participating politically, economically, and socially within the affairs of the state.

Even if civic-Republican theory strongly argues that political community sustains with the active participation of member citizens in carrying out their civic duties, and this virtue is used in defending their citizenship rights (Ndegwa, 1997), in post-independence Africa dictatorial /authoritarian and neopatrimonial regimes, with weak/subservient organs of government, and their draconian laws have crippled the liberal/democratic functioning of the three organs of government (the executive, legislative and judiciary) which are essential in exercising the active participation of members within the affairs of government in defending citizenship rights through the system of checks-and-balances. Weak/subservient organs of government in tandem with authoritarian regimes, and lack of active and effective civic society within the political sphere instrumentalized in marginalizing individuals/citizens, and groups from actively participating and carrying out their civic duties which positively maintain the state-citizen relation (Nafziger, 1988; Keller, 1991; Ndegwa, 1997; Kanyinga, 2000).

The other key political factor is the organization of post-independence African state and its subsequent socio-political system with the existence of two different opposing views and practices of citizenship (Hunter, 2016), which are identified as "official" and determined by the state; and the other "unofficial" or "primordial," defined by local communities based on birth/ethnicity/identity, and these two different opposing views have hugely challenged the very concept of who a citizen is, downgrading the realization of substantive membership; legal status; rights and active participation of citizens individually and collectively at the official /national level, making civic-republican citizenship difficult status and practice to employ theoretically and practically in post-colonial African states (Ndegwa, 1997; Kanyinga, 2000; Hunter, 2016).

In theoretically appraising the status and practice of post-independence African citizenship through the classical theoretical lens of citizenship, the third key question of this study was: - does the status and practice of post-independence African citizenship/membership fit into the communitarian theory of citizenship? The answer to

this question is based on examining the colonial legacy and the socio-political organization of the post-independence African state. To begin with, the major philosophical pillar of this theory emphasized that a citizen must identify her/himself with the community he/she belongs as a member, and he/she must actively participate in the political life of the community for advancing the overall communal welfare, not the narrow egoist self-interest of the individual at the expense of the community. But, the advent of colonialism destroyed pre-colonial organic/indigenous political, economic, social fiber, value and communal system in Africa, with the formation of new artificially formed and externally imposed colonial state that separated similar communities into multiple new independent entities sawing inter and intra-societal and intra-state socio-political discord (Tangari, 1985; Nafziger, 1988; Ndegwa, 1997; Kanyinga, 2000).

The colonial state being "forged by use of force: a 'regime of compulsion' [with the new economic policy of] appropriation and expropriation of land [used as] an instrument of control" (Kanyinga, 2000:13), extinguished the early existing means "of interaction between governors and governed" (Hunter, 2016:3) within pre-colonial African states and political organizations. The newly independent states of Africa since the early decolonization period have become incompatible to advance and employ communitarian theory of citizenship, because the state is composed of multiple eccentric communities where the personalization of political power by the immediate post-independence leaders "have patrimonialized the state [in which] corruption has become a defining feature of contemporary politics [hence] politics has become more like business" (Keller, 1991:139), favoring individualism, tribalism and clientelism by downgrading individual responsibility in the community, and severely diminishing substantive membership; legal status; rights and participation both at the communal and state level.

This hugely deteriorated the state-community-individual/citizen relation in Africa sidelining the masses after independence, in which "the state has remained inaccessible to citizens [individuals, and] in spite of these changes, citizens continue to be marginalized in the governance process" (Kanyinga, 2000:5). The Colonial legacy exacerbated the expansion of new exclusionary personality cult based egoist political culture of the ruling elite, and post-colonial African states "encouraged a passive vision of national unity-a celebration of state and ruler-instead of the citizen activism they had ridden to power" (Cooper, 2005:22), sidelining the very communities African states vowed to free, serve for and develop since independence.

Major Findings

After thoroughly exploring and examining those three classical theories of citizenship in relation with the weak, neo-patrimonial nature of post-independence African state, and its contrasting political, economic and social friction between the individual's loyalty to state and to the corresponding ethnic group he/ she belongs (Hunter, 2016), this study found that the concrete political, economic and social justifications along with the

authoritarian form of governance that "is the most common political device for dominant class consolidation in Africa" (Nafziger, 1988:82) has made African citizenship as a status and a practice the paper tiger on constitutional and legal documents being adopted from ex-colonial masters understood as unrealistic and inapplicable by the masses (Keller, 1991; Kanyinga, 2000; Herbst, 2014). Citizenship as a status and a practice is solely accorded and practiced by the narrow elites of the ruling class of the regimes in post-independence Africa (Tangari, 1985; Keller, 1991; Ndegwa, 1997; Kanyinga, 2000). Unlike the Western status and practice of citizenship that is deeply rooted in the social contract theory, post-independence African citizenship as a status and a practice is the political, economic and social victim of class dominance by the narrow ruling elites and its clients with the broader exclusion of the African masses poorly treated by the corrupt officials and feeble institutions of public administration (Tangari, 1985; Keller, 1991; Kanyinga, 2000).

Most post-independence African states have seriously failed politically, economically and socially in achieving the diverse interests of their citizens individually and collectively (Englebert, 1997). Hence, the three classical theories of citizenship are very difficult and impractical to employ and explain the existing status and practice of citizenship in post-colonial African political context, because in post-independence Africa citizenship goes against Aristotelian dictum where "to be truly human, one had to be an active citizen to the community, which Aristotle famously expressed: 'to take no part in the running of community's affair is either to be a beast or a god[10]'" (Singh, 2020:95). Hence, the failure of post-independence African state in taking no part in the running of community's affair concerning the legal-political implementation of the status and practice of citizenship has made it to be a god, and the deliberate marginalization of the majority African mass in taking part in the running of its own affair as a citizen has made it to be a beast, making post-independence African citizenship impractical to employ and explain it through one of those three classical theories of citizenship.

With regards to rationales, this study outlined that the following core political, economic and social rationales have made theorizing the status and practice of citizenship a challenging endeavor in post-independence Africa: - the colonial legacy of Africa made a citizen/member of the state is to be typically affiliated with tribes, identities and ethnic groups (primordialism) attached with particular language, religion, class and racial differences rooted within solid determinations (Mutabazi, 2020/1). Colonialism adversely contributed on the status and practice of post-independence African citizenship with the new trends of state versus ethnic citizenship[11], because "ethnic identity in Africa is a relatively recent phenomenon whose salience is largely a

[10] Not in the Christian or other religious domains, but only in the ancient Hellenic/Greek religious perspective.

[11] Having its origin in the earliest Greek citizenship that was marginalizing with ethnic exclusivity (Bauböck, 2007; Singh, 2020), ethnic citizenship is claimed to exist "rest[ing] on evidence of identity, authority, and legitimacy for members of an ethnic group" (Ndegwa, 1997:601).

product of colonial rule (Ekeh, 1975; Kalinga, 1985; Young, 1976) and of postcolonial dynamics in which elites have continued to rectify ethnic identity for political mobilization" (Lentz, 1994; Sithole, 1985; Binsbergen, 1994, cited in Ndegwa,1997:600).

The other key rationale in failing to the theorization of post-independence citizenship as a status and practice in Africa has to be observed from the following two interrelated rationales (justifications) in this study context: - citizenship in Africa has "still-unsettled meanings informed and misinformed by pasts of [Africans]" (Lonsdale, 2019:19). The unsettled meanings of citizenship informed and misinformed by pasts of Africans is attached with the reality that in post-independence Africa, citizenship as a status and practice cannot be explained and examined at the level of the nation-state only (Ndegwa, 1997; Kanyinga, 2000)., there are also other variables which are important in African context; the existence of two different opposing social views with regard to the statuses and practices of citizenship (Hunter, 2016), which are identified as "official" and determined by the state; and the other "unofficial" or "primordial," defined by local communities based on birth/ethnicity/identity in which exercising the civil, political and social rights, and ensuring them using the corresponding weak institutions of the state are very meager and unlikely.

Post-colonial conception of citizenship in Africa is very challenging and problematic when examining the question where and with whom is an individual belonging as a member/citizen and being loyal with? The state, the identity group or ethnicity (Lieres, 1999), and this implied the bifurcated nature and analysis of the conception of citizenship in post-independence African context where citizenship is identified either at the national (state) level or primordial (ethnic) level being complicated and challenging to appraise it through one of the classical theories of citizenship (Ndegwa, 1997; Kanyinga, 2000).

Conclusion

Modern citizenship as a status and practice is the Western laden concept, and it has become a very important political issue, enjoying its revival through granting membership or belonging by guaranteeing security within the state, and this is identified as the modern (Gothic) citizenship. Citizenship as a practice and a status is not novice in the history of Africa, but it has been changed with the formation of a post-independence African state since the early 1960s, and this study emphasized on attempting to theorize its practice through the three classical theories of citizenship: - Liberal/contractarian, Civic-Republican and Communitarian. After thoroughly exploring and examining those three classical theories of citizenship in relation with the weak, neo-patrimonial, authoritarian nature of post-independence African state, and its contrasting political, economic and social friction between the individual's loyalty to state and to the corresponding ethnic group he/ she belongs, it is clear that none of those classical theories of citizenship are fit in this study context.

To theorize the practice of citizenship through one of these classical theories of

citizenship, the African states must adopt democratic, inclusionary and fair political system which is devoid of its colonial legacy, otherwise, post-colonial citizenship as a practice and a status remains complex not only to theorize but also to exercise it in objective reality. Finally, this study recommends that, citizenship in Africa has to be based on shared accommodation and realistic, practical agreements between those who are ruling and those who are ruled (members/citizens), where democratically sustainable, all-inclusive political system that fairly entertains and addresses the diverse political, economic and social demands and expectations of an individual and groups must prevail. Hence, post-colonial African citizenship has to be theorized in a very accommodative way, and what is required is a form of citizenship that is capable of negotiating both rights-based and ethnic identities in the African context. Undertaking these recommendations in the objective reality of post-independence African politics, it will be possible to theoretically appraise the practice of African citizenship accordingly in one of the classical theories of citizenship.

Funding Information

The author hereby declares that there is no any funding and grant received from any entity in any form.

Ethical Approval

This research did not involve human participants in case of primary data collection, or interventions. Since this article is theoretical appraisal, its data are exclusively gathered from the existing literatures which are secondary sources and publicly available scholarly materials, hence no ethical approval is necessary in conducting this study. All academic and scientific sources are appropriately cited to maintain academic integrity.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to the almighty God, St. Gabriel, Virgin Mary, and to my Advisor Solomon Mebrie Goffie (PhD) Associate Professor Dept of PSIR AAU; my best friends, Eyasu Gizaw, PhD candidate at Leiden University, Getaye Abineh, Tigiste Alemayehu,Tegaye Kassa, Fisseha Moreda Obssu (PhD), and Fiteh Woldesenbet (PhD), for their multifaceted support, both academically and materially.

Notes on Contributor

Dawit Mezgebe Tsegaye is a PhD candidate at the Centre for African and Asian Studies (CAAS) within the College of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. He serves as a Senior Lecturer at Dilla University and is an active member of the African Studies Professionals Association of Ethiopia. He also holds an executive role in the Ethiopian Professionals of Political Science and International Relations. Dawit is an author, political commentator, and scholar engaged in research

and public discourse. He contributes to academic scholarship and policy discussions on African politics, governance, and international relations in contexts.

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that there is no any conflict of interest from any other author in any form including no competing financial interest exists for this article.

References

Abbink, J. (2024). Political culture and cyclical conflict in Ethiopia: Exploring the generative dynamics of political crisis in the 2020s. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 1–17. Sage. https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096241284394

Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2013). *Why nations fail: The origins of power, prosperity and poverty*. Manipal Technologies Limited.

Alemayehu, B. (2019, September 27). Citizenship versus identity: The current political discourse in Ethiopia. *Advocacy4Oromia*. Retrieved January 14, 2026 from https://advocacy4oromia.org/2019/09/27/citizenship-versus-identity-the-current-political-discourse-in-ethiopia/

Akokpari, J. (2008). "You don't belong here": Citizenship, the state & Africa's conflicts -Reflections on Ivory Coast. In A. Nhema & P. Tiyambe (Eds.), *The roots of African conflicts: The causes and costs* (88–105). James Currey.

Bauböck, R. (2007). *Theories of citizenship: Problems of membership and political boundaries*. Department of Political and Social Sciences, European University Institute.

Bellamy, R. (2008). *Theories of citizenship and their history*. Oxford University Press. https://academic.oup.com/book/637/chapter/135339146

Bendix, R. (1973). The extension of citizenship to lower classes. In R. Bendix et al. (Eds.), *State and society* (233–256). Ohio University Press.

Cooper, F. (2005). *The politics of citizenship in colonial and postcolonial Africa*. Studia Africana. THEMA.

Biao, I. (2024). African values as natural drivers. *Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, 30*(2), 285–301. Sage. https://doi.org/10.1177/14779714241240382

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Easton, S. C. (1964). *The rise and fall of Western colonialism: A historical survey from the early nineteenth to the present*. Frederick A. Praeger.

Englebert, P. (1997). The contemporary African state: Neither African nor state. *Third World Quarterly, 18*(4), 767–775.

Fallers, L. (1973). Political sociology and the anthropological study of African politics. In R. Bendix et al. (Eds.), *State and society* (pp. 73–86). Ohio University Press.

Heater, D. (2004). *A brief history of citizenship*. Edinburgh University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctvxcrsq8

Herbst, J. (2014). *States and power in Africa: Comparative lessons in authority and*

control. Princeton University Press.

Hunter, E. (2016). Introduction. In Hunter E. (Ed.), *Citizenship, belonging, and political community in Africa: Dialogues between past and present* (1–16). Ohio University Press.

Jackson, R. H., & Rosberg, C. G. (1982). Why Africa's weak states persist: The empirical and the juridical in statehood. *World Politics*, *35*(1), (1–24). Cambridge University Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010277

Kanyinga, K. (2000, September 7–9). *Subjects of the state: Citizenship and governance in Eastern and Southern Africa*. Paper presented at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Consultative Meeting on Governance, Ottawa, Canada.

Keller, E. J. (1991). The state in contemporary Africa: A critical assessment of theory and practice. In Rustow D. & Erickson E. (Eds.), *Comparative political dynamics* (134–159). Macmillan Press.

Keller, E. J., & Omwami, E. M. (2007). Federalism, citizenship and national identity in Ethiopia. *The International Journal of African Studies*, *6*, (37–70).

Lister, M. (2008). Theories of citizenship. In D. Heater (Ed.), *Theories of citizenship*. Edinburgh University Press. https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9780748633418.003.0002

Lonsdale, J. (1981). States and social processes in Africa: A historiographical survey. *African Studies Review*, *24*(2/3), (139–225). Cambridge University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/523904

Lonsdale, J. (2016). Unhelpful pasts and a provisional present. In Hunter E. (Ed.), *Citizenship, belonging, and political community in Africa: Dialogues between past and present* (17–40). Ohio University Press.

Manby, B. (2010). *Citizenship law in Africa: A comparative study*. Open Society Foundations. https://www.soros.org

Melber, H., et al. (2020). *Politics of citizenship: Social contract and inclusivity in Africa* (Policy Notes 2020:8). The Nordic Africa Institute.

Mori, L. (2020). Social citizenship and cultural citizenship: The role of social rights in promoting cultural citizenship. *Italian Sociological Review*, *10*(2), (291–303). https://italiansociologicalreview.com/ojs/index.php/ISR/article/view/341/265

Mutabazi, E. (2020). Ethnicity and second-class citizenship in Rwanda. *Université Catholique de l'Ouest, Bildungsforschung*. Retrieved January 14, 2026 from http://www.jstor.com/stable/41240237

Nafziger, E. Wayne (1988). *Inequality in Africa: Political Elites, Proletariat, Peasants and the Poor.* Cambridge University Press.

Singh, M. Kumar (2020). *Political Theory*. Anmol Publication Pvt. Ltd

Skinner, Q. (1993). Two concepts of citizenship. *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*, *55*(3), (403–419). Peeters Publishers. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40886879

Stokke, K. (2017). *Politics of citizenship: Towards an analytical framework*. Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo.

Ulrich, N. (2016). Rethinking citizenship and subjecthood in Southern Africa: Khoesan,

labor relations, and the colonial state in the Cape of Good Hope (c. 1652–1815). In Hunter E. (Ed.), *Citizenship, belonging, and political community in Africa: Dialogues between past and present* (43–73). Ohio University Press.

Lieres, B. von (1999). Review: New perspectives on citizenship in Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *25*(1), 139–148. Taylor & Francis. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2637590

Williams, P. D. (2011). *War and conflict in Africa*. Polity Press

A New Paradigm for International Peacekeeping: Examining the EU Security and Defence Initiative in the Gulf of Guinea as a Reference for the Future UN Peacekeeping[1]

Yusaku Fukuhara[2]

Abstract:

This article argues that the European Union's Security and Defence Initiative in support of West African countries of the Gulf of Guinea (EUSDI) offers valuable insights for the future evolution of Peacekeeping operations deployed by both the United Nations (UN) and regional organisations. While UN peacekeeping has a strong record in reducing casualties and facilitating peace, it has faced significant challenges due to rising confrontations within the UN Security Council as well as the increasingly challenging mission environments. In this context, the EUSDI, established in December 2023 in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and Benin, provides a unique operational model characterised by a small team, agility, targeted support, and cost-effectiveness, leveraging existing EU delegations for a short-term, scalable presence. The EU's strategic focus on targeted technical support in the region, underscored by the EUSDI, exemplifies the efficacy of a modest yet competent operational presence in addressing pressing security challenges. This article presents that the EUSDI's nimble, agile mission model, with tailor-made approaches, could offer compelling lessons for the UN's ongoing efforts to redefine its peacekeeping approach in an increasingly complex global security landscape.

Keywords:

United Nations; European Union; Peacekeeping Operations; the Gulf of Guinea.

[1] DOI: https://10.12700/jceeas.2026.6.1.491
[2] Second Secretary, Embassy of Japan to Ukraine; ORCID: 0009-0000-2369-9529; yu.fu.117@outlook.jp.

Introduction

This article argues that the agility, targeted support, and cost-effectiveness demonstrated by the European Union (EU)'s Security and Defence Initiative in support of West African Countries of the Gulf of Guinea (EUSDI) provide compelling reference points for discussion for adaptation and evolution of future United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping operations, particularly in response to contemporary security challenges.

A literature review on UN peacekeeping operations reveals that the UN peacekeeping operations has an extraordinary track record of reducing civilian and non-combatant casualties in civil wars; preventing the spread of violence; facilitating and assisting in the implementation of peace agreements; and maintaining peace in the aftermath of war (Walter, Howard & Fortna, 2021). Concurrently, the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations remains a subject of ongoing debate within academic literature, as other studies also point out the challenges of UN peacekeeping operations (Khonde, Katayanagi & Mikami, 2025; Rosas Duarte & Souza, 2024; Blair, Di Salvatore & Smidt, 2022). Scholarly analysis reveals a mixed record, with some operations successfully achieving their mandates and contributing to peace and stability, while others have fallen short of this or even exacerbated conflict dynamics.

Turning to key documents presented at the UN, the so-called the "Brahimi Report" was a seminal document acknowledging the need for more robust, better resourced, and more strategically deployed UN missions (United Nations, 2000). Recent UN discussions, including independent research *The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities* released by the UN in October 2024, are built on top of these discussions, acknowledging the limitations of traditional peacekeeping operation models in contemporary conflicts and seeking new paradigms. As evidenced by the 2024 independent study, there is an institutional recognition that the traditional multidimensional peacekeeping, with its extensive mandates and large footprints, needs to be updated.

"Peacekeeping faces formidable challenges, as does the multilateral system writ large," the Under-Secretary-General (USG) for peace operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, told the UN Security Council in September 2024. "As geopolitical tensions have mounted . . . operations are increasingly unable to rely on member states to act in a strong, unified manner to support peacekeeping efforts," he said (Lacroix, 2024). Notwithstanding the geopolitical tensions and other operational challenges that peacekeepers face, UN peacekeeping remains a symbol of multilateral cooperation. USG Lacroix noted, "We need to continue to invest in strengthening peacekeeping tools in order to make them more effective and adaptable to today's and tomorrow's challenges" (Lacroix, 2024).

With regards to the rowing sense of urgency over the current situation surrounding the UN peacekeeping operations, USG Lacroix noted in his op-ed issued on the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers on 29 May 2025 that "Today, the United Nations Peacekeeping stands at a critical juncture. The global landscape is dangerous and complex. Crises erupt quickly and spread faster, magnified by

international political polarisation, transnational crime, terrorism, a rising sense of impunity, and the weakening of international law." (Lacroix, 2025).

Against the backdrop of expanding multidimensional crises, a working group issued a study report on the future of the UN Peacekeeping titled, *The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities*, which was commissioned by the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) of the UN Secretariat at the request of Germany and the other co-chairs of the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Process. It was intended to inform the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial, which was convened in Berlin in May 2025, by providing insights on new peacekeeping models and capabilities (Wane & Kihara-Hunt, 2024, p. 1). The report outlined a series of thirty models that describe what UN peacekeeping has accomplished in the past and could achieve in the future. Each model delineates the strategic objective it seeks to fulfil, the tasks that peacekeepers would perform to meet that objective and the assets an eventual mission would need to be successful.

In this context, this article argues that the EU's new Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) initiative, namely, the EU Security and Defence Initiative in support of West African countries of the Gulf of Guinea (EUSDI), established in December 2023 in partnership with Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and Benin, could provide a potential model for multinational peacekeeping missions and operations from which the UN could learn in particular from the perspective of its nimbleness and flexibility. Whilst it is evident that the viability and success UN peacekeeping hinge on the political will among UN member states to find consensus on solutions to conflicts, this article analyses on the operational model of multinational peacekeeping operations, with a particular focus on the EUSDI.

Firstly, this article provides a concise overview of the recent discussions surrounding the UN peacekeeping operations. Then, it reviews the 2024 DPO's study on the future of peacekeeping. This article moves to overviews of the EU's engagement in the Gulf of Guinea and its CSDP as well as an analysis of the EUSDI activities. Lastly, the concluding part discusses how the EUSDI model could be useful for future peacekeeping operations.

Literature Review: Success and Limitations of the UN Peacekeeping Operations

A number of studies have positively evaluated the effectiveness of the UN peacekeeping operations. Previous studies focusing on UN peacekeeping operations' roles in peace and security indicated that UN peacekeeping: is clearly a cost-effective way of increasing global security (Hegre, Hultman & Nygård, 2019); deployed into an active civil war reduces battle-related fatalities (Hultman, Kathman & Shannon, 2019); improves protection of civilians (Kjeksrud, 2024); reduces conflict-related sexual abuses (Reeder & Dicke, 2023); and improves women's political participation (Blanton, Peksen & Blanton, 2023) as well as women's well-being (Gizelis & Cao, 2020). Other studies focusing on UN peacekeeping' roles in socioeconomics demonstrated that UN peacekeeping: increases economic growth in host countries in post-conflict settings (Jensen, 2020); mitigates the negative effect of conflict on household's economic well-

being (Bove, Di Salvatore & Elia, 2022); and promotes democracy in host countries (Campbell & Di Salvatore, 2024). It is evident that the key determination for the success of UN peacekeeping operations in civil war settings is cooperation from the host state (Pushkina, Siewert & Wolff, 2022). A rapid deployment of blue helmets in civil war settings is also the key to success in terms of reducing violence, displacement, and contagion (Kathman, Benson & Diehl, 2023). Whilst it is evident that these positive assessments were derived from specific circumstances and may require certain conditions to be met, the extant scholarly literature largely supports the argument that the UN peacekeeping operation is an effective tool for addressing the aforementioned topics and others besides.

Peacekeeping operations are often associated with large-scale operations but the 2024 DPO report shows that peacekeeping missions can be tailored flexibly. As the study presents: "The models could be used to establish narrowly focused missions based on a single model, or operations with a broader set of objectives that encompass multiple models" (Wane & Kihara-Hunt, 2024, p. 21). Both scholarly research and policy reports predict that the future of UN peacekeeping is likely to lie in smaller, tailor-made missions with relatively narrow mandates (Wane & Kihara-Hunt, 2024; van Emmerik & Albrecht, 2025).

Key Discussions on the Future of the UN Peacekeeping Operations

Recent years have seen a noticeable trend in UN peacekeeping operations whereby new missions have not been established for more than a decade. According to the DPO, there are seventy-one UN peacekeeping missions established, with eleven currently deployed. The most recently established mission is MINUSCA, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic established in 2014, except for the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), which succeeded the UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). This fact indicates that there have been no new UN peacekeeping operations for more than ten years.[3] Hikaru Yamashita argues that three principal factors are identifiable as the primary factors contributing to the stagnation of the deployment of new UN peacekeeping operations (Yamashita, 2024).

Firstly, there has been a shift in the dynamics of the Security Council due to a resurgence in the competition between major global powers (Yamashita, 2024, p. 3). Secondly, the stagnation of decision-making momentum in the Security Council, in conjunction with the deterioration of relations between major powers, exerts a substantial influence on both UN peacekeeping operations and multilateral cooperation in general (Yamashita, 2024, p. 7–10). Thirdly, there has been an expansion of the mandates of PKOs as well as a mismatch between the actual priorities and mandates.

[3] United Nations, *Past Peace Operations*. https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/past-peacekeeping-operations. (accessed on 7 March 2026).

This is due to the nature of conflicts having changed, which has exacerbated the gap between mandates and implementation (Yamashita, 2024, p. 10–11).

At the level of the UN, several key studies have been conducted as initiatives by the past Secretary-Generals and the relevant departments related to peacekeeping operations since the publication of the "Brahimi Report." Fifteen years later, the report of then Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's *High-level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* (HIPPO Report) (United Nations, 2015a) was released in 2015 (United Nations, 2015b). Subsequently, the strategy of the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) (United Nations, 2018) and the Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+) (United Nations, 2021) were released in 2018 and 2021 respectively, under the initiative of Secretary-General António Guterres. Furthermore, the DPO-led study, Future of Peacekeeping Operations (FOPO), has also been conducted from 2020 as part of A4P. Subsequently, in July 2023, the Secretary-General unveiled *The New Agenda for Peace* (United Nations, 2023), providing material for deliberation in the lead-up to the adaptation of *The Pact for the Future* at the Summit for the Future in September 2024 (United Nations, 2024). In this context, the DPO released *The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities* in October 2024.

UN 2024 Study Report on the Future of Peacekeeping

The report, entitled *The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities*, provided insights into the future of UN peacekeeping, including new models and modalities. It highlighted the key capabilities for the future of UN peacekeeping operations, including planning, personnel, leadership, support capabilities, data and information management, strategic communications, information integrity, standby and rapid deployment capabilities, and peacekeepers' security and welfare (Wane & Kihara-Hunt, 2024). The report also identified several factors that contribute to the success of UN peacekeeping operations, including the Security Council's leadership and unity, cooperation and support from the host government, delivery of tangible benefits, regional support, achievable goals, sufficient resources, realistic expectations, commitment and local knowledge, adaptability, performance, conduct and accountability, and effective transition.

At the same time, the report outlined several challenges facing UN peacekeeping, including intensifying geopolitical competition, perceptions of partiality and a trust deficit among some actors, increasing financial pressures, and a range of problems and limitations within UN headquarters and peacekeeping missions, particularly pertaining to planning, human resources, and the level of agility of various processes. The report identifies the following five challenges facing contemporary peacekeeping operations.

First, geopolitical competition is intensifying and international divisions are deepening. Differences in perspectives on international issues have polarised the Security Council and among Member States, making political support and funding for peacekeeping operations unstable and eroding trust in the UN (Wane & Kihara-Hunt, 2024, p. 10).

Second, the gap between capabilities and expectations is widening. While local and international communities hold high expectations, the resources available for deploying peacekeeping missions and operations are limited, creating a significant gap. Particularly when resources are insufficient or expectations are unrealistically high, the UN's achievements are often underestimated, potentially making alternative security actors appear more attractive (Wane & Kihara-Hunt, 2024, p. 10).

Third, the financial crisis is worsening, and UN peacekeeping operations are no exception, as they have also faced serious financial pressure due to member states' budget cuts (Wane & Kihara-Hunt, 2024, p. 10).

Fourth, the fundamental principles of peacekeeping face intense pressure. Traditionally, peacekeeping operations were clearly distinguished from peace enforcement, based on the consent of the parties, impartiality, and the non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. Instances are, however, increasing, where host governments request support closer to enforcement activities, such as countering insurgents, rather than support for peace processes, making this principal distinction difficult (Wane & Kihara-Hunt, 2024, p. 10).

Fifth, responding to complex new threats is required. Armed conflicts have become urbanised and internationalised, while non-state actors have diversified and expanded. Concurrently, the weaponisation of artificial intelligence and drones, the spread of mis- and disinformation, and the infiltration of organised crime are advancing simultaneously, overlapping and influencing each other (Wane & Kihara-Hunt, 2024, p. 15–17).

One of the key contributions of this report is the summary of 30 peacekeeping models that the UN could utilise in the context of peacekeeping (Yamashita, 2024, p. 19–35). Each model represents a package of a desired strategic goal, a cluster of potential mandated tasks, and a brief list of related capabilities to enable its successful deployment (Yamashita, 2024, p. 19). These models can be used to establish short-term missions based on a single model or operations with a broader set of objectives that encompass multiple models as well as those with long-term mandates (Yamashita, 2024, p. 21). A modular approach has the potential to engender flexibility by facilitating the design of different phases of a peacekeeping operation across its operation cycle. Similarly, these models could be used to plan the transition of large missions with broad mandates into smaller, more focused operations as part of an exit strategy (Yamashita, 2024, p. 22).

The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Activity in the Gulf of Guinea

The EU's CSDP Missions and Operations

The CSDP is an integral part of the EU's foreign and security policy, providing the union with the capacity to act in situations of crisis and conflict. It has evolved significantly since its inception in the early 2000s, with roots in the earlier European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). The CSDP is the EU's primary mechanism for the deployment of

military and civilian missions and operations abroad, with a core focus on key tasks in peace and security. These include peacekeeping, conflict prevention, capacity building and the strengthening of international security (Keukeleire & Delreux, 2022; Doyle, 2022). The scope of CSDP missions and operations is wide-ranging, encompassing military operations, such as counter-piracy missions (e.g., Operation Atalanta), and civilian missions focusing on the rule of law, security sector reform (SSR), and border management.

Since the first CSDP missions and operations were launched back in 2003, the EU has undertaken more than 40 operations outside of the union, deploying both civilian and military missions and operations in several countries across Europe, Africa and Asia. As of today, there are twenty-one ongoing CSDP missions and operations, including twelve civilian, eight military and one civilian and military initiative (EEAS, 2025a).

The EUSDI in the Gulf of Guinea

The Gulf of Guinea (GoG) is an important shipping zone for maritime transport between central and southern Africa and Europe. However, the states of the region have been confronted with considerable challenges, namely the increased threats emanating from the lack of control over the coastal waters and the weak control over access and security along the coast. The consequences included a growth in criminal and terrorist activity, which also posed a growing threat to the EU (EEAS, 2021). In this particular context, in 2014, the EU adopted an "EU Strategy for the Gulf of Guinea" (Council of the European Union, 2014) to lend support to the objectives of the so-called "Yaoundé Architecture" (CCAS, ECOWAS, and GGC, 2013). Subsequently, the EU launched "the Gulf of Guinea Action Plan" in 2015 to support the implementation of the EU's Strategy for the Gulf of Guinea (Council of the European Union, 2015).

While piracy and armed robbery incidents reached a peak in 2020 and then dropped by about 90% in 2024 compared to that peak, the weak rule of law and justice systems continue to undermine security efforts (Marangio, 2025). Turning to the northern region of the GoG countries, the region still faces challenges such as activities of terrorist armed groups, illegal migration, organised crimes, and hybrid threats. These threats not only disrupt the internal security of countries in the region but also regional trade and economic development.

The EU has recognised the need for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to address these challenges, leading to the establishment of the EUSDI. The Council of the EU adopted a decision to establish the EUSDI in Benin and Ghana on 3 August 2023 (Council of the EU, 2023a), which was followed by an adaptation of another decision to establish the Initiative in Côte d'Ivoire and Togo on 25 September 2023 (Council of the EU, 2023b). The Initiative has officially been launched with the adoption of the decision by the Council on 11 December 2023 in partnership with Ghana, Togo, Benin and Côte d'Ivoire. (Council of the EU, 2023c).

The EUSDI is modest in size, with a limited number of technical specialists deployed to the EU delegations in the four countries to provide the government with technical

support. The Initiative is comprised of a civilian pillar and a military pillar. A small number of specialists are based in EU Delegations across the region to establish a network of contacts and collaborate with national authorities to identify specific needs and develop advisory or training projects. The deployment of supplementary EU experts and/or short-term training teams can be requested on a temporary basis to address specific requests (Council of the EU, 2023a). It complements the European Peace Facility (EPF) assistance measures (EEAS, 2025k), including the provision of support for the Beninese Armed Forces[4] and the Ghanian Armed Forces.[5]

The Initiative implements civilian and military projects aimed at enhancing resilience in vulnerable areas of the northern regions of these countries, such as capacity-building of the national security and defence forces; pre-deployment operational training of their security and defence forces; enhancement of security and defence forces in technical areas; promotion of the rule of law and good governance in the security sector; and support trust building between civil society and security and defence forces. The initiative has several key components as follows:

(a) Civilian Component: This focuses on strengthening the capacities of local law enforcement agencies, coast guards, and judicial systems. It includes training, advisory support, and equipment provision to enhance the rule of law and civilian-military trust.
(b) Military Component: This entails the deployment of naval assets and personnel to conduct joint exercises, patrols, and capacity-building activities with regional navies. It also aims to enhance the awareness of the participants in their programmes.
(c) Coordination and Cooperation: The EUSDI emphasises coordination with regional organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC), as well as with individual coastal states. This ensures a collaborative and effective approach to security.

The EUSDI is designed to be a flexible and adaptable instrument as well as to complement other EU initiatives and programmes in the Gulf of Guinea, such as development aid and humanitarian assistance. Its targeted and small-scale engagements also promote local ownership while ensuring its operational sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

[4] Council of the EU adopted assistance measures under the EPF to provide the **Beninese Armed Forces** (*Forces Armées Béninoises*) with military equipment to meet their operational requirements and pre-deployment training needs on 21 May 2024 (Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/1455), 13 June 2024 (Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/1415), and 15 July 2024 (Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/1980), respectively.

[5] Council of the EU adopted assistance measures under the EPF to provide the Ghana Armed Forces with non-lethal equipment to enhance their capabilities on 10 July 2023 (Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/1440), on 27 November 2023 (Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/2682), and on 4 April 2024 (Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/1063).

Activities of the EUSDI in the Gulf of Guinea

This section overviews the primary activities of the EUSDI in Benin, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire, respectively. Regarding Togo, no public reports of EUSDI activities have been released by the EEAS at the time of the writing this article.

The Case of Benin

In Benin, the EU team trained ninety officers of five units of the Republican Police to deal with Conter-Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED) in Kandi, Parakou, Dassa and Cotonou in May 2024. In Cotonou, Dassa and Parakou, twenty-two members of the operational command of Mobile Intervention Companies (CMI) took part in scenario-based training exercises organised by the EU team (EEAS, 2024a). A mobile training team (Mobile Training Team/MTT), made up of five military trainers from the Engineer Battalion of the Spanish Army's XVI "Canarias" Brigade, also gave a course on Countering Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IEDs) in Porto Novo in January and February 2025 (EEAS, 2025h). Additionally, a specialised team of five EU drone experts from the European Gendarmerie Force arrived in Benin in March 2025 to train the Republican Police on the use of drones to support police work (EEAS, 2025b). In December 2025, four-week training programme, which was the 25th course provided by the military pillar of the initiative, took place in Cotonou, marked at every step by close cooperation between instructors, trainees, and visiting leadership (EEAS, 2025i).

The Case of Ghana

In Ghana, a team of three EU experts visited Ghanaian border posts near Burkina Faso in May 2024 to develop support measures for the Ghana Immigration Service, the Ghana Police Service, and the Ministry of National Security. They prepared initial proposals for forensic training for the Immigration Service (EEAS, 2024a). The Initiative conducted a pilot course on "Counter Terrorism and Intervention Training" in January 2025 in Ghana, where twenty instructors from the Immigration Tactical Training School (ITTS) were trained in advanced counterterrorism and intervention tactics (EEAS, 2025g). The ITTS trained members of the Ghana Immigration Service for their deployment in northern Ghana in the fight against terrorism. A team from the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) also made a pivotal visit to Ghana in April 2025 as part of the EU's commitment to advancing security and defence partnerships in West Africa (EEAS, 2025j). The Netherlands has contributed with planning expertise in the Brussels based headquarters and provided StratCom training, followed by training on integrating gender perspectives into military operation in September 2025 (EEAS, 2025d). In December, the EU announced that they delivered the first edition of the *Ammunition and Depot Management* Module Training Team through the EUSDI in close cooperation with Ghanaian authorities, with the focus on safety, accountability, and sustainability (EEAS, 2025c).

The Case of Côte d'Ivoire

In Côte d'Ivoire, hundreds of police officers, including nine women, participated in security and first aid courses provided by the EU at the Police School in Korhogo in 2024. The training focused on two topics: (1) Sensitization for Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and (2) First aid in a hostile environment. By the end of the training cycle, over 300 police officers will have taken part in the training, with later sessions planned for the Ivorian Gendarmerie (EEAS, 2024b). In addition, an educational initiative unfolded at Camp Militaire de Zambakro, near Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, where the EU Delegation and the EU Military Advisor delivered a specialized lecture, which aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of EU Defence and the CSDP, with a particular focus on the EU's Strategic Compass and its implications for the Government of Côte d'Ivoire (EEAS, 2025e). In September 2025, a high-level training took place in Abidjan with the focus on strategic communication and national stability for the Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FACI) (EEAS, 2025f).

Implications

A core tenet of the EUSDI is to enhance the security situation of the region by supporting capacity building and training for national security and defence forces as well as by fostering the rule of law and governance in the security sector. The examples demonstrated in the previous section exemplify the targeted intervention model, which enables a swift and precise response to a specific threat or request. The following three key implications for the future UN peacekeeping operations can be drawn out from the preceding section.

(a) Agility and adaptability: The EUSDI leverages pre-existing EU delegations in the countries. This allows for rapid tasking, deployment, and scaling of presence based on a request from the local authorities as well as real-time intelligence.

(b) Targeted and specialised interventions: The EUSDI's relatively limited yet highly specialised areas of focus demonstrate how a small but highly capable footprint can address acute security challenges within a defined operational domain.

(c) Flexibility and cost-effectiveness: The EUSDI operates through a flexible coordination, with local authorities based on their requests, with the support from the EEAS HQ and EU member states, depending on their demands in terms of human resources and logistics. This allows the EUSDI to implement programmes effectively despite its relatively limited human and financial resources.

Considering the expansion of the mandates of UN peacekeeping operations and the resulting potential mismatch between the actual priorities on the ground and the mandates that UN missions may face, the EUSDI presents a compelling exemplar through its targeted and specialised engagements. The C-IED training in Benin and the Counter Terrorism and Intervention Training in Ghana, for example, exemplified these

limited yet highly specialised support. The EUSDI's capacity to dispatch mobile training teams or specialised drone experts, as evidenced in Benin and Ghana, underscores a modest yet effective blueprint for faster international security assistance.

There is criticism of the EU's inability to design a clear strategy for its CSDP missions in Africa and to effectively counter the growing anti-Western sentiment on the continent, which is often fuelled by competing foreign actors (Vogel & Horváth, 2025). The EUSDI model can offer a critical view on the possibility of overcoming the failures of the withdrawals of several EU CSDP missions in the Sahel region, as the model respects the ownership of African countries while carefully managing the mission's visibility in order not to be seen as a foreign 'colonial' actor intervening in their countries/regions (Pye, 2024, pp. 488–489). The EUSDI model shows the possibility of the EU remaining a competent security actor without the political friction of large-scale military substitution in Africa, although its application could be limited to countries that already have well-established democratic and rule-of-law systems and relatively high-level security environments.

The discussion on the EUSDI can also be incorporated into the discussion of ad hoc coalitions (ADCs), in which there is growing recognition that flexibility is a key asset, as it could help avoid deadlock in highly institutionalized settings of traditional international organizations (Reykers et al., 2023, p. 738).

Conclusion

As this article discussed, the EUSDI represents a significant development in its approach to regional security. Whilst the scales and political contexts differ, the Initiative offers concrete lessons in operational flexibility and targeted capacity building that, if strategically adapted, could significantly inform the UN's ongoing efforts to redefine its peacekeeping footprint in an increasingly complex global security landscape. The EUSDI model, primarily focused on training and capacity building at the request of host nations, could also navigate a lower political threshold for the establishment of a mission and operation at the Security Council.

However, the EUSDI is so small that it cannot be directly compared to UN peacekeeping operations, which typically deploy larger numbers of personnel in more politically complex and charged environments. Therefore, it would be more productive to focus on the key implications this article highlights for discussions of future UN peacekeeping models rather than treating the EUSDI as a potential alternative to UN peacekeeping operations.

As UN Peacekeeping missions and operations, including large-scale, multidimensional missions, face increasing legitimacy crises and host-state resistance (Norberg, Amstutz, Bardalai, Mood and Phillips, 2025; Street, Watson and Hartmann, 2025), the EUSDI model offers a compelling alternative characterised by hybridity, modularity, and regional ownership. Although the EUSDI does not aim to replace larger peacekeeping missions and operations, its unique model could serve as a potential reference point for the strategy in the post-peacekeeping operations setting.

This operational shift aligns with the transition toward modular and more flexible CSDP missions envisioned in the EU's Strategic Compass for Security and Defence to allow for tailored support to regional partners as well as in the further refined in the 2023 Civilian CSDP Compact (Council of the EU, 2022; EU, 2023). By deploying small teams of civilian and military advisors rather than medium- to large-sized battalions, the EU minimises the mission's interventionist aspect while providing cost-effective technical assistance. This shift is also able to address the capability-expectation gap by focusing on the specific training and equipment needs of the four coastal states.

One of the most significant contributions of the EUSDI model to the post-UN peacekeeping operation debate is its emphasis on reciprocal partnership. The EUSDI is built upon tailored support based on the needs identified and formulated by the four countries themselves (Council of the EU, 2023d). By prioritising regional ownership and focusing on the capacity building of local authorities through a modular framework, the EUSDI operationalises a sustainable, state-led security model suited to the evolving challenges of the post-UN peacekeeping era.

Another pivotal element in the EUSDI is its integration with the European Peace Facility (EPF). Established in 2021 as an off-budget instrument, the EPF allows the EU to bypass previous legal restrictions under Article 41(2) TEU, which prohibited the use of the EU budget for operations having military or defence implications (European Union, 2016). By funding the provision of defence-related equipment, including non-lethal equipment, as well as training, alongside the EUSDI's personnel deployment, the EU can both train local forces and equip them to secure their own territory materially.

The EUSDI Gulf of Guinea demonstrates that the future of international security assistance may not lie in the perpetuation of large- to medium-scale missions and operations, but in the deployment of flexible, nimble, and material-intensive initiatives. By prioritising modularity and bridging the gap between training and equipment, the EUSDI stands as a critical case study in how the EU is operationalising a sustainable security model that respects sovereign agency while effectively addressing transnational threats. This model offers a viable path forward for the international community as it seeks to redefine peace operations in an increasingly fragmented global security landscape.

As the literature shows, UN troops can reduce battlefield violence more effectively alongside a non-UN partner, and non-UN multinational missions also need UN peacekeeping operations to curb violence successfully (Schumann & Bara, 2023). UN peace operations have increasingly partnered with regional multinational organisations. In this context, the EUSDI model, as analysed in this article, also provides practical insights for multinational peacekeeping operations led by other regional or international organisations.

Disclaimers

The views, opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not reflect the views of the organisation I belong to.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding Statement

No funding was received for conducting this study.

Notes on Contributor

Yusaku is a Second Secretary at the Embassy of Japan in Ukraine. In his previous posts, Yusaku served at the UN Liaison Office for Peace and Security (UNLOPS), where he worked extensively on peace and security-related files, including the EU CSDP/CSFP and UN PKO/SPM. Prior to that, he worked at the Mission of Japan to the EU in Brussels. Yusaku holds a PhD from the University of Tokyo (Japan).

References

Bergmann, J. (July 18, 2023). *Heading in the Wrong Direction? Rethinking the EU's Approach to Peace and Security in Africa. Megatrends spotlight 26*. Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP). Retrieved April 1, 2026 from https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/mta-spotlight-26-the-eu-should-rethink-its-approach-to-african-peace-and-security

Blair, R. A., Di Salvatore, J., & Smidt, H. M. (2022). When Do UN Peacekeeping Operations Implement Their Mandates? *American Journal of Political Science*, *66*(3), 664-680. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12650

Blanton, S. L., Peksen, D., & Blanton, R. (2023). The Impact of Peacekeeping Missions on Women's Empowerment. *Political Research Quarterly*, *76*(4), 1872-1887. https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129231181594

Bove, V., Salvatore, J. D., & Elia, L. (2022). UN Peacekeeping and Households' Well-Being in Civil Wars. *American Journal of Political Science*, *66*(2), 402-417. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12644

Campbell, S. P., & Di Salvatore, J. (2024). Keeping or Building Peace? UN Peace Operations beyond the Security Dilemma. *American Journal of Political Science*, *68*(3), 907-926. https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3987449

CCAS, ECOWAS, & GGC. (2013). *Code of Conduct Concerning the Repression of Piracy, Armed Robbery Against Ships, and Illicit Maritime Activity in West and Central Africa*. Retrieved April 1, 2026 from https://wwwcdn.imo.org/localresources/en/OurWork/Security/Documents/code_of_conduct%20signed%20from%20ECOWAS%20site.pdf

Council of the Eropean Union. (2023). *Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/1599 of 3 August 2023 on a European Union Security and Defence Initiative in support of West African countries of the Gulf of Guinea*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2023/1599/oj/eng

Council of the European Union. (2014). *EU Strategy on the Gulf of Guinea*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/141582.pdf

Council of the European Union. (2015). *Council Conclusions on the Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015–2020. 7168/15 of 16 March 2015*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21521/st07168en15.pdf

Council of the European Union. (2022). *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence - For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security. 7371/22 of 21 March 2022*. Retrieved March 9, 2026 from https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7371-2022-INIT/en/pdf

Council of the European Union. (2023a). *Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/1599 of 3 August 2023 on an assistance measure under the European Peace Facility to support the West African countries of the Gulf of Guinea. Official Journal of the European Union*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2023/1599/oj/eng

Council of the European Union. (2023b). *Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/2066 of 25 September 2023 amending Decision (CFSP) 2023/1599 on a European Union Security and Defence Initiative in support of West African countries of the Gulf of Guinea*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2023/2066/oj/eng

Council of the European Union. (2023c). *Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/2786 of 11 December 2023 on launching the European Union Security and Defence Initiative in support of West African countries of the Gulf of Guinea*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2023/2786/oj

de Coning, C. (2019). Africa and UN Peace Operations: Implications for the Future Role of Regional Organisations. In C. de Coning & M. Peter (Eds.), *United Nations Peace Operations in a Changing Global Order* (pp. 213-229). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-99106-1_11

de Coning, C. (2021). The future of UN peace operations: Principled adaptation through phases of contraction, moderation, and renewal. *Contemporary Security Policy*, *42*(2), 211-224. https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2021.1894021

Doyle, K. (2022). *EU Peacebuilding Missions: Developing Security in Post-conflict Nations*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-18769-8

European Council/Council of the European Union. (2023). *Gulf of Guinea: Council launches an EU Security and Defence Initiative*. Retrieved March 9, 2026 from

https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/12/11/gulf-of-guinea-council-launches-an-eu-security-and-defence-initiative/

European External Action Service (EEAS). (2021). *EU Maritime Security Factsheet: The Gulf of Guinea*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-maritime-security-factsheet-gulf-guinea_en

European External Action Service (EEAS). (2024a). *Gulf of Guinea SDI civilian pillar delivers its first support to Benin and Ghana*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/gulf-guinea-sdi-civilian-pillar-delivers-its-first-support-benin-and-ghana_en?s=410355

European External Action Service (EEAS). (2024b). *Hundreds of police officers receive EUSDI training in Côte d'Ivoire*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/hundreds-police-officers-receive-eusdi-training-côte-d'ivoire_en?s=410355

European External Action Service (EEAS). (2025a). *Benin - Drone training for the Police*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eu-sdi-gulf-guinea/benin-drone-training-police_en?s=410355

European External Action Service (EEAS). (2025b). *Building safety for the future*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/building-safety-future_en

European External Action Service (EEAS). (2025c). *EU Deepens Commitment to Security in the Gulf of Guinea*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-deepens-commitment-security-gulf-guinea_en

European External Action Service (EEAS). (2025d). *EU guest speaker at Course d'Etudes Superieures de Defense Cote d'Ivoire*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-guest-speaker-course-d'etudes-superieures-de-defense-cote-divoire_en?s=410355

European External Action Service (EEAS). (2025e). *EU Missions and Operations*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-missions-and-operations_en

European External Action Service (EEAS). (2025f). *EU Strengthens Partnership with Côte d'Ivoire in the Gulf of Guinea*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-strengthens-partnership-côte-d'ivoire-gulf-guinea_en

European External Action Service (EEAS). (2025g). *EUSDI GoG conduct a pilot course on "Counter Terrorism and Intervention Training*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eusdi-gog-conduct-pilot-course-"counter-terrorism-and-intervention-training"_en

European External Action Service (EEAS). (2025h). *Learning to overcome Improvised Explosive Devices in Benin*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/learning-overcome-improvised-explosive-devices-benin_en?s=410355

European External Action Service (EEAS). (2025i). *Partnership in Training*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/partnership-training_en

European External Action Service (EEAS). (2025j). *Strengthening Ties: MPCC Team Visits Ghana to Advance EU Security and Defence Initiative*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strengthening-ties-mpcc-team-visits-ghana-advance-eu-security-and-defence-initiative_en?s=410355

European External Action Service (EEAS). (2025k). *About the European Union Security and Defence Initiative in the Gulf of Guinea*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eu-sdi-gulf-guinea/about-european-union-security-and-defence-initiative-gulf-guinea_en?s=410355

European Union. (2016). *Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union, OJ C 202*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12016M/TXT

European Union. (2023). *Civilian CSDP Compact: Towards more effective civilian missions*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2023/Civilian%20CSDP%20Compact%20Report_22.05.2023.pdf

Gizelis, T.-I., & Cao, X. (2021). A security dividend: Peacekeeping and maternal health outcomes and access. *Journal of Peace Research*, *58*(2), 263-278. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343320917198

Hegre, H., Hultman, L., & Nygård, H. M. (2018). Evaluating the Conflict-Reducing Effect of UN Peacekeeping Operations. *The Journal of Politics*, *81*(1), 215-232. https://doi.org/10.1086/700203

Hultman, L., Kathman, J. D., & Shannon, M. (2019). *Peacekeeping in the midst of war*. Oxford University Press.

Jensen, L. (2020). *Foreign Direct Investment and Growth in Fragile and Conflict Affected Countries. UNDP*. Retrieved February 25, 2026 from https://www.undp.org/library/dfs-foreign-direct-investment-and-growth-fragile-and-conflict-affected-countries

Kathman, J. D., Benson, M., & Diehl, P. F. (2023). Punching before the Bell Rings: United Nations Signaling and Pre-Deployment Violence in Civil Wars. *International Studies Quarterly*, *67*(3), sqad038. https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqad038

Keukeleire, S., & Delreux, T. (2022). *The Foreign Policy of the European Union (third edition)*. Bloomsbury.

Khonde, F. N., Katayanagi, M., & Mikami, S. (2025). Strategic Communication in Peacekeeping Operations: The Case of MONUSCO. *International Peacekeeping*, *32*(3), 387-413. https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2025.2451862

Kjeksrud, S. (2024). Finding the Utility of Force to Protect Civilians from Violence: Exploring Outcomes of United Nations Military Protection Operations in Africa (1999–2017). *Civil Wars*, *26*(1), 41-73. https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2023.2222058

Lacroix, J.-P. (2024). *Statement to the Security Council by Under-Secretary General for Peace Operations. Security Council Briefing*. Retrieved February 25, 2026 from https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/statement-to-security-council-under-secretary-general-peace-operations

Lacroix, J.-P. (2025). *Op-Ed: UN Peacekeeping is both a lifesaving tool and a smart investment*. Retrieved May 9, 2026 from https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/op-ed-un-peacekeeping-is-both-lifesaving-tool-and-smart-investment

Marangio, R. (2025). *Deep Waters: The Maritime Security Landscape in the Gulf of Guinea. The European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)*. Retrieved February 25, 2026 from https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-02/Brief_2024-22_Gulf%20of%20Guinea.pdf

Norberg, A. H., Amstutz, M., Bardalai, A. K., Mood, R., & Phillips, W. (2025). Taking UN Peace Operations to the Next Level: Strategic Revitalization and Reinforcement of UN Military and Civilian Observers. In J. Koops & M. Dal Dosso (Eds.), *Compendium of Short Issue Papers and Policy Recommendations for the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial 2025 in Berlin* (pp. 3-6). Global Alliance for Peace Operations.

Pushkina, D., Siewert, M. D., & Wolff, S. (2022). Mission (impossible? UN military peacekeeping operations in civil wars. *European Journal of International Relations*, *28*(1), 158-186. https://doi.org/10.1177/13540661211046602

Pye, K. (2024). From the "laboratory" to the "arena": the EU's quest for maturity and the instrumentalisation of conflict in Africa. *European Security*, *33*(3), 474-496. https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2024.2376617

Reeder, B. W., & Dicke, R. (2023). Peacekeeping Deployments, Intragroup Cohesion, and the Use of Sexual Violence by Armed Non-State Groups. *International Peacekeeping*, *30*(2), 230-258. https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2023.2196411

Reykers, Y., Karlsrud, J., Brosig, M., Hofmann, S. C., Maglia, C., & Rieker, P. (2023). Ad hoc coalitions in global governance: short-notice, task- and time-specific cooperation. *International Affairs*, *99*(2), 727-745. https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiac319

Rosas Duarte, G., & Souza, M. (2024). Illiberal Peacebuilding in UN Stabilization Peace Operations and Peace Agreements in the CAR, the DRC and Mali. *International Peacekeeping*, *31*(2), 157-185. https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2023.2300135

Schumann, M. P., & Bara, C. (2023). A New Era: Power in Partnership Peacekeeping. *International Studies Quarterly*, *67*(3), sqad037. https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqad037

Street, J., Watson, A., & Hartmann, K. (2025). Stick or Twist: Is Peace Enforcement part of the UN's Future? In J. Koops & M. Dal Dosso (Eds.), *Compendium of Short Issue Papers and Policy Recommendations for the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial 2025 in Berlin* (pp. 31-37). Global Alliance for Peace Operations.

Tardy, T. (2019). The European Union and UN Peace Operations: What Global–Regional Peace and Security Partnership? In C. de Coning & M. Peter (Eds.),

United Nations Peace Operations in a Changing Global Order (pp. 231-251). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-99106-1_12

United Nations. (2000). *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. A/55/305-S/2000/809.*

United Nations. (2015a). *Identical letters dated 17 June 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council. A/70/95-S/2015/446.*

United Nations. (2015b). *Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations on Uniting Our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnership and People. A/70/95–S/2015/446.*

United Nations. (2018). *Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations.*

United Nations. (2021). *A4P+: Priorities for 2021–2023.*

United Nations. (2023). *Our Common Agenda: Policy Brief 9 - A New Agenda for Peace. .*

United Nations. (2024). *Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations. A/RES/79/1.*

United Nations. (n.d.). *Past Peace Operations*. Retrieved March 7, 2026 from https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/past-peacekeeping-operations

Van Emmerik, C., & Albrecht, P. (2025). *The contending futures of UN peacekeeping. DIIS Working Paper, Vol. 2025 No. 01, 1–36. Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)*. Retrieved February 25, 2026 from https://pure.diis.dk/ws/portalfiles/portal/26730191/2025_-_PK_future_working_paper_.pdf

Vogel, D., & Horváth, K. (2025). Neo-colonialism, violence, and the EU's approach to peace operations in Africa. *Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies*, *5*(2), 44-71. https://doi.org/10.12700/jceeas.2025.5.2.420

Walter, B. F., Howard, L. M., & Fortna, V. P. (2021). The Extraordinary Relationship between Peacekeeping and Peace. *British Journal of Political Science*, *51*(4), 1705-1722. https://doi.org/10.1017/S000712342000023X

Wane, E.-G., Williams, P. D., & Kihara-Hunt, A. (2024). *The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities*. United Nations. Retrieved February 25, 2026 from https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/the_future_of_peacekeeping_new_models_and_related_capabilities_-_nov1.pdf

Yamashita, H. (2024). *Wither UN Peacekeeping? Structural Factors and New Directions [Kokurenheiwaizikatsudou (PKO): "Teitai" no kouzou to aratana houkousei no mosaku (in Japanese)*. Sasakawa Peace Foundation. Retrieved February 25, 2026 from https://www.spf.org/global-data/user200/PKO1.pdf

Sub-Saharan Africa and French National Security[1]

Christopher Griffin[2]

Abstract:

Is the African continent still a strategic priority for France? Most recent discussions about France in Africa focus on the closures of French bases on the continent starting in 2022 and continuing into 2025. The reductions in prepositioned forces in West and Central Africa represents a significant loss of operational capacity for the French Army to respond to crises in those regions. Despite these setbacks, sub-Saharan Africa remains a concern for the French Government but has become less of a priority over the last three years, particularly with the French preoccupation with the Ukraine War. This paper will look at how the French Government has situated sub-Saharan Africa in its global strategic thinking after the base reorganization. The French Government has reoriented much of its military assets toward a rearmament program aimed at preparing for a high-intensity conflict in Europe. The military commitment to Africa remains a part of French strategy, however, due to concerns about the security of the French population in the region, the continuing threat of terrorism, including for the littoral states, the perceived weakness of ECOWAS after the Niger coup d'état and the influence of other actors in the region. There is also substantial disagreement within the French Government about the future of military cooperation in Africa.

Keywords:

France in Africa; Military Cooperation; Terrorism in the Sahel; ECOWAS; Sahel Alliance; French Military Strategy; French Rearmament.

[1] DOI: https://10.12700/jceeas.2026.6.1.452

[2] Associate Professor/Maître de conférences in Political Science Université Catholique de l'Ouest, Nantes Campus, France; ORCID: 0000-0002-4530-5436; cgriffin@uco.fr.

Introduction

Since 2022, France has had a series of major setbacks in its military presence in sub-Saharan Africa. The French military has had to withdraw from its bases in Mali, Senegal and Chad, and undertake a reorganization of its military relations with Côte d'Ivoire and with Gabon. The French operation in Mali was viewed as a failure, even before its official end in 2022 (Guichoua 2020), so the decline in French military power in the region was not sudden and was already in progress prior to the main series of coups d'état. In other words, the series of coups d'état that started with Mali in 2020 likely accelerated a process of French military decline that was already at work due to events in Mali.

Recent research work on the subject tends to focus on the reasons for the French failure in Mali. Certain analysts argue that France's military approach in the Sahel backfired due to the lack of a political element (Bertrand et al., 2024), while others have pointed to the lack of a sufficient understanding of local domestic political imperatives in France's partners (Guichoua 2020). Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos (2025) has claimed that French authorities failed to learn from previous experience in the region, which ultimately led to disaster. The subsequent series of coups d'état has attracted some scholarly attention (Akinola & Makombe 2024), but the effects on the French military presence has been addressed to a much lesser degree. Ndongo Symba Sylla (2024), has attempted to situate the coups in a larger framework, however, that characterizes the phenomenon as a revolt against residual French imperialism, *la Françafrique*.

This article intends to contribute to the literature by going beyond the Mali experience to examine the more recent phenomenon of the French military reorganization in Africa in detail. The argument is that France is in fact reorganizing and redeploying but not undertaking a full withdrawal. The second contribution is an analysis of how this redeployment fits into overall French national strategy. What is the role of Sub-Saharan Africa in France's worldwide military strategy? What is fundamentally changing in French strategy in the region? In this sense, the article does not seek to cover the entire political, economic and cultural relationship between France and its former colonial empire but focuses in on the military strategic implications of recent events on the continent. It is not a study of *Françafrique*, but of the evolution of France's military presence.

The article will first examine the larger context of current French military strategy in examining the priorities set out in key national security documents published since the outset of the Ukraine War in 2022. Second, the base closures and the French reorganization of its African forces will be examined in detail in this context. Third, the operational consequences of this reorganization for France's capacities for military action in Africa will be assessed. Finally, France's cooperation and/or conflict with other actors in the region of military importance will be addressed to demonstrate that France may no longer be the most important or the strongest external actor in the region.

French National Strategy after 2022

President Macron stated on September 4, 2025, that there was a "coalition of volunteers" comprising 26 countries, who have "agreed to deploy a reassurance force to Ukraine…the day after a cease-fire or peace (Macron, September 2025)." This was just the latest statement of a French government and military turn back toward a conventional warfighting posture, which rapidly became evident after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

In France's National Strategic Review, published in late 2022, Macron stated in the introduction that the reorientation toward conventional warfare had already begun in 2017, and that by 2030, France needed to maintain "a role in the balance of power (Premier Ministre 2022, 3)." French military priorities were first to "reinforce our strategic autonomy," notably with credible conventional forces that were integrated with the nuclear deterrent. The second focus was on shoring up European alliances and NATO. The third priority was about ensuring the stability of neighboring regions (Premier Ministre 2022, 20-21). While not absent from French strategic analysis, as we will see below, intervention in crises abroad, and in Africa in particular, had fallen farther down the list of priorities than in the post-Cold War period.

Africa was third on a list of geographical priorities for 2030 in the 2022 document, following the security of metropolitan France, and the defense of Europe and the Mediterranean area. Prepositioned forces were assumed to be still in place in Africa as far out as 2030, with the capacity to maintain a large training mission in the Sahel region as well as normal limited intervention capacities (Premier Ministre 2022, 27). This was already ambitious, given the resources to be allocated to high-intensity conventional and nuclear capacities aimed at the defense of France. A renegotiation of treaties with African partners, however, was already on the table in 2022 (Premier Ministre 2022, 43).

The worry about a Russian threat to NATO was clear in France in 2022. Russian nuclear forces were the subject of several significant studies by French think tanks as early as 2018 (Maitre 2018). The mainstream French media picked up the issue in 2022, with descriptions of the Russian Sarmat missile as capable of destroying all of France in a single shot (Gazzane, 2025). This threat, repeated in a few sources, certainly focused French political and public attention on the Ukraine conflict. *Revue de Défense Nationale*, quickly refocused many of its publications around analyses of the Ukraine War, current and future alliances, and technological developments for future high-intensity conflicts.[3] Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa were not forgotten completely in the journal, however, as we will see below.

France's response to the Ukraine War has been to provide a large quantity of military equipment to the Ukrainian Government, in line with its NATO allies. In 2022 and

[3] A list of RDN issues and articles can be found at: https://shs.cairn.info/revue-defense-nationale?lang=fr&tab=numeros.

2023, France sent 420 million euros of equipment directly to Ukraine, and 900 million euros via Europe. Ukrainian soldiers were also allowed to train in France. French troops have not been deployed in Ukraine, but military assets were deployed in Romania, Estonia and Lithuania (Ministère des Armées 2024b). This large commitment by the French Army to Ukraine means that most other operational issues no longer have high priority. The French military budget also reflected both the commitment to Ukraine and the return to conventional warfare, as military spending was set to increase from 47.2 billion euros/year in 2024 to 67.4 billion euros/year in 2030 (Legifrance 2023, Article 4).

In February 2025 (Ministère des Armées 2025c), French General Rodolphe Hardy explained some of the lessons that the French Army had learned from the Ukraine War. He highlighted the importance of drones in the war, but at the same time, emphasized that the difficulty in gaining air superiority led to problems of vulnerability for ground forces on the battlefield. Being able to rely less on airpower would increase the relative importance of artillery, an arm which had been less visible in expeditionary operations over previous decades. France is also putting a great deal of importance on technological innovation for high-intensity conflict.

The Hamas attacks on Israel of October 7, 2023, and the subsequent war in Gaza also turned French attention away from other strategic issues. The priority after the attacks was to secure the French national territory and to also attempt to prevent what the French Government identified as a rise in antisemitism (Macron 2023). The French Navy also provided support ships for humanitarian aid for Gaza's hospitals during 2024 (Marine Nationale, January 2024). There is little to suggest, however, that France's military saw an immediate or significant terrorist threat stemming from the Middle East conflict. French officers instead looked to the war for lessons about future urban warfare, which corresponded with the new preparations for high-intensity conflict (Molinié 2023). When Iran and Israel went to war in 2025, France indicated early on that it could not intercept Iranian missile strikes from the Djibouti and Abu Dhabi bases (Barbarit 2025). Later in the conflict, however, the French Defense Minister admitted that France had shot down Iranian drones that threatened the airspace of the two French bases, without being more specific about French defensive measures (Masson 2025).

Terrorist threats remained a reality in France, and in 2024 there was worry about the possibility of an attack on the Olympic Games. This was particularly salient after the attacks on a Moscow shopping center by ISIS-K on March 22. Marc Hecker, of the French Institute for International Relations, said in an interview in January 2025 that the risk of terrorism in France was still real, with potential attacks regularly prevented (Mirkovic 2025). He argued that a few armed groups see France as in "a war against Islam," which makes it a special target. The fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban in 2021 and the Ukraine War marked a change, however, according to Hecker: "The fight against Islamist terrorism no longer appears as the main threat. The battle continues, but

with fewer resources." He also warned about the continuing shift of terrorist groups towards Africa.

At the time of the coup d'état in Niger in 2023, the immediate French strategic concern in West and Central Africa was the security of French citizens. French parliamentary reports, however, indicated in the aftermath that French intelligence services were surprised by the Nigerien coup d'état, as "the DGSE was entirely focused on the battle against terrorism (Assemblée Nationale 2023)." The terrorist threat was seen as increasing in West Africa, but there was no indication that it was seen as a potential problem for metropolitan France, but only for the countries in the Sahel and in West Africa. Terrorism as a larger, worldwide threat continued to be taken seriously, as President Macron stated in a speech on March 5, 2025, saying that "the terrorist threat is not weakening (Macron, March 2025).

In the same speech (Macron, March 2025), the French President called for the rearmament of France as a part of a larger European project to prepare for war. He indicated the problems in the relationship with the Trump Administration in the U.S., notably, at the time, the threat of tariffs. The implicit idea of the speech was that it was no longer possible to rely on the U.S. for military support, and that the Trump Administration made any U.S. commitment unpredictable. Europe and France had to begin to make up the difference, which translated into greater French defense spending. The Military Program Law for 2024-2030 (Légifrance 2023), which was approved in 2023, already highlighted the preference for preparing for high-intensity operations. Defense spending would increase by 3% each year between 2024 and 2030, from 47.2 billion euros in 2024 to 67.4 billion euros in 2030. The focus is on procurement and improvement of heavy weaponry in the French arsenal.

In July 2025, France produced a new National Strategy Review, which was nearly twice as long as the 2022 document. Interestingly, in the introduction, President Macron put the civil war in Sudan on the same level as the conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza and the war between Israel and Iran (Premier Ministre 2025, 3). The President still identified the main problem as Russia, however. The other countries seen to pose threats to France were Iran and China, in that order. There was particular concern about Chinese economic influence in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, as well as the U.S. focus on the Chinese threat. The American focus on China was linked to the unreliability of the transatlantic partnership in 2025 (Premier Ministre 2025, 13-14, 20). Another major issue is the "centrality of nuclear weapons" in the policy of the major powers, which is leading France to put deterrence at the head of its list of priorities (Premier Ministre 2025, 14). Africa is seen as having problems with terrorism, organized crime and regional conflict in the cases of the Congo and Sudan. The "renegotiation" of the French partnerships in West and Central Africa is clearly seen as negative in the document, as it opened the door for "strategic competitors" with an "anti-French" agenda and "predatory strategies (Premier Ministre 2025, 16-17)." The criticism here indicates that the conclusions of the Bockel Report in late 2024 were not universally accepted in the French Government, as we have already observed above.

Drones, missiles, and other new technologies were seen as making military intervention abroad more difficult in the years to come, which ties into the assessments of General Hardy mentioned above (Premier minister 2025, 29-30). African security does not appear until the sixth strategic objective (nuclear deterrence being the first), and even then, the operations are seen as being European led (Premier minister 2025, 58). The French Government stated that "France would recenter and deepen the cooperation with countries that were interested in the French offer (in particular in training, equipment and support for the development of [defense] industrial capacities (Premier minister 2025, 64)." The message was clear: if countries in Sub-Saharan Africa wanted to work with France, it was ready to do so, but only when asked.

It is clear that, at least on paper, Sub-Saharan Africa is not high on the list of French national security priorities. What is missing in more recent analyses is the fact that this is not a new way of thinking for the French Government. As early as 1972, when the French Government published the first Defense White Paper of the Fifth Republic, African security was relegated down the list of French national security priorities. First was the security of metropolitan France, second the European continent, and third the protection of the African partners (Ministère de la Défense Nationale 1972, Chapter 1). At the same time, France frequently intervened on the continent in the period following the publication of the document (Dumoulin 1997, Bat 2012). The operations in Chad have often been addressed most frequently, but France also intervened repeatedly in the Central African Republic, in Gabon, in Côte d'Ivoire, to take just a few examples. Thus, the relegation of Africa down the list of French military strategic priorities in printed national strategy did not necessarily reflect operational realities, a situation that would persist through to the present-day. The subsequent two White Papers in 1994 and in 2013 would also maintain Sub-Saharan Africa in the third place for French national security priorities. A significant difference in the 2013 text (Ministère de la Défense 2013, 53-56) is the attempt to enlarge the scope of France's African priorities to states outside of the Francophone network. In the 2008, White Paper, however, Sub-Saharan Africa was one of four critical zones, in a less hierarchical assessment of French strategy, and the Sahel was separated into another zone, an "arc of crisis" from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean (Ministère de la Défense 2008, 43-47).

There have also been attempts to reduce the French military presence in Africa in the past. One of the more notable attempts was the introduction of the *Renforcement des capacités africaines de maintien de la paix* (RECAMP) program in 1997. This was essentially to attempt to make security in Francophone Africa a multilateral affair, first in working with the European Union and subsequently with the African Union after 2002 (Griffin 2016, 901). President Nicolas Sarkozy in 2009 took this further in announcing a renegotiation of the defense agreements that France signed with its former colonies at independence (Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy 2009). As is clear today, this attempt to reduce the French military footprint in Africa was called into question with the beginning of operations in Mali in 2013 as well as the less prominent Operation Sangaris in the Central African Republic in that same year. The following discussion of

the French reorganization of its military presence in Africa should be seen in this context, in that previous French military reductions in Sub-Saharan Africa has not proved to be long-term, despite the region's relatively low importance in official French strategic documents.

The Reorganization of the French Military Presence in Sub-Saharan Africa

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, the French military has had a few setbacks in Africa since 2022. This accelerated in 2025 following the decisions of several African partners to terminate the French presence on their territories. Given the large deployments in the Sahel between 2013 and 2022, this represents a very significant reduction in French forces on the continent, but as we will see below, it is still a long way from a complete withdrawal.

On Thursday, July 17, 2025, the French military officially handed over its last military bases at Dakar to the Senegalese authorities. France had already withdrawn its remaining naval forces from Dakar in May 2024 (Groizeleau 2024). Senegal's President Bassirou Diomaye Faye announced on November 28, 2024, that he had "instructed the minister of the armed forces to develop a new doctrine for defense and security cooperation, which implies, among other things, the end to all foreign military presence in Senegal as of 2025 (Le Monde 2024a)." The French military withdrawal from the Dakar base was a significant setback for the French presence on the continent. The naval base had been designated a "*point d'appui*"[4] for the French Navy in the Atlantic as early as 1898 (Dramé 2007, p. 312). The French Colonial Ministry viewed Dakar as important in the immediate post-World War I period for the imperial port facilities network that encompassed at the time Diego-Suarez (Madagascar), Mers-el-Kébir (Algeria), Saigon and Fort-de-France (Martinique). It was seen as necessary in 1919 to "class the place [Dakar] as a naval base and to organize it along the same principles as the large bases in metropolitan France (Dramé 2007, p. 303)."

The Dakar base continued to be important after World War II. According to Mathieu Le Hunsec (2011, p. 45), it served as a site for maintenance and repair for French ships patrolling in the region. This in turn allowed for a continuous presence of the French Navy, even after decolonization. Dakar's naval and airbase was important for French military interventions on the continent as well, with units being deployed from that location in most cases. French amphibious units were deployed there after 1971. At the same time, the Senegalese government has never made a secret of its interest in reclaiming the territory from the French, as there were significant signals to that effect sent as early as 1970 (Le Hunsec 2011, pp. 48-49).

Another major historic French base closure occurred in 2025. The Chadian Government stated, also on November 28, 2024, that it was unilaterally ending the defense agreements with France (Laloupo 2024). The Chadian decision coincided with

[4] A useful translation of the term in English may be "support base," though it loses some of the sense of the interconnected nature of the port with the other strategic positions in the French Empire at the time.

that of Senegal, and as in Senegal, was not a new request, as the first call for full Chadian sovereignty over the three French bases dated back to 1964. French soldiers only partially withdrew from the country in the middle of the 1960s, however, and returned for major operations in 1968. Since 1975, however, there have been repeated requests for France to turn the bases back over to the Chadians (Laloupo 2024). All three bases, at Faya, Abéché and N'Djamena were concerned by the 2024 decision, and the last French troops left Chad on January 30, 2025 (France 24, 2025). President Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno stated that the defense agreements were "obsolete due to current political and geostrategic realities (France 24, 2025)."

The French withdrawal from Chad comes as something of a surprise, even when considering the other base closures in the region and the history of Chadian opposition to the French presence. Chad has often been referred to as the "aircraft carrier" for France in Africa, due to the capacity for French aircraft to intervene in neighboring theatres of operation from the bases in that country (Beillard 2025).[5] Like Dakar, this made the country a vital base, this time as a central hub for the deployment of French airpower on a regional basis. Chad was also France's most important ally in the initial stages of Operation Barkhane, the French stabilization mission that employed up to 5,000 French troops across the Sahel after 2014 (Griffin 2016, pp. 902-903). With Chad, France lost an important strategic position as well as a powerful regional military partner in January 2025.

Significant adjustments were also made to the base agreements in Côte d'Ivoire in 2025. President Alassane Ouattara stated on December 31, 2024, that the Ivorian Army's "modernization had been achieved" and that "Port Bouët would be ceded back to the Ivorian Armed Forces in January 2025 (Le Monde 2024b)." The timing of the announcement, which coincided with that of the presidents in Senegal and in Chad, was not a coincidence, and may also have to do with the presidential elections in October 2025, in which Ouattara won another term in office. The transfer of power was effective on February 20, later than had originally been announced. The base has been renamed "Camp militaire Ouattara-Thomas d'Acquin." France's Defense Minister Sébastien Lecornu was present at the handover ceremony (Courrier International 2025).

Unlike in Senegal and in Chad, the French Army did not withdraw completely from Côte d'Ivoire. According to the French Army Ministry, about 80 soldiers will remain in place[6] in what is being called a *Détachment de liason interarmées en République de Côte d'Ivoire* (Joint Forces Liaison Team in the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire) (DLIA-I). This unit will cooperate with Ivorian forces for training, joint exercises and possible joint operations. It can be reinforced as necessary. The main priorities are fighting terrorism, maritime security, dealing with migration and the theft of natural resources (Ministère des Armées 2025a). Côte d'Ivoire has not had to deal with major terrorist attacks coming from the Sahel in recent years, but some analysts suggest that the country may face problems soon (Tull 2024). The partial French deployment could potentially

[5] The term was also used for the Central African Republic base in the 1990s.
[6] In 2024, there were between 900 and 1000 French soldiers in Côte d'Ivoire.

support a large operation in the case of a major assault or significant attacks in the northern part of the country. A major training exercise at Bouaké in May 2025 was also aimed at improving interoperability between the French and Ivorian air forces for future operations (Ianni 2025, p. 83).

Gabon is the final piece of the puzzle for understanding the French base reorganization of the first half of 2025. Unlike in Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso, the coup d'état in Gabon in August 2023 did not lead to an anti-French backlash. The military authorities sought to avoid a situation in which French interests would be targeted (Molinié 2024). In November 2024, Jean-Marie Bockel, President Emmanuel Macron's special envoy to Africa, returned from a fact-finding mission to the continent with a report that recommended the reduction of French prepositioned forces in Africa from 2,300 to 600 soldiers (not counting Djibouti). Bockel's son, Lieutenant Pierre Bockel, was killed in a helicopter accident on operations in Mali in November 2019 (Lepiouff 2019). Bockel's report was drafted prior to the requests for the total withdrawal of French forces from Chad and Senegal. Bockel argued that the main strategic issues in Gabon were maritime security and forest preservation, which implicitly allowed for a reduction in French forces at the Libreville base (Assemblée Nationale 2024, 12).

"Camp de Gaulle" in Libreville has been rebranded as an "*Académie militaire*" with significant French force reductions. The emphasis has been put on joint training missions and the development of the regional military training school located on the base (Hivert 2024). As in Côte d'Ivoire, the French Forces in Gabon have become a *Détachement de liaison interarmées* (DLIA-G). There will ultimately be 200 French soldiers in Gabon, down from 350 in 2024, and 900 before the coup d'état, in what is mainly intended as a training mission. Two further new elements of the DLIA-G are the opening of a commando school for the equatorial forest region (Ministère des Armées 2025b) and a new Academy for the Protection of the Environment and Natural Resources (*l'Académie pour la protection de l'environnement et des ressources naturelles (APERN)*) (Ianni 2025, p. 83).

At the regional level, France has reorganized its forces into a single military command structure in the region, the *Commandement pour l'Afrique* (CPA). This command, formed in April 2024 and officially launched in January 2025, is directly attached to the French Chief of Staff (Etat-Major), but is under the authority of the diplomatic missions in the region (Ministère des Armées 2024a). This is intended to maintain close cooperation between the French Embassies in West and Central Africa and French military units. The command is in Paris, and its first commander was General Pascal Ianni.

General Ianni, in a 2025 article for France's primary defense journal, *Revue de Défense Nationale* (RDN), highlighted the role of the rise of anti-French sentiment in sub-Saharan Africa. He even claimed that there were efforts at "subversion," particularly online, that contributed to a fundamental mistrust of the "former colonial power," by the younger population (p. 78). Throughout his analysis of the situation, General Ianni

continued to insist on the importance of the increase in false information about the French presence in the region and the dangers that posed for the French Army (p. 79).

Ianni laid out four common priorities for cooperation between France and the countries of Central and West Africa in 2025:

1. Fighting terrorism
2. Eliminating illegal trafficking in drugs, weapons and people
3. Protecting the environment and natural resources
4. Responding to climate change (p. 79)

This is a significant reorientation from the earlier priorities of the French prepositioned forces system, which focused on defending partner states from external attack and internal unrest. A "lighter footprint" was seen as necessary for French forces in the region (p. 80).

In the space of three years, France lost access to the bases in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal and Chad, and has significantly reduced its presence in Côte d'Ivoire and in Gabon. The main French operational base on the continent, with 1,500 soldiers, is now Djibouti. The French government renewed its treaty for the use of that base with Djibouti's government in 2025 and pays 85 million euros/year for that privilege (Sénat 2025). The Djibouti base in turn is supported by the 700 soldiers present at the Abu Dhabi base. Despite this reduction, it remains a reorganization, and not a total withdrawal of French forces from the continent.

The Operational Consequences of the French Military Reorganization in Africa

The question is whether this reorganization presents a major barrier for French intervention in Africa and to what extent it was seen as a setback for France. Despite Bockel's report, which called for a significant rethink of French partnerships in sub-Saharan Africa, not all French politicians agreed with this approach. A French Senate report of January 2025 (Sénat 2025) argued that the French military reorganization on the continent was badly managed and negotiated. The report argued that "French prepositioned forces allowed for emergency interventions," notably in Mali in 2013, which used units in Chad, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire to stop the insurgent offensive. The same year saw the French intervention in the Central African Republic employ French forces from Gabon, Chad and Djibouti, and the operational headquarters was in Gabon. More recently, the evacuation of French and other foreign citizens from Sudan in Operation "Sagittaire" in 2023 also relied on prepositioned forces.

The same Senate report (2025) pointed to the fact that the French drawdown would limit the capacities for French soldiers to evacuate its citizens in the region, notably due to longer time needed for deployments from metropolitan France. The prepositioned forces system and the base infrastructure allowed for much more rapid military responses. The initial operations of the troops in place could buy time for metropolitan units to be deployed in the region. In 2025, the Senate claimed that there were 270,000 French citizens in Africa, and that their security had not been considered in the

renegotiation of the defense agreements. Finally, the Senate pointed to the competition with "new" actors on the continent, notably an increase in Chinese military cooperation with Gabon as well as the move by the United States to establish bases in West Africa. The report ends by arguing: "the French bases were perceived by other powers as occupying strategic positions. The reduction or closure of the bases risks being seen by France's competitors as a cry for help."

The closure or reduction of so many bases will result in a limitation of French expeditionary capacities. French airlift capacity remains limited, and the A400M transport aircraft has had a large share of problems. Janes reported in 2024 that Airbus said, "Risks remain on the qualification of technical capabilities and associated costs, on aircraft operational reliability, on cost reductions, and on securing overall volume as per the revised baseline (Jennings 2024)." The future of French military air transport remains uncertain, and recent evacuation operations in Sudan and Niger put a great deal of pressure on the existing fleet (Lagneau 2023).

France's permanent naval presence in the Gulf of Guinea will also potentially be called into question due to the loss of the Senegal base. France maintained naval forces in the area throughout the period after decolonization (Le Hunsec 2011, pp. 69, 92, 114, 131). In 1990, France established Operation Corymbe, which was designed to deal with possible crises in the region and to maintain a permanent naval presence. A definition of Corymbe's mission in 2002 reads:

> "*Similar to prepositioned forces, it was a mission to have a combat ship present off the African coast, notably in international waters off the Gulf of Guinea. The mission was to show that France maintained an interest in the Gulf countries, and to be able to support all necessary operations in the zone, notably for rescue or for the evacuation of our citizens*" (Assemblée Nationale 2002, cited in Le Hunsec 2011, pp. 193-194.

The Yaoundé naval agreement in 2013, which created the "Yaoundé Architecture" also allowed for cooperation between the states in the area with French support for operations and naval exercises (Marine nationale 2024). For the moment, there are no public indications that Corymbe or that the cooperative structures based on the Yaoundé Architecture are endangered by the base closures. It is clear, however, that the French Navy will have a much more difficult time maintaining the continuous French naval presence without the facilities available at Dakar.

The closing of French bases will almost certainly limit the capacity for military intervention in Sub-Saharan Africa over at least the medium term. The question is, however, how much of an impact this setback will have on overall French global strategy and national security? President Macron's Special Military Advisor (*Chef d'Etat-Major Particulier* – CEMP) from 2017 to 2020, Admiral Bernard Rogel, wrote in his memoirs that the French military after the Cold War focused more on expeditionary operations, in Afghanistan and Africa. This was seen as way by the service chiefs not

only to respond to crises but also to maintain spending on defense (Rogel 2025, 124-125). Previous experience, as detailed in the sections above, have shown that even when France relegated Sub-Saharan Africa to a lower level of strategic priorities and attempted to drawdown forces, the interventions continued. It will be more difficult for France to intervene quickly in crises in the region, but the 2013 operations indicate that when France claims that it is reducing its military footprint in Africa, that this can be reversed quickly, despite the operational obstacles involved.

French Cooperation and Conflict with New (and Old) Actors in Sub-Saharan Africa

As mentioned above, the French Government and military have tried to work with regional organizations for African security since the RECAMP program in the late 1990s. A more recent initiative from 2014, the G5 Sahel, which was intended to create a joint force between Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso. The joint force that was created in 2017 became ineffective in 2022 and 2023 after the withdrawal of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso from the organization (Daoura and Salia 2026). The subsequent creation of the Alliance of Sahel States (*Alliance des Etats du Sahel* – AES) by those three states had significant effects on French efforts to undertake multilateral security cooperation in the region. This in turn also affected the capacities of ECOWAS to deal with security in the region.

Given the problems arising from the withdrawal of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso from ECOWAS in early 2025 in favor of the newly created AES, it is important to briefly look at the role of that organization in French strategy. There is no mention of the regional organizations in Africa in the French national security documents of 2022 and 2025. France has close relations with ECOWAS, however, and the appointment of France's ambassador to Nigeria in 2021 was also approved by the organization (Ambassade de France au Nigeria 2021).

Could ECOWAS "replace" the French military in the region? The withdrawal of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso from ECOWAS at the beginning of 2025 was seen as a major setback for the organization. Colonel Aboagye (2025) in Amani Africa has written that the AES "signals a shift toward fluid, issue-based regional cooperation rather than strictly geographical arrangements." The AES was created as a collective defense organization, after unrealized threats by ECOWAS to intervene after the Niger coup d'état (Bagayoko 2025). France openly supported the ECOWAS military option in Niger (Chauveau 2024). At the same time, when the operation did not occur, France did not attempt to intervene on its own. Any potential expectation that ECOWAS could replace French intervention, at least in the Niger case, turned out not to be possible.

In early December 2025, the situation changed again regarding ECOWAS and France in West Africa. An attempt at a coup d'état in Benin was repressed not only by Benin's armed forces, but also by an intervention by ECOWAS, which included air strikes by the Nigerian Air Force. Nigeria also sent ground troops to help stop the coup d'état, in

Nigeria's first intervention abroad under ECOWAS since 2017 (Dzirutwe 2025). France was also involved in the effort to stop the coup leaders, as Paris said that President Patrice Talon specifically asked for French help. That French aid included "surveillance, observation and logistical backing to Benin's armed forces ("France backs Benin" 2025)." This was a clear indication that France has not ruled out the possibility of military intervention in West Africa, even if French troops were not deployed. The coup attempt comes as well in a context of increased JNIM attacks in northern Benin (Nsaibia 2025), which may have influenced the French Government to back the intervention. It remains to be seen if France will concentrate more on military cooperation with ECOWAS, and notably Nigeria, after the apparent success of the Benin operation.

Can ECOWAS and the Sahel Alliance fill the security vacuum in the region by working together. Chatham House analyst Romane Dideberg (2025) has pointed out that there are possibilities on that front. She stated in December 2025 that "ECOWAS and the AES already appear to be edging towards an understanding on some form of open framework for the free-flowing trade, travel and migration that are fundamental to West African life." The question remains to what extent this rapprochement between the two organizations is in the French interest. The AES has been openly hostile to France, with its states even accusing France of sponsoring terrorism in the region (Omar 2024). Thus, France may be less inclined to support ECOWAS if it is working in conjunction with the AES. At the same time, the alternative to the regional organizations has already been clear, with the intervention of other major powers in the region, notably Russia.

The replacement of Wagner troops in the Sahel region by the "Africa Corps," which has much closer links to Moscow, was seen as a major concern for security in West Africa. More recent research has shown, however, that Africa Corps is increasingly seen in a negative light by public opinion in the region (Africa Defense Forum, 2025). Africa Corps has not distinguished itself on the battlefield either, as in August 2025, JNIM successfully ambushed one of their units near Ténenkou in Mali (Maurice 2025). The battlefield losses, which were already evident with the Wagner defeat in Tinzinouaten in 2024, calls into question some of the concerns about growing Russian influence in the Sahel. If Russian forces cannot hold off the insurgent groups in the area as promised, the states in the Sahel may need to look elsewhere for help. The summer 2025 issue of *Revue de défense nationale* contains two articles about the Russian military influence in the region (Quideller 2025 and De Jong 2025). It is clear, however, that the local actors have seen Russian paramilitary groups as a viable alternative to French intervention in the region in recent years.

Other external actors continue to attract attention from France. One does not find any official indications that China is seen as a military threat to French interests in Africa, but there is considerable interest in Chinese economic power. The Chinese-African Summit in 2024 was seen as a strategic step forward for China by the French Government in consolidating its partnerships on the continent (Ministère de l'Economie

2024). Given the trepidations about China in the French National Strategic Review in 2025, this is surely a closely watched issue.

The United Arab Emirates is viewed as a strategic partner by France (Ministère de l'Economie 2025), and the issue of UAE involvement in Africa, including in conflicts, seems to be less of a strategic concern. The French base in Abu Dhabi is a strategic interest for France, and French economic interests in the Middle East are also important in this case. The United States and other countries are more worried about the increasing influence of the UAE in Africa (Hochet-Bodin and Brachet 2024).

The U.S. is also still present in West Africa, as mentioned above. The Trump administration largely cut off humanitarian aid but promised more investments and to continue to station American military force in Côte d'Ivoire (Sylvestre-Trainer and Vincent 2025). The U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) has a training mission in Côte d'Ivoire, which was reinforced in 2024 (U.S. Embassy Côte d'Ivoire, 2024). U.S. Special Forces were moved to Côte d'Ivoire from Niger in 2024 following the coup d'état and the closing of the U.S. base there. In the same year, the U.S. also was working on improving airfields in Benin and sent Special Forces to Chad (Babb 2024). AFRICOM also carried out a limited bombing mission in Nigeria in 2025, but there was no real follow-up to the operation, as the Trump Administration turned its attention back to South America and the Middle East at the outset of 2026 (Obadare 2025).

France has never been alone in its operations in Africa, and recent years have shown that the states in the region have been looking for alternatives. As of writing, the Russian option has been the most prevalent, but there is considerable skepticism about Russian military efficiency on the battlefield. In a major crisis, no single actor has yet emerged that would be expected to intervene in force to stop a major terrorist group offensive as France did in Mali in 2013.

Conclusion

The role of Sub-Saharan Africa in French strategy since the end of the colonial period has been one in which there is a significant disconnect between printed strategy and national security documents, official declarations and the reality on the ground. National security documents in France tend to relegate Africa to a relatively low-level of importance. Official speeches since the 1990s first emphasized multilateral solutions to security problems as well as a will to reduce the French defense commitment to the region. France continued to intervene military throughout the period, coming back each time in force to deal with the immediate military problems of West and Central Africa.

As France is turning its attention back toward Europe and the Middle East, and rearming for conventional warfare, will this be the final break with the (post)colonial defensive system? France has retained the capacity to intervene on the continent with the DLIAs in Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon, which could be used as staging points for larger missions. The troops in Djibouti also remain available, so the French withdrawal is not total. A French military buildup on the continent in the event of an emergency or a change of government in France cannot be ruled out.

What would be a "best-case scenario" for France in its security relations with West Africa? Given official statements and documents in recent years, it would likely be an increasing ability of international organizations and African states to take the lead in African security over time. This would reduce the need for French involvement in the region and allow France to concentrate its limited resources in other theatres, while retaining a capacity to help in exceptional circumstances, such as a full invasion of an allied country. A "worst-case scenario" would be that same full invasion of an allied country, but this time successful, due to the inability of local and regional actors to stop it, and the operational incapacity or lack of political will in France to carry out an intervention.

Notes on Contributor

Christopher Griffin holds a PhD in international relations and is an Associate Professor/Maître de conférences in the Political Science Deparment of the Nantes Campus of the Université Catholique de l'Ouest. He is also the head of study abroad programs and the foreign language studies coordinator for the campus. Dr. Griffin has published extensively on counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, with articles on French strategy in the Algerian War and in the Sahel, on French involvement in the Nigerian Civil War, and articles on allied strategy in Afghanistan. He has published in Security Studies, Comparative Security Policy, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, Small Wars and Insurgencies, and French journals.

Conflict of Interest

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

References

Aboagye, F. B. (2025). *The Withdrawal of AES from ECOWAS: An opportunity for re-evaluating existing instruments for regional integration? Amani Africa*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://amaniafrica-et.org/the-withdrawal-of-aes-from-ecowas-an-opportunity-for-re-evaluating-existing-instruments-for-regional-integration/

Africa Defense Forum. (2025). *Selon un rapport, à mesure que la Russie se tourne vers l'Africa Corps, le déni plausible disparaît. Africa Defense Forum*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://adf-magazine.com/fr/2025/08/selon-un-rapport-a-mesure-que-la-russie-se-tourne-vers-lafrica-corps-le-deni-plausible-disparait/

Akinola, A., & Makombe, R. (2024). Rethinking the Resurgence of Military Coups in Africa. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, *60*(5), 2847-2863. https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096231224680

Ambassade de France au Nigeria. (2021). *L'ambassadrice de la France accréditée auprès de la CEDEAO*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://ng.ambafrance.org/L-ambassadrice-de-France-accreditee-aupres-de-la-CEDEAO

Assemblée Nationale. (2023). *Compte-rendu : Commission de la défense nationale et les forces armées. Audition, à huis clos, de M. Sylvain Itté, ambassadeur de la France au Niger, n°28, session ordinaire du 2023-2024*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/16/comptes-rendus/cion_def/l16cion_def2324028_compte-rendu

Assemblée Nationale. (2024). *Compte-rendu : Commission de la défense nationale et les forces armées. Audition ouverte à la presse, de M. Jean-Marie Bockel, envoyé personnel du Président de la République pour l'Afrique, n°19, session ordinaire du 2024-2025*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/17/comptes-rendus/cion_def/l17cion_def2425019_compte-rendu

Babb, C. (2024). *VOA Exclusive: US General explains US movements, partnerships in West Africa*. Voice of America. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.voanews.com/a/general-who-oversaw-us-military-withdrawal-from-niger-explains-us-movements-partnerships-in-west-africa/7791629.html

Bagayoko, N. (2025). *AES versus CEDEAO : vers la fragmentation de l'Afrique de l'Ouest*. Fondation Méditerranée d'Etudes Stratégiques. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://fmes-france.org/aes-versus-cedeao-vers-la-fragmentation-de-lafrique-de-louest/

Barbarit, S. (2025). *Conflit entre Israël et Iran : quel rôle peut jouer la France?* Public Sénat. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.publicsenat.fr/actualites/politique/conflit-entre-israel-et-liran-quel-role-peut-jouer-la-france

Bat, J.-P. (2012). *Le Syndrôme Foccart : la politique française en Afrique, du 1959 à nos jours*. Gallimard.

Beillard, M. (2025). *La France rétrocède sa dernière base armée au Tchad et au Sahel et tourne une page historique*. RMC. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://rmc.bfmtv.com/actualites/international/la-france-retrocede-sa-derniere-base-armee-au-tchad-et-au-sahel-et-tourne-une-page-historique_AV-202501310623.html#:~:text=Personnels%20et%20mat%C3%A9riels%20de%20combat,'op%C3%A9ration%20anti%2Djihadiste%20Barkhane.

Bertrand, E., Chafer, T., & Stoddard, E. (2024). (Dis)utilities of Force in a Postcolonial Context: Explaining the Strategic Failure of the French-Led Intervention in Mali. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, *18*(3), 286-305. https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2023.2278268

Chauveau, A. (2024). *Niger : soutien total de Paris à la Cédéao sur l'option militaire. Europe 1.* Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.europe1.fr/international/niger-soutien-total-de-paris-a-la-cedeao-sur-loption-militaire-4198202

Courrier International. (2025). *Tournant. La France rétrocède sa base militaire en Côte d'Ivoire, la dernière en Afrique de l'Ouest*. Courrier International. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.courrierinternational.com/article/tournant-la-france-retrocede-sa-base-militaire-en-cote-d-ivoire-la-derniere-en-afrique-de-l-ouest_228015

Daoura, L. S., & Salia, R. L. (2026). *Will the AES Unified Force succeed where the G5 Sahel failed?* ISS Africa. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://issafrica.org/iss-today/will-the-aes-unified-force-succeed-where-the-g5-sahel-failed

De Jong, P. (2025). L'Afrique, espace d'influence pour les Sociétés militaires privées (SMP) internationales. *Revue de défense nationale*(882), 63-69. https://doi.org/10.3917/rdna.882.0063

Dideburg, R. (2025). *West Africa needs regional solutions to combat the escalating Sahel security crisis*. Chatham House. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.chathamhouse.org/2025/12/west-africa-needs-regional-solutions-combat-escalating-sahel-security-crisis

Dramé, P. P. (2007). *L'impérialisme colonial français en Afrique : enjeux et impacts de la défense de l'AOF (1918-1940)*. L'Harmattan.

Dumoulin, A. (1997). *La France militaire en Afrique*. GRIP.

Dzirutwe, M., Corey-Boulet, R., & Adjoha, P. (December 9, 2025). *Nigerian airstrikes foil coup attempt, Benin says*. Reuters. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/nigeria-dispatches-jets-troops-quash-benin-coup-bid-2025-12-08/

France 24. (January 30, 2025). *L'armée française quitte le Tchad et rétrocède sa dernière base militaire au Sahel*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.france24.com/fr/afrique/20250130-arm%C3%A9e-fran%C3%A7aise-quitte-tchad-r%C3%A9troc%C3%A8de-derni%C3%A8re-base-militaire-sahel

France backs Benin after foiled coup as ECOWAS warns of rising instability. (December 9, 2025). RFI. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20251209-france-backs-benin-after-foiled-coup-as-ecowas-warns-of-rising-instability

Gazanne, H. (April 21, 2026). *Guerre en Ukraine : faut-il avoir peur du nouveau missile Sarmat testé par la Russie ?* Les Echos. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.lesechos.fr/monde/enjeux-internationaux/faut-il-avoir-peur-du-nouveau-missile-sarmat-teste-par-la-russie-1402053

Griffin, C. (2016). Operation Barkhane and Boko Haram: French Counterterrorism and Military Cooperation in the Sahel. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, *27*(5), 896-913. https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2016.1208283

Groizeleau, V. (May 30, 2024). *La Marine nationale rapatrie les moyens portuaires qui étaient stationnés au Sénégal*. Mer et Marine. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.meretmarine.com/fr/defense/la-marine-nationale-rapatrie-les-moyens-portuaires-qui-etaient-stationnes-au-senegal

Guichoua, Y. (2020). The bitter harvest of French interventionism in the Sahel. *International Affairs*, *96*(4), 895-911. https://doi.org/10.193/ia/iiaa094

Hochet-Bodin, N., & Eliott, B. (April 14, 2024). *Comment les Emirats arabes unis renforcent leur influence dans la Corne de l'Afrique*. Le Monde. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2024/04/14/comment-les-emirats-arabes-unis-renforcent-leur-influence-dans-la-corne-de-l-afrique_6227674_3212.html

Ianni, P. (2025). S'adapter aux réalités d'aujourd'hui et entretenir nos partenariats de demain : une nécessaire transformation du modèle d'engagement militaire français en Afrique centrale et de l'Ouest. *Revue Défense Nationale*, *7*(882), 78-84. https://doi.org/10.3917/rdna.882.0078

Jennings, G. (October 1, 2024). *Risks remain' for A400M as further development and retrofits progress, says Airbus*. Janes Insights. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.janes.com/osint-insights/defence-news/defence/risks-remain-for-a400m-as-further-development-and-retrofits-progress-says-airbus

Lagneau, L. (November 7, 2023). *Le nombre d'avions A400M destinés à l'armée de l'Air dépendra du « futur cargo médian tactique » européen*. Zone Militaire/OPEX 360. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.opex360.com/2023/11/07/le-nombre-davions-a400m-destines-a-larmee-de-lair-dependra-du-futur-cargo-median-tactique-europeen/

Laloupo, F. (2024). *Fin des accords militaires entre la France et le Tchad : facteurs et enjeux de la rupture*. IRIS. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.iris-france.org/fin-des-accords-militaires-entre-la-france-et-le-tchad-facteurs-et-enjeux-dune-rupture/

Le Hunsec, M. (2011). *La Marine nationale en Afrique depuis des indépendances : 50 ans de diplomatie navale dans le golfe de Guinée*. Service historique de la Défense.

Le Monde. (December 31, 2024a). *La base sera rétrocédée à la Côte d'Ivoire en janvier, annonce Alassane Ouattara*. Le Monde. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2024/12/31/la-base-de-l-armee-francaise-sera-retrocedee-a-la-cote-d-ivoire-en-janvier-annonce-alassane-ouattara_6476127_3212.html

Le Monde. (December 31, 2024b). *Le president sénégalais appelle à la « fin de toutes présences militaires étrangères dès 2025 » dans le pays*. Le Monde. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2024/12/31/le-president-senegalais-appelle-a-la-fin-de-toutes-presences-militaires-etrangeres-des-2025-dans-le-pays_6476126_3212.html

Légifrance. (2023). *LOI n°2023-703 du 1er août 2023 relative à la programmation militaire pour les années 2024 à 2030 et portant diverses dispositions intéressant la défense*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000047914986

Lepiouff, C. (November 26, 2011). *Mort de treize militaires au Mali : Pierre Bockel, fils de Jean-Marie Bockel, figure parmi les victimes*. Franceinfo. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://france3-regions.franceinfo.fr/grand-est/alsace/mort-treize-militaires-au-mali-pierre-bockel-fils-jean-marie-bockel-figure-parmi-victimes-1754757.html

Macron, E. (March 5, 2025). *Adresse aux Français*. Elysée. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2025/03/05/adresse-aux-francais-6

Macron, E. (October 12, 2023). *Adresse aux Français*. Elysée. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2023/10/12/adresse-aux-francais-3

Macron, E. (September 4, 2025). *Réunion de la coalition des volontaires. Press Conference*. Elysée. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2025/09/04/reunion-de-la-coalition-des-volontaires

Maitre, E. (2018). *Le Sarmat : vitrine du renouvellement des forces russes*. Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, Bulletin n°58. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://frstrategie.org/programmes/observatoire-de-la-dissuasion/sarmat-vitrine-renouvellement-forces-nucleaires-russes-2018

Marine Nationale. (January 21, 2024). *Proche-Orient : comment les armées françaises oeuvrent à la désecalade*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/proche-orient-comment-armees-francaises-oeuvrent-desescalade

Marine Nationale. (November 19, 2024). *Golfe de Guinée – Grand Africain NEMo, engagement multinational d'ampleur pour la sécurité maritime*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.defense.gouv.fr/marine/actualites/golfe-guinee-grand-african-nemo-engagement-multinational-dampleur-securite-maritime

Masson, A. (June 26, 2025). *Guerre Iran-Israël : des drones iraniens interceptés par l'armée française avant le cessez-le-feu*. Ouest France. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.ouest-france.fr/monde/iran/guerre-iran-israel-des-drones-iraniens-interceptes-par-larmee-francaise-avant-le-cessez-le-feu-8fc78300-528b-11f0-9d8f-210ccc004fd7

Maurice, G. (August 13, 2025). *A disaster.' Russia's Africa Corps suffers its first defeat in Mali*. France 24. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20250813-mali-russia-africa-corps-defeat

Ministère de l'Economie des Finances et de la Souvrainété Industrielle et Numérique. (2024). *A la Une d'Objectif Afrique : Sommet FOCAC 2024 : Un lévier économique stratégique pour la coopération sino-africaine*. Direction générale du Trésor. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/Articles/2024/11/18/a-la-une-d-objectif-afrique-sommet-focac-2024-un-levier-economique-strategique-pour-la-cooperation-sino-africaine

Ministère de l'Economie des Finances et de la Souvrainété Industrielle et Numérique. (2025). *France-Emirats : un partenariat en pleine expansion*. Directon Générale du Trésor. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/Articles/2025/02/28/france-emirats-un-partenariat-strategique-en-pleine-expansion

Directon Générale du Trésor. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/Articles/2025/02/28/france-emirats-un-partenariat-strategique-en-pleine-expansion

Ministère de la Défense nationale. (1994). *Livre blanc de la défense nationale 1994*. Union générale d'éditions. https://www.vie-publique.fr/files/rapport/pdf/944048700.pdf

Ministère de la Défense nationale. (2008). *Défense et sécurité nationale : le livre blanc*. Odile Jacob / La Documentation Française. https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/0000.pdf

Ministère de la Défense nationale. (2013). *Livre blanc : défense et sécurité nationale 2013*. Direction d'information légale et administrative. https://www.vie-publique.fr/files/rapport/pdf/134000257.pdf

Ministère de la Défénse nationale. (1972). *Politique de défense française. Livre blanc sur la défense nationale. Tome I.* S.n. https://mjp.univ-perp.fr/defense/lb1972.htm

Ministère des Armées. (2025a). *Détachement de liaison interarmées au Gabon (DLIA-G)*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/detachements-liaison-interarmees/detachement-liaison-interarmees-au-gabon-dlia-g

Ministère des Armées. (2025b). *Détachement de liaison interarmées en République de Côte d'Ivoire (DLIA-I)*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/afrique/detachements-liaison-interarmees/detachement-liaison-interarmees-republique-cote-divoire-dlia-i

Ministère des Armées. (2025c). *Quels enseignements pour l'armée de Terre après trois ans de guerre en Ukraine?* Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/quels-enseignements-larmee-terre-trois-ans-guerre-ukraine

Ministère des Armées. (June 6, 2024). *Soutien de la France à l'Ukraine : plus de 1 milliard d'euros supplémentaire en 2024*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.defense.gouv.fr/actualites/soutien-france-lukraine-plus-1-milliard-deuros-supplementaire-2024

Ministère des Armées. (June 12, 2024). *Arrêté portant création du commandement pour l'Afrique*. Bulletin Officiel des Armées. Édition Chronologique n° 31 du 12 avril 2024. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.defense.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/bulletin-officiel/Arrêté%20du%2010%20avril%202024%20portant%20création%20du%20commandement%20pour%20l%27Afrique%20modifé.pdf

Mirkovic, P. (2025). *La France est la cible d'un traitement spécifique dans le propagande djihadiste. Institut français des relations internationales.* Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.europe1.fr/international/israel-hamas-larmee-francaise-tire-des-enseignements-des-combats-4219738

Molinié, W. (2013). *Israël-Hamas : l'armée française tire des enseignements des combats. Europe 1.* Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.europe1.fr/international/israel-hamas-larmee-francaise-tire-des-enseignements-des-combats-4219738

Molinié, W. (2024). *Coup d'Etat au Gabon : pourquoi les armées françaises ne sont pas ciblées par les putschistes. Europe 1.* Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.europe1.fr/international/coup-detat-au-gabon-pourquoi-les-armees-francaises-ne-sont-pas-ciblees-par-les-putschistes-4201032

Montclos, M.-A. (2025). Lessons not learned: Ten years of French military intervention in the Sahel. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *63*(1), 51-62. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X25100906

Nsaibia, H. (2025). *New frontlines: Jihadist expansion is reshaping the Benin, Niger and Nigeria borderlands*. ACLED. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://acleddata.com/report/new-frontlines-jihadist-expansion-reshaping-benin-niger-and-nigeria-borderlands

Obadare, E. (2025). *The Dynamics Behind Trump's Decision to Bomb ISIS in Nigeria*. Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.cfr.org/articles/dynamics-behind-trumps-decision-bomb-isis-nigeria

Omar, S. (2024). *La France 'renseigne, forme, finance et arme les groupes terroristes au Sahel,' accuse le Niger.* Anadolu Ajansi. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.aa.com.tr/fr/afrique/la-france-renseigne-forme-finance-et-arme-des-groupes-terroristes-au-sahel-accuse-le-niger-/3346901

Premier Ministre. (2022). *Revue Nationale Stratégique*. Secrétariat général de la défense et de la sécurité nationale. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.sgdsn.gouv.fr/publications/revue-nationale-strategique-2022

Premier Ministre. (2025). *Revue Nationale Stratégique.* Secrétariat général de la défense et de la sécurité nationale. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.sgdsn.gouv.fr/publications/revue-nationale-strategique-2025

Quideller, T. (2025). La sous-traitance de la guerre au Sahel : le cas du Burkina Faso et du Mali. *Revue de défense nationale*(882), 36-42. https://doi.org/10.3917/rdna.882.0036

Rogel, B. (2025). *Un marin à l'Elysée : des sous-marins nucléaires au bureau du Président.* Tallandier.

Sakozy, M. N. (2009). *Déclaration de M. Nicolas Sarkozy, Président de la République, devant le Parlement de la République du Congo, sur les relations franco-africaines et franco-congolaises, à Brazzaville, lé 26 mars 2009*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.elysee.fr/nicolas-sarkozy/2009/03/26/declaration-de-m-nicolas-sarkozy-president-de-la-republique-devant-le-parlement-de-la-

republique-du-congo-sur-les-relations-franco-africaines-et-franco-congolaises-a-brazzaville-le-26-mars-2009

Sénat. (2025). *Voir l'Afrique dans tous ses Etats : D. Une réduction mal négociée du format des bases françaises en Afrique de l'Ouest. Rapport d'information n°288 (2024-2025)*. La Galaxie Sénat. Retrieved March10, 2026 from https://www.senat.fr/rap/r24-288/r24-2887.html

Sylla, N. S. (2024). The crisis of French imperialism: debating military coups in Africa. *Review of African Political Economy*, *51*, 181. https://doi.org/10.62191/ROAPE-2022-0033

Sylvestre-Trainer, & Vincent, E. (2025). *Le commerce, pas d'aide : en Côte d'Ivoire, les Etats-Unis de Trump mettent en œuvre leur nouvelle doctrine*. Le Monde. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2025/05/26/le-commerce-pas-l-aide-en-cote-d-ivoire-les-etats-unis-de-trump-mettent-en-uvre-leur-nouvelle-doctrine_6608652_3212.html

Tull, D. M. (2024). *Côté d'Ivoire's Containment of Jihadist Threats: A Provisional Success? Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik*. Deutsches Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.swp-berlin.org/publikation/mta-spotlight40-cote-divoires-containment-of-jihadist-threats

United States Embassy Côte d'Ivoire. (2024). *AFRICOM Strengthens Partnerships with Côte d'Ivoire*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://ci.usembassy.gov/africom-strengthens-partnerships-with-cote-divoire/

Geopolitics of Vaccines in a Multipolar World: A World-Systems Analysis of Dependency, Agency, and Health Sovereignty in Kenya[1]

Allan Okeyo[2], Garnet Okeyo[3]

Abstract:

This study employs Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory to critically examine the structural inequities embedded within the global administration of vaccines. It argues that the political economy of immunisation, particularly in Kenya, reflects and extends a Euro-American biomedical hegemony, reinforcing a core-periphery dynamic in which high-income countries control production, intellectual property, and regulatory standards while low- and middle-income nations remain dependent importers. Through a case study of Kenya's immunisation program, the paper illustrates how this dependency is institutionalised via mechanisms such as the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), donor-driven funding from entities like Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (Gavi) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the dominance of Northern NGOs in setting the global health agenda. However, the analysis also acknowledges the limitations of a rigid core-periphery model by highlighting the rising agency of semi-peripheral and peripheral states such as China, India, Cuba, and African Union initiatives like the Partnership for African Vaccine Manufacturing (PAVM), which are developing scientific autonomy and challenging entrenched hierarchies. The COVID-19 pandemic is presented not as the origin of these disparities, but as a revelatory moment that exposed existing vulnerabilities while simultaneously accelerating shifts toward a more multipolar global health order. The study concludes by calling for research and policies that support vaccine justice and recognise the growing capacity of the periphery to resist biomedical hegemony.

Keywords:

Vaccine Geopolitics; World-Systems Analysis; Multipolar World; Dependency; Agency; Health Sovereignty; Kenya.

[1] DOI: https://10.12700/jceeas.2026.6.1.451
[2] Doctoral Researcher, Doctoral School of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Eotvos Lorand University, Hungary; ORCID: 0009-0006-1405-3877; okeyoallan@student.elte.hu.
[3] Researcher, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Maseno University, Kenya; ORCID: 0009-0006-4017-5093; garnetokeyo@gmail.com.

1. Introduction

This paper contends that the global architecture of vaccines' administration reflects the expansion of the asymmetrical nature of the capitalist world-system (Smith, 2012). And, that the political economy of immunisation, specifically in Kenya is an extension of an established western biomedical hegemony. Accordingly, the unequal global relations of power in science are theorized in this analysis along the ideas of the core-periphery model, primarily associated with Immanuel Wallerstein. Thus, Wallerstein ideas are subsequently used to explain three themes in world politics which are global inequality, dependency and the diminishing of state sovereignty through unequal exchange (Wallerstein, 1974). In this context, the COVID-19 pandemic becomes a testament to these pre-existing inequalities where high income countries secured most of the initial vaccines while low-income countries countered significant delays in accessing the vaccine doses. Moreover, the recent interruption in the United States foreign aid under President Donald Trump illustrates a real-time case study of how fiscal power can directly or indirectly obstruct healthcare systems in the periphery. This situation entrenches active forms of coercion, pushing peripheral states beyond passive dependency and further constraining their sovereignty (Wallerstein, 1974).

The centre-periphery distinction is often referenced in global science and public health discourse where new ideas and technologies remains profoundly concentrated in the centre while nations in the periphery and semi-periphery have been subjected to roles of imitation and consumption (Chinchilla-Rodriguez, Miguel, Perianes-Rodriguez, & Sugimoto, 2018; Olechnicka, Ploszaj, & Celinska-Janowicz, 2019; Marginson, 2021). However, this traditional landscape is continuously becoming more dynamic given the rapid rise in science and technology of emergent economies like China, India, Brazil and Cuba. For instance, China developed and exported more than two billion doses of its Sinopharm and Sinovac COVID-19 vaccines globally as part of its "Health Silk Road" diplomacy. Correspondingly, the role of India as the "Global South Pharmacy" was exemplified through the Serum Institute of India which became a vital supplier for the COVAX vaccines before its export ban thereby illustrating the instability of this dependency. Furthermore, Brazil has increasingly developed a sturdy national health innovative architecture, at the same time Cuba also realised a monumental success in developing its own Abdala and Soberana COVID-19 vaccines amidst the US-led imposed system of sanctions. Indeed, the Cuban case highlights the growing scientific autonomy within the periphery which highlights further the limitation of a stringent world-systems analysis. Thus, the aforementioned developments are a clear indictment of the ability of Wallerstein's world-systems theory to holistically account for the complex agency of semi-peripheral and peripheral actors. Rather than being viewed as merely passive consumers, these nations have become active agents who are building independent scientific autonomy, and exposing further the limitation of the hierarchy the theory describes (Marginson, 2021). Hence, this paper explores this complexity by employing Kenya's immunisation program as the primary case study, while also recognising the evolving constraints to the world-systems model.

2. Theoretical Framework World Systems Analysis of Global Health

This analysis is principally anchored in the centre-periphery model, which is of particular relevance to global health inequities. World-Systems theory as developed by Immanuel Wallerstein, provides not merely a theory but an analytical framework for examining broad historical and contemporary patterns within the contemporary capitalist system (Wallerstein, 2004). Central to this model is the relational dynamic between core and peripheral regions, where each is structured by mechanisms that systematically facilitate the flow of resources toward the core at the expense of the periphery, resulting to an asymmetry (Sorinel, 2010).

For Wallerstein this world-system is characterised by a multicultural territorial division of labour in which the production and exchange of basic goods and raw materials is necessary for the everyday life of its inhabitants. This division of labour refers to the forces and relations of production of the world economy as a whole. When trade between core-production and periphery production occurs, the core is in a strong position, while periphery is in a weak one. So, the core-periphery relation is unequal in favour of the centre, and this inequality is the root of the centre-periphery thesis. The world system has boundaries, structures, member groups, rules of legitimation, and coherence. This world-system is what Wallerstein terms a world economy, integrated through the market rather than a political centre, where two or more regions are interdependent with respect to necessities like food, fuel, and protection. Furthermore, two or more polities compete for domination without the emergence of one single centre forever (Sorinel, 2010).

Wallerstein (1974) proposes four different categories that include the core, semi-periphery, periphery, and external, into which all regions of the world can be placed. Of the four, two are of uttermost importance that is, the core and periphery. These are geographically and culturally different, with one focusing on labour-intensive, and the other on capital-intensive production. The core-periphery relationship is structural such that semi-peripheral states act as a buffer zone between core and periphery and has a mix of the kinds of activities and institutions that exist on them. Among the most important structures of the current world-system is a power hierarchy between the core and periphery, in which technology is a central factor in the positioning of a region in the core or the periphery. Hence, peripheral countries are structurally constrained to experience a kind of development that reproduces their subordinate status. For Wallerstein (2004), emphasis is on the world system and not on nation-states as the primary but exclusive unit of analysis. Nation-states are variables, elements within the system where states are used by class forces to pursue their interest, in the case of core countries.

The application of the centre-periphery model is timely and warranted. Health and disease are not just biomedical entities but are also shaped by the global economy (Brown, Cueto, & Fee, 2006; Farmer, 2004). Because the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, suffering is seldom divorced from the actions of the

powerful. Understanding health outcomes in the periphery requires analysis of not just what is happening in those countries but also of the global forces that influence (often by constraining) the actions that have been taken in those countries. From this perspective, to understand structural violence in one setting requires both a micro and macro analysis. Similarly, understanding these phenomena requires deep engagement with the history which manifests in contemporary power relations (Farmer, 2003).

The realm of global health mirrors the world-system power imbalances and systemic inequities that have roots in colonial histories. This includes the dominance of high-income countries in setting research agendas, funding priorities, and governance structures (Contractor, & Dasgupta, 2022). Therefore, understanding the political economy of the world-system provides a critical lens for analysing global health structures (Mehjabeen, Patel, & Jindal, 2025).

The asymmetrical impact of the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) offers a particularly clear example of this systemic complexity. While rooted in intellectual property regimes long established in Western market economies, TRIPS has often been criticized for exacerbating, rather than mitigating, the divide between core and peripheral nations. Many members of the WTO perceive the agreement as serving primarily—if not solely—the interests of the core, by safeguarding the patents and revenue streams of multinational corporations headquartered there (Cottier, 2005). In doing so, it institutionalizes a form of biomedical hegemony that shapes health outcomes for populations worldwide (Pemunta & Tabenyang, 2020).

In this context, the scientific debate and research on Global Health is dominated by North American and European universities, which play a vital role in this field and sustain Global North-South research gaps (Cash-Gibson, Rojas-Gualdrón, Pericàs, & Benach, 2028; Dalglish, 2020). Likewise, the political debate is strongly influenced by the meetings of the Heads of State and Government in the G7 and G20, which, incidentally, are not international organisations and have no politically legitimate mandate beyond the existing power relations. Nevertheless, they play a decisive role in determining the Global Health agenda and tend to push through the privatisation of basic health services (People's Health Movement, Medact, Third World Network, Health Poverty Action, Medico International, & Asociación Latinoamericana de Medicina Social. (2017).

However, the theoretical application of the World-Systems framework must also critically engage with its limitations. This paper will later expose how the model's macro-level focal point conceals the autonomy and resistance of actors in the semi-periphery and periphery (Ortiz, 2018). Furthermore, the emergent multipolarity due to the rise of powerful semi-peripheral states like China and India has challenged the centre-periphery dichotomy (Marginson, 2021). By acknowledging these dynamics, this paper is anchored on the World-Systems framework not as a rigid tool for analysis, but as a heuristic concept to highlight the political and economic nuances that underlie global vaccine inequity.

3. Overview of Vaccines' Administration Hegemony

Consider for instance that during the nineteenth century, scientists from the United States, Great Britain, France and Germany developed the foundational inactivated whole-cell vaccines against plague, typhoid and cholera. Correspondingly, this hegemony of the core in vaccine administration is a historical constant whose legacy persists. Today there are multinational corporations including but not limited to Pfizer, that were founded over a century ago, controlling approximately 90% of the global vaccine market (Ortiz-Prado, Espin, Vasconez, Rodriguez-Burneo, Kyriakidis, & Lopez-Cortes, 2021). This state of affairs points to vaccine-manufacturing industries that are driven primarily by developed countries and production-rated economies large enough for each country's needs. As a result, most low- and middle-income countries are subjected to structural dependency hence the need to import final products and the equipment necessary to produce quality vaccines (Plotkin, Robinson, Cunningham, Iqbal, & Larsen, 2017).

The World Health Organisation established the Expanded Program on Immunisation (EPI) in 1974 to develop and expand immunisation programs throughout the world. Accordingly, national vaccination programs, which grew out of the smallpox eradication initiative, have developed in many countries through the administrative, technical, and financial support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organisation (WHO), and other bilateral or multilateral partner agencies (WHO & UNICEF, 1996). However, the international goal of bridging the gap by WHO due to structural dependency has often reinforced this dependency.

Nevertheless, the paradigm is shifting in that initiatives like the African Union's Partnership for African Vaccine Manufacturing (PAVM) intend to escalate local vaccine production to 60% by 2040 (African CDC, 2022). This directly confronts the historical dependency framework even though Africa currently imports over 99% of its vaccines (Gennari, Holt, Jordi, & Kaplow, 2021). Even so, there is still lack of equitable access to basic vaccines in the low-income and middle- income countries (Mihigo, Okeibunor, Cernuschi, & Petu, 2019). This deficiency in local vaccine production in Africa is an indictment of the chronic under-investment in local research and development, poor knowledge transfer, and a loss of investment to the African health sector estimated to be $2 billion annually due to "medical brain drain" (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2018; Groenhout (2012).

Generally, the COVID-19 pandemic profoundly revealed the unsustainability of this model. Furthermore, the dependency on a limited number of vaccine manufacturers also contributed to an unsustainable pandemic response as experienced during the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic and the 2014 Ebola virus disease outbreak (Khan, Ikram, & Hamza, 2021), which was magnified during COVID-19. Although high-income countries obtained billions of doses through direct bilateral agreements, the low- and middle-income countries were compelled to depend on the COVAX facility which had delivered over 1.9 billion doses worldwide. Still, these deliveries were

overtaken by the bilateral deals underpinning the hierarchy the model describes. This heightened further the vulnerability of peripheral nations due to severe delays which protracted the pandemic globally. Thus, it was a distinct illustration of surplus extraction from periphery to core.

4. The Mechanisms of Vaccines' Hegemony

To respond to this inequality, the same structures that sustain it have often been mobilised through Euro-American based Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), philanthropic organisations and public-private partnerships. Entities like Gavi, i.e. the Vaccine Alliance, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) play a predominant role as chief agents of capacity building in vaccine development and deployment in the periphery (Kumraj, Pathak, Shah, Majumder, Jain, Bhati, Hanif, Mukherjee & Ahmed, 2022). Moreover, the institution responsible for regulating vaccines globally known as the United States Federal Drug Administration's (FDA) Centre for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) is based in the core. Hence, the FDA sets standards that dictate the global market access (Ortiz-Prado et al., 2021).

Tied to this system is the American dollar hegemony whose benefit is contextualised incost-effective terms pegged on the US dollar, and global funding framework (Simoneau and Bliss, 2022). On this account, the US. has historically been the primary benefactor to Gavi since its inception. This financial supremacy also presents a powerful political tool for coercion which can have a direct impact on health outcomes in the periphery. This coercive capability is not just theoretical. For instance, the recent deadlock in the congressional budget discussions prompted the freezing on foreign aid allocations severely rendering the operational capacity of USAID as ineffective (Phelps, 2023). This impacted negatively on dependent nations due to constraints in vaccine supply chains, distribution networks and last-mile vaccination efforts. This is a clear indication of how quickly the important flow of resources can be disrupted by the domestic dispensation of the core (Lieberman & Iyer, 2024; Bussell & Chatzky, 2023), hence revealing the vulnerability inherent in this dependency relationship. Consequently, these proclivities correspond with and modernises Andre Gunder Frank's dependency theory, where exploitative relationships are maintained through control of international trade, the emergence of multinational corporations and the reliance of low- and middle-income countries on Western aid (Frank, 1966).

5. Case Study: Vaccination Services in Kenya

Kenya's immunisation history vividly illustrates the complexities of the core-periphery dynamic. Beginning in the early 1970s, compliance with international travel protocols required vaccinations against diseases such as cholera and yellow fever for outbound travellers. Initial coordination fell to the Nairobi City Council, which later ceded this responsibility to the national Department of Environmental Health. Operating through Port Health Services and in tandem with immigration authorities, this body managed

border health measures. Concurrently, in the late 1970s, the National Public Health Laboratories served a dual role: manufacturing vaccines for smallpox and cholera domestically while leading the investigation of significant disease outbreaks across the country (Kenya National Policy on Immunisation, 2013).

Given its central mandate in disease surveillance and outbreak response, the National Public Health Laboratories also assumed responsibility as the national repository for emergency vaccines, including those for cholera, hepatitis B, typhoid, and rabies, as well as anti-snake venom. Following the worldwide eradication of smallpox, the Laboratories discontinued production of the smallpox vaccine, though they retained their coordinating role for other emergency vaccines. One exception was the cholera vaccine, which was withdrawn from use in the 1980s following evidence of limited efficacy (Kenya National Policy on Immunisation, 2013).

Following the 1978 Alma-Ata declaration by the World Health Assembly *(World Health Organisation, 1978)*, Kenya embarked on the process of formalising its immunisation services (Ministry of Health, 2013). Kenya Ministry of Health established the Kenya Expanded Program on Immunisation (KEPI) in 1980. Hence, it moved from ad-hoc services mainly through primary schools and the larger health institutions and facilities to a structured program against six childhood diseases namely: Tuberculosis (BCG vaccine), polio (Oral Polio Vaccine), diphtheria (Diphtheria toxoid vaccine), whooping cough (whole cell Pertussis vaccine), tetanus and measles to all children in the country before their first birthday, and tetanus toxoid vaccination to all pregnant women (Kenya National Policy on Immunisation, 2013).

Having achieved the Universal Child Immunisation goals of immunising at least 80% of the target population in the 1990s, KEPI's focus changed to disease control, elimination and eradication. Since 2001, the Ministry of Health has endorsed the introduction of four new vaccines namely: Yellow fever in two counties of the country, Hepatitis B vaccine, and Haemophilus Influenza type B vaccine; Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine in 2011; and Rotavirus vaccine and measles second dose in 2013 (Kenya National Policy on Immunisation, 2013).

The Division of Vaccines & Immunisation (DVI) became effective from 1st July 2007 and currently oversees a wide-ranging set of responsibilities, organised around several key functions. Its mandate encompasses the national Expanded Program on Immunisation, which covers routine infant vaccines as well as tetanus vaccination for pregnant women and trauma cases. A second function involves targeted vaccination programs for specific populations, such as occupational risk groups, healthcare workers, prisoners, food handlers, and international travellers, in addition to managing emergency responses to outbreaks and bites from animals or snakes. The DVI also coordinates immunisation campaigns against diseases including polio, measles, meningitis, and emerging threats like influenza. Finally, it oversees the provision of specialised biological products, such as rabies immunoglobulins and anti-D sera for rhesus-negative pregnant women (Ministry of Health, 2013).

All KEPI vaccines are procured through UNICEF for Gavi. The Government of Kenya

and UNICEF work under a memorandum of understanding where UNICEF is contracted to procure Gavi funded vaccines as well as Kenya's co-payment of Gavi supported vaccines and traditional vaccines (MoH, 2013). The United States is the largest bilateral donor to the Global Alliance on Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI). Since 2001, Kenya has received over $500 million from Gavi, introducing almost every vaccine the Alliance supports (Simoneau and Bliss, 2022). This dependency continued during the COVID-19 pandemic. By 2021, the U.S. had provided almost 4 million doses through COVAX partnership and invested $4.5 million in technical assistance to support Kenya's nationwide COVIID-19 vaccine rollout program (US Department of State, 2021). However, the recent aid freeze to USAID allocations has shown that this important support exists within an environment of vulnerability. Indeed, freezing aid to USAID has had a ripple effect on Kenya's health system, demonstrating the risks of this dependency. Reports indicate that USAID-funded programs for vaccine supply chain logistics, cold storage maintenance and community health worker mobilisation have faced crippling budget cuts and subsequent operational paralysis (Phelps, 2023).

The direct impact on Kenya's economy is reflected in the country's diminished capacity to distribute and administer existing vaccine stocks, including and not limited to just COVID-19 and for routine immunization (EPI). Consequently, USAID's annual commitments which had gradually increased to $40 million in 2018 for health programs, are now liable to the volatility of the core's political shifts (Habbema & Moon, 2024). Although the bilateral support from US to Kenya is a vital component for health programs in Kenya (Gavi, 2023), it nonetheless reflects the core-periphery framework. Moreover, it is an illustration of how health sovereignty is constrained by dependency on external funding. This mirrors critiques that the West's indulgence and zeal of the Cold War era is being manifested by its politicisation of vaccines. By exploiting vaccines as a geopolitical tool, the West has reproduced a world divided between two spheres of influence, such as countries inoculated with Chinese-Russian vaccines verses those with US-European ones (Wenwen, 2021).

6. Limitations of the Centre-Periphery Model in Understanding Vaccine Administration

The world-systems analysis provides a macro-sociological approach to understanding vaccine provision thereby obfuscating the micro-level materiality of vaccine accessibility for specific sub-populations like young mothers. This reiterates the exclusion of young mothers from Kenya's priority groups in the Kenya National Policy on Immunisation (2013). Most significantly, the centre-periphery model does not adequately account for the rapid growth of science in the semi-periphery as well as the autonomy and agency of nations and persons. Respectively, other emergent and middle-sized economies like China, South Korea, Iran and India have built national science systems that follow the semi-autonomous trajectories based on state investment, intensive national network building and international engagement without integrating tightly into the global duopoly (Marginson, 2021).

While the COVID-19 exposed entrenched hierarchies, it also precipitated shifts in the geo-political economy of vaccine administration. China become a major supplier of Covid-19 vaccines to low-income countries, exporting over 2 billion doses of its Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines to South-East Asia, South America and North Africa as part of its "Health Silk Road" and subsequent vaccine diplomacy initiative (Bollyky and Bown, 2022). This state of affairs acted as a substitution for the Western-led vaccine supply and asserted China's geopolitical authority. Additionally, India, which is considered a semi-peripheral economy, emerged as the predominant vaccine manufacturer and the second largest exporter by volume (24.7 percent of total global exports) (Jeanrenaud, Poitiers and Veugelers, 2021). It initially supplied COVAX through its Serum Institute before the emergence of the Delta variant of SARS-CoV-2 in India in late 2020 which later became the dominant variant in the middle of 2021. This prompted the export ban of the Serum Institute COVID-19 vaccines in April 2021 resulting in substantial disruptions across Africa hence revealing the precarity of depending on a single semi-peripheral supplier (WHO, 2023).

Notably, the inception of African Union's Partnership for African Vaccine Manufacturing (PAVM) is a case in point of the periphery's active resistance to permanent subordination. The aim of PAVM is to produce 60% of Africa's vaccines by 2040 indicating a critical challenge to the biomedical core-periphery model. In South Africa, initiatives like the WHO mRNA vaccine technology transfer hub have been established suggesting counter measures toward this challenge (Africa CDC, 2022). Moreover, another peripheral nation like Cuba while facing a series of embargo, was able to develop and export its own Abdala and Soberana COVID-19 vaccines. This illustrates how a vital scientific autonomy is not readily accounted for in the traditional core-periphery structure.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the paper demonstrates that the global vaccines' administration is a potent reflection of the expansion of the capitalist world-system. Evidently, Wallerstein tiered system demarcates between the United States and Europe as producers and financiers of vaccines, and much of the Global South as importers and consumers.

The response to the inequalities in vaccines administration is channelled through the dollar-dominated aid by Euro-American based non-governmental organisations and charitable donor organisations. These multinational organisations have been linked to the perpetuation of neocolonial dependency as shown by Kenya's immunisation program. The recent aid freeze to the USAID allocations presents a current example of how financial hegemony can actively debilitate health systems, moving from dependency to coercion.

The rise of economies like India and China, and most importantly, the concerted effort by Africa's PAVM for self-reliance suggests a restructuring of the rigid core-periphery model and subsequent global health power dynamics. The COVID-19 pandemic did not produce these inequalities but rather exposed them while at the

same acting as an impetus for change. Future research should inform technical solutions that uphold vaccine justice by confronting the exploitative nature of world-system model and continue to track the agency of the periphery to challenge this sustained hegemony.

Acknowledgments

Gratitude is extended to colleagues and scholars in the fields of global health, political economy, and African studies for their insightful discussions and intellectual engagement. Any errors or omissions are the sole responsibility of the authors.

Funding Details

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Data Availability Statement

No new data were created or analysed in this study. This article is based on a review of existing published literature and publicly available documents.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

During the preparation of this work the author(s) used DeepSeek AI in order to refine language, improve academic tone, and assist with the structural organisation of the manuscript. After using this tool/service, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Notes on Contributors

Allan Okeyo is a Kenyan doctoral candidate in the Doctoral School of Sociology at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. His research sits at the intersection of medical anthropology, sociology, and health systems, with a focus on the political economy of global health, vaccine equity, antibiotics utilisation practices and postcolonial critiques of biomedical hegemony in African contexts. He holds an MA in Anthropology (Medical Anthropology) from Maseno University, Kenya. His professional experience spans over nine years in community-based research, HIV prevention, and university-level teaching in Kenya and Hungary. He has also served as a course instructor at ELTE University in Budapest.

Garnet Ochieng' Okeyo holds a BA in Sociology and Anthropology from Maseno University, Kenya. His background encompasses community mobilisation, public health outreach, and participatory research across rural and peri-urban Kenyan settings. With extensive experience in evidence-based HIV prevention interventions, he has worked as

a facilitator and field researcher on programs targeting vulnerable populations, including adolescent girls and young women. His research interests include community-based health interventions, social determinants of health, and decolonial approaches to health equity. He is committed to bridging grassroots engagement with critical social science perspectives to advance health justice in African communities.

References

Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC). (2022). *Framework for Action: Partnership for African Vaccine Manufacturing (PAVM)*. African Union.

Bollyky, T. J., & Bown, C. P. (2022). *The tragedy of vaccine nationalism: Only cooperation can end the pandemic*. Foreign Affairs.

Brown, T. M., Cueto, M., & Fee, E. (2006). The World Health Organization and the transition from "international" to "global" public health. *American Journal of Public Health*, *96*(1), 62-72. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2004.050831

Cash-Gibson, L., Rojas-Gualdrón, D. F., Pericàs, J. M., & Benach, J. (2018). Inequalities in global health inequalities research: A 50-year bibliometric analysis (1966-2015). *PLoS One*, *13*(1), e0191901. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0191901

Chinchilla-Rodríguez, Z., Miguel, S., Perianes-Rodríguez, A., & Sugimoto, C. R. (2018). Dependencies and autonomy in research performance: examining nanoscience and nanotechnology in emerging countries. *Scientometrics*, *115*(3), 1485-1504. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-018-2652-7

Contractor, S. Q., & Dasgupta, J. (2022). Is decolonisation sufficient? *BMJ Global Health*, *7*(12), e011564. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2022-011564

Cottier, T. (2005). The Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. In P. F. J. Macrory, A. E. Appleton, & M. G. Plummer (Eds.), *The World Trade Organization: Legal, Economic and Political Analysis* (pp. 1041-1120). Springer US. https://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-22688-5_22

Dalglish, S. L. (2020). COVID-19 gives the lie to global health expertise. *The Lancet*, *395*(10231), 1189. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30739-X

Farmer, P. (2003). *Pathologies of power: Health, human rights, and the new war on the poor*. University of California Press.

Farmer, P. (2004). An Anthropology of Structural Violence. *Current Anthropology*, *45*(3), 305-325. https://doi.org/10.1086/382250

Frank, A. G. (1978). Development of underdevelopment or underdevelopment of development in China. *Modern China*, *4*(3), 341-350. http://www.jstor.org/stable/188950

Gavi The Vaccine Alliance. (2023). *COVAX: Interactive supply forecast dashboard [Data set]*. Retrieved October 26, 2023 from https://www.gavi.org/covax-vaccine-roll-out

Gennari, A., Holt, T., Jordi, E., & Kaplow, L. (2021). *Africa needs vaccines: What would it take to make them here?* McKinsey and Company. Retrieved January 10, 2026 from https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/life-sciences/our-insights/africa-needs-vaccines-what-would-it-take-to-make-them-here

Habbema, S., & Moon, S. (2024). The collateral damage of US political gridlock on global health. *The Lancet*, *403*(10425), 519–520.

Jeanrenaud, L., Poitiers, N., & Veugelers, R. (2021). A world divided: Global vaccine trade and production. *Bruegel Blog*.

Kenya National Policy on Immunisation. (2013). *National policy guidelines on immunisation*. Ministry of Health, Government of Kenya.

Khan, M. I., Ikram, A., & Hamza, H. B. (2021). Vaccine manufacturing capacity in low- and middle-income countries. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, *99*(7), 479–479A.

Marginson, S. (2022). 'All things are in flux': China in global science. *Higher Education*, *83*(4), 881-910. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-021-00712-9

Mehjabeen, D., Patel, K., & Jindal, R. M. (2025). Decolonizing global health: a scoping review. *BMC Health Services Research*, *25*(1), 828. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-025-12890-8

Mihigo, R., Okeibunor, J., Cernuschi, T., Petu, A., Satoulou, A., & Zawaira, F. (2019). Improving access to affordable vaccines for middle-income countries in the African region. *Vaccine*,, *37*(21), 2838–2842. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2019.03.07

Ministry of Health Kenya. (2013). *National policy guidelines on immunisation*. Government of Kenya.

Mo Ibrahim Foundation. (2018). *Brain drain: A bane to Africa's potential*. Retrieved May 21, 2025 from https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/news/2018/brain-drain-bane-africas-potential

Ortiz-Prado, E., Espín, E., Vásconez, J., Rodríguez-Burneo, N., Kyriakidis, N. C., & López-Cortés, A. (2021). Vaccine market and production capabilities in the Americas. *Tropical Diseases, Travel Medicine and Vaccines*, *7*(1), 11. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40794-021-00135-5

Ortiz, I. (2018). A world-systems approach to global health. *Sociology of Development*, *4*(4), 345-368.

Pemunta, N. V., & Tabenyang, T. C. (2020). *Biomedical hegemony and democracy in South Africa (Vol. 51)*. Brill.

People's Health Movement, M., Third World Network, Health Poverty Action, Medico International, Asociación Latinoamericana de Medicina Social,. (2017). *Global Health Watch 5: An alternative world health report*.

Phelps, J. (2023). *US aid freeze hits refugees and global health programs*. The New Humanitarian.

Plotkin, S., Robinson, J. M., Cunningham, G., Iqbal, R., & Larsen, S. (2017). The complexity and cost of vaccine manufacturing – An overview. *Vaccine*, *35*(33), 4064-4071. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2017.06.003

Simoneau, M., & Bliss, K. E. (2022). *Kenya's immunisation system in the post-covid world. Center for Strategic and International Studies*. Retrieved May 23, 2025 from https://www.csis.org/features/kenyas-immunization-system-post-covid-world

Smith, R. (2000). Vaccines and medicines for the world's poorest. Public-private partnerships seem to be essential. *British Medical Journal*, *320*(7240), 952-953. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.320.7240.952

Sorinel, C. (2010). Immanuel Wallerstein's world system theory. *Annals of Faculty of Economics*, *1*(2), 220–224.

United States Department of State. (2021). *The United States and Kenya: Strategic partners [Fact sheet].* Office of the Spokesperson. Retrieved May 21, 2025 from https://www.state.gov/the-united-states-and-kenya-strategic-partners-2/

Wallerstein, I. (1974). *The modern world-system*. Academic Press.

Wallerstein, I. (2004). *World-systems analysis: An introduction*. Duke University Press.

Wenwen, W. (2021). West 'weaponizes' vaccines to divide world aimed at maintaining hegemony. *Global Times*.

World Health Organization. (1978). *Declaration of Alma-Ata. World Health Organisation*. Regional Office for Europe. Retrieved May 21, 2025 from https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/347879

World Health Organization & United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). (1996). State of the world's vaccines and immunisation.

The Turkish Drone Industry and Its Geopolitical Significance on Africa[1]

András Málnássy[2]

Abstract:

The study examines a specific segment of the Turkish military industry capabilities in the light of the country's geopolitical aims. In recent years, Türkiye has become one of the best-known and most important global exporters of military unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly known as drones, in the world military equipment market. Turkish drone development and warfare have introduced many innovative military operational concepts that have achieved great success in the conflicts of recent years. When talking about military alliance systems, it cannot be neglected from the point of view of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) that the robotic warfare solutions of one of its militarily strong member states, Türkiye, are proving to be effective against Soviet-era Russian weapons, thus providing a significant combat advantage to the countries with the given UAV, or for armed groups. The weapons tested in combat have clearly opened up new horizons for the Turkish defence industry in terms of manufacturing and exporting high-tech products. In addition to economic and military benefits, Ankara can also use the expansion of its customer base for its geopolitical purposes. This paper focuses on the Turkish defence industry including the drone industry and its geopolitical driving factors.

Keywords:
Türkiye; Drones; Drone Industry; Defence Industry; UAVs; Geopolitics; Bayraktar.

[1] DOI: https://10.12700/jceeas.2026.6.1.433

[2] Security and Defense Policy Expert, Africa Research Institute, Doctoral School on Safety and Security Sciences, Óbuda University, Hungary; ORCID: 0000-0002-3196-4967; malnassy.andras@gmail.com

1. Introduction

In accordance with its geopolitical concept, Türkiye looks at the world in a realistic paradigm characterized by a constant struggle for power. Therefore, it is present in the strategic culture of Türkiye, which does not shy away from the use of hard power. In the background, lies the Ottoman imperial heritage with the revival of political rivalry and interest-based foreign policy. This study attempts to present a slice of the process of how Türkiye has become a world player in the highly lucrative arms production and sales with its drone industry. The authors' hypothesis is that Türkiye asserts its foreign policy and geopolitical interests through its arms industry especially the drone industry which means Turkish drones are real foreign policy assets. The first part of the study presents Turkish drone diplomacy as a prominent part of the country's geopolitical and military policy toolbox. The second presents the Turkish drone program. The third deals with the Turkish drone acquisitions from Israel, Germany and the US. The fourth part examines the rise of the Turkish drone industry including Anka, Bayraktar and other Turkish drone developments. The fifth deals with some future perspectives and the Turkish drone export. The study concludes with the progress of Turkish drone development and its implications for Ankara's geopolitical thinking.

2. Theoretical Background

Türkiye has always considered the world in a realist paradigm. In realism it may also be possible to reduce the hegemonic influence of a given region (in the sphere of interest), one of the possibilities of which is to emphasize the principle of *regional ownership* (National Security Council Convenes at the Presidential Complex, 2017). The main point of this approach is to find solutions to regional problems; the regional actors directly involved need to work together and address the challenges internally, and not externally. In recent years, the term "regional ownership" has become iterative in Turkish foreign policy. *Ahmet Davutoğlu* has used regional ownership several times in his activity as Foreign Minister, and the regional ownership approach has been the basis for several Turkish initiatives in the Black Sea, the Caucasus, Central Asia, North Africa (Besenyő, 2021, pp. 70-89), and especially in the Middle East. In particular, these initiatives are: The Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), established in 1992, the Black Sea Forum for Partnership and Dialogue, created in 2006, the Black Sea Harmony, established in 2004, and the Turkish proposal to create a Stability and Cooperation Instrument for the Caucasus, in 2008 (Frappi, 2018, pp. 45-71). The implementation of regional ownership and geopolitical thinking is well demonstrated by the Astana process in the case of the Syrian civil war and Türkiye's mediation efforts in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

A realist approach in international relations is perhaps closest to the theory and practice of Turkish foreign policymaking, as for Turkey, the national interest plays a central role. According to neoclassical realism, the interests of a country's foreign policy are driven by its position in the international system and, in particular, its capabilities in

power (Şener, 2013, pp. 3-21). Neoclassical realism is best suited to present recent Turkish foreign policy and geopolitical goals. The neoclassical realist paradigm highlights that a country's foreign policy behaviour is not always in straight relationship with one another (Málnássy, 2022, p. 61). Foreign policy decisions are made by the political leaders in power; thus, their perception of power and security are more important than the capabilities of the state (Gideon, 1998, pp. 144-172).

Neoclassical realists agree that states are situated in anarchical international milieu and states try to control and form their external environment against uncertainties in the international system. In addition, as the material capacity of a state increases, it will tend to make more ambitious geopolitical goals concerning their security and external environment. All states are inclined to have more influence in the international politics, and they can do this in line with the growth of material capability such as military capabilities (Taliaferro et al., 2009, p. 23).

3. Turkish 'Drone Diplomacy' is a Prominent Part of the Geopolitical and Military Policy Toolbox

In the case of Türkiye, increasing the capacity of unmanned aerial vehicles is one of the effective means of achieving geopolitical goals in addition to its military importance. The increasing robotization of military equipment allows the Turkish government to act more boldly beyond the country's borders in pursuit of their interests. For Türkiye, the foreign policy based on the innovation of military equipment and the resulting geostrategic paradigm goes back several decades. Traditionally, Turkish strategic culture has always been characterized by the use of military force or the potential of using it when necessary. The foundations of the current Turkish national security doctrine can be traced back to the 1990s, building on two "pillars". On one hand, the National Military Strategic Concept with the central element of active military deterrence, and, on the other, the military-geopolitical paradigm according to which Türkiye should be able to fight "two and a half wars" at one time. The two pillars are complementary to one another. That is, the former meant diplomatic procedures emphasizing the possibility of deploying military means in case of regional challenges while the latter formulated the requirement for the Turkish Armed Forces to be ready to fight two traditional (conventional) wars, while maintaining the ability to fight a low-intensity conflict against the terrorist threats posed by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) within and across the country's borders outside as well (Kasapoglu, 2022, pp. 1-2).

As far as the current Turkish foreign policy is concerned, it is said that Türkiye's drone developments, and the military advantage thus obtained, strengthened the more active and bolder strategic thinking of the decision-makers, by making a military intervention less costly by deploying a large number of drones. For instance, the price of the F-16 Fighting Falcon C/D, which is the main fighter aircraft in the Turkish Air Force, is US$18,8 million, compared to a US$5 million for a single Bayraktar TB2 drone (Hwang and Song, 2022). They are also more precise from the point of view of the civilian

population, while they are making the available military potential less burdensome on the defence economy and less dependent on foreign military technical assistance. The development and use of UAVs in large numbers gives Ankara more room for manoeuvre in deploying military forces than before, when the Turkish military did not have such technological solutions. The conflicts of recent years, in which Turkish military forces were deployed, clearly show the possibilities of using Turkish-made drones, their efficiency, speed and survivability (Besenyő and Málnássy, 2022, pp. 11-13).

Several external factors played a role in the changes of the Turkish military industry and defence strategy in recent years, and in the acceleration of military technical developments. Among these factors, the following should be highlighted: Türkiye's changed security perception, the changed regional security situation in the Middle East and North Africa in the wake of the Arab Spring protest waves that started in December 2010, and the strengthening of the political perception that a strong defence industry can have a significant influence on foreign policy. The Turkish security perception was also determined by the Syrian civil war from March 2011 on and its security relations in the region. In this changed security framework, the Turkish drone program and its military effectiveness can provide higher strategic importance thereof for the country. Of course, it cannot be ignored that the deterioration of diplomatic relations between Türkiye and the United States, as well as some Western European countries, contributed greatly to the significant development of the domestic defence industry, including the drone industry, which processes have made Türkiye the world's leading drone manufacturer (Besenyő and Málnássy, 2022, pp. 15-16).

4. Initial Steps of the Turkish "Drone Program"

With respect to the processes of global military industrial development, Türkiye launched a national program for the acquisition of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) at the end of the 1980s. Since the country did not have the appropriate technical equipment and production capacities at that time, Ankara had to purchase this military equipment from abroad.

The first foreign drones appeared in the Turkish army in 1989, which was the Meggitt BTT-3 Banshee drone system manufactured by the English Target Technology Ltd. The general characteristics of the Meggitt BTT-3 Banshee drone are that it is 2.84 meters long, has a wingspan of 2.49 meters, a height of 0.86 meters, its weight without weapons is 39 kilograms, while its gross weight is 73 kilograms. In terms of performance, it is said that its maximum speed can reach 200 km/h, it can stay in the air for more than an hour, and its operating altitude can exceed 7,000 meters. The Banshee is built mainly of composite material (Kevlar and glass-reinforced plastic) with a tailless delta wing plain form. The drone is designed to simulate a missile floating at sea or to serve as a reconnaissance UAV with a specially equipped camera (Karaagac, 2016, pp. 33).

The next major purchase came from Germany in 1994. Berlin delivered the Canadair CL-89 surveillance drone, originally developed in Canada, to Türkiye, but it did not serve for long due to the difficulties in procuring parts, as well as the complexity and thus relative reliability of the device. The drone looks and flies like a rocket, can be launched from truck-mounted rails, and flies with jet propulsion. Take-off can be accomplished using a booster rocket that is released when flight speed is reached. A small turbo engine takes over the task for the rest of the flight. Upon arrival at the calculated position, the engine stops and releases a parachute. This slows the drone down enough to change its attitude and allow the parachute to deploy from the bottom of the drone, causing the drone to flip. Before landing, a pair of pneumatic landing bags is released from the top of the drone. The general characteristics of the CL-89 drone are that it is 3.71 meters long, has a very short wingspan of about 0.94 meters, a diameter of 0.33 meters, a weight without weapons of 78 kilograms, while its maximum take-off weight could reach 156 kilograms. In terms of performance, its maximum speed can reach 740 km/h, its range reaches 60 kilometres, and its operating altitude can exceed 3,000 meters (Karaagac, 2016, pp. 33-35).

The next foreign acquisition was linked to the name of the General Atomics company, whose Gnat 750 drone and the I-Gnat drone system were used by the Turkish ground forces for tactical reconnaissance and combat support between 1995 and 2005. The GNAT-750 is a long-range tactical surveillance and support system. The GNAT system is popular in the defence industries of each country due to its long service life, high payload, ease of use and low maintenance. The GNAT-750 type drone can fly for up to 48 hours without landing for fuel, its operating height is more than 7,600 meters, and it can climb at a speed of 330 m/s per minute. Its wingspan is slightly more than 10 meters, the fuselage is 4.8 meters long, and the gross take-off weight, including the 150-kilogram payload, is 517 kilograms. The I-GNAT system is already an improved version, which is also characterized by a long service life, high payload, simple use and low maintenance. Originally designed for tactical observation up to an altitude of about 7,600 meters, the I-GNAT was converted with a turbocharged engine to increase the operating altitude to 9,300 meters with a life of 48 hours (FAS, 1999).

5. Drone Acquisitions from Israeli Suppliers

The development of Türkiye's drone purchases from Israel was greatly influenced by Turkish foreign policy and the current situation of Turkish-Israeli relations. In the early and mid-2000s, Turkish-Israeli relations strengthened, especially in the field of military cooperation, which enabled Ankara to purchase drones from the State of Israel, a country that is known to have a high standard in the development of military equipment. In May 2005, Turkey and Israel signed an agreement[3] with a total value of US$150 million for the purchase of about 10 Israeli drones (Hwang & Song, 2022). The

[3] The agreement was signed by the Israel UAV Partnership (IUP) and the Turkish Ministry of Defence. The IUP is owned by the Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI) and the Elbit Systems.

type of drones was the IAI Heron,[4] detailed later, medium-altitude, long-range (MALE) military equipment. In terms of the payload, equipment that meets Turkish requirements would have been installed. The deadline for the delivery of the systems included in the contract was three years, and the Turkish side designated the Turkish Armed Forces as the user of the drones (DefenceTalk, 2005).

a. *Heron MALE drones*. The first Israeli drones provided by the Israel Aerospace Industry (IAI) to the Turkish army included the Heron MALE and IAI Searcher drones. The IAI Heron is a multi-mission, advanced, long-range, medium-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aircraft system (UAS) developed for strategic missions. Among the strategic tasks, intelligence, surveillance, target collection and reconnaissance using various precision instruments can be highlighted. The drone is equipped with automatic take-off and landing (ATOL), satellite communication (SATCOM) for increased range (IAI, 2019). The Heron can be considered an extremely reliable drone, the technical characteristics of which can be emphasized as having a take-off weight of 5,670 kilograms and a payload capacity of 2,700 kilograms. The total length of the drone is 14 meters, its wingspan is 26 meters, and its engine is the 1,200 HP PT6 Turbo Propeller. In terms of performance, the Heron can spend more than 30 hours in the air, has a range of more than 1,000 kilometres, a maximum speed of 410 km/h, and can fly at an altitude of more than 13,700 meters (IAI, 2019).

Item	Technical Characteristic
Take-off weight	5,670 kg
Payload capacity	2,700 kg
Total length	14 m
Wingspan	26 m
Engine	1,200 HP PT6 Turbo Propeller
Time in the air	30 hours
Range	1,000 km
Maximum speed	410 km/h
Altitude	More than 13,700 m

Figure 1: Heron Drone Technical Characteristics Source: Israel Aerospace Industry (IAI).

[4] A "Shoval" or "Heron 1", or the "Heron 2/Eitan" models.

The possibilities of the Israeli-Turkish cooperation were shown by the fact that some parts of the Heron system were developed by Turkish companies, such as its ASELFLIR 300T camera by ASELSAN, the satellite ground terminals of the drone system by SAVRONIK, and the remote video terminals and portable image evaluation systems by Turkish companies MilSOFT. However, several problems arose with the integration of the previously mentioned electro-optical payloads, and the Israeli side made less and less spare parts available to the Turks. The Israeli Heron drone was the first unmanned aerial vehicle to be integrated into the Turkish Air Force (Düz, 2021, p. 9).

b. *The Searcher*. The other Israeli drone, the Searcher, is a multi-role tactical unmanned aerial system used for surveillance, reconnaissance, target acquisition, artillery targeting and damage assessment. Searcher is a complex system designed for military, law enforcement and internal security tasks; the device's technical parameters enable the collection and transmission of high-quality, real-time intelligence data. Regarding the technical characteristics of the drone, it has a take-off weight of 450 kilograms and a maximum payload of 120 kilograms. The total length of the drone is 5.85 meters, its wingspan is 8.55 meters, its engine is a four-stroke gasoline engine, and it is characterized by an autonomous take-off and landing system. In terms of performance, the Searcher can spend more than 20 hours in the air, has a range of 350 kilometres, and a maximum speed of 203 km/h (IAI, 2019).

Item	Technical Characteristic
Take-off weight	450 kg
Payload capacity	120 kg
Total length	5,85 m
Wingspan	8,55 m
Engine	4 stroke silent gasoline
Time in the air	20 hours
Range	350 km
Maximum speed	203 km/h
Altitude	More than 6,400 m

Figure 2: Searcher Drone Technical Characteristics Source: Israel Aerospace Industry (IAI).

c. *The Dominator*. Türkiye later acquired another Israeli drone, which was used by Turkish ground forces for border monitoring. The name of the drone is Dominator, the production of which was started by the Israeli Aeronautics Defence Systems Ltd. Dominator can be used to conduct intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations. The technical characteristics of the drone are as follows: its gross weight can reach 1,200 kilograms, its total length is 8 meters, its wingspan is 13.42 meters, and the

device is powered by a double Thielert diesel engine. In terms of performance, the maximum speed of the Dominator is 354 km/h, and it can fly at an altitude of 9,100 meters (AVweb, 2009).

Item	Technical Characteristic
Take-off weight	1,200 kg
Payload capacity	300 kg
Total length	8 m
Wingspan	13,42 m
Engine	Double Thielert diesel
Time in the air	28 hours
Range	300 km
Maximum speed	354 km/h
Altitude	More than 9,100 m

Figure 3: Dominator Drone Technical Characteristics Source: AVweb.com.

d. *The Aerostar.* In 2008, Israel's Aeronautics Defence Systems Ltd. provided another drone, the Aerostar, to Turkish ground units. Aerostar is one of the most efficient, reliable and cost-effective systems in its category, one of the world's leading tactical UAV systems. The drone is equipped with a large payload bay and can carry a variety of payloads including advanced stabilized EO/IR sensors, laser designation systems, synthetic aperture radars (SAR)/GMTI, various electronic intelligence sensors (such as the COMINT) and other technical devices. The Aerostar has a take-off weight of 230 kilograms and a maximum payload of 50 kilograms. The total length of the drone is 4.5 meters, and its wingspan is 8.7 meters. In terms of performance, the Aerostart can stay in the air for more than 12 hours, has a range of 250 kilometres, and a maximum speed of 203 km/h (Aeronautics, 2022).

Item	Technical Characteristic
Take-off weight	230 kg
Payload capacity	50 kg
Total length	4,5 m
Wingspan	8,7 m
Engine	A single Zanzottera 498i two-stroke boxer
Time in the air	12 hours

Range	250 km
Maximum speed	203 km/h
Altitude	More than 5,400 m

Figure 4: Aerostar Drone Technical Characteristics Source: Aeronautics.

The delivery of the amount of Heron MALE drones undertaken by Israel, i.e. the additional purchases, as well as the supply of the existing unmanned aircraft systems with parts, was made impossible by the fact that the Turkish government suspended the bilateral agreement in 2008 and 2009, when Israel attacked the Gaza Strip came under the control of Hamas. Turkish President *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan* voiced his displeasure at the political level, during the joint panel discussion at the World Economic Forum held in January 2009 in Davos, Switzerland. He also expressed his concern that the Israeli operation in the Gaza Strip did not spare the civilian population. Statements critical of Israel on the Turkish side further worsened the situation, which eventually led to the Mavi Marmara flotilla incident in May 2010. The Gaza-bound flotilla of the Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Aid Foundation (IHH) was intercepted by the Israeli armed forces, as it refused to turn back and unload its cargo despite repeated requests. Nine Turks were killed in the incident, which led to a significant deterioration in relations between the two countries. The Turkish ambassador was recalled from Israel, and the Israeli was expelled from Turkey (Egeresi, 2022, p. 5). As a result of these events, Turkey suspended Israel's participation in the upcoming Anatolian Eagle air exercise[5] in 2010, which also delayed the delivery of the Heron drones and made the maintenance and technical supply of the existing ones uncertain. On 21 June, 2010, at an international military conference, General *İlker Başbuğ*, then Chief of Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces, stated that the Turkish security forces would begin the practical use of Israeli Heron MALE drones and use them for reconnaissance tasks in the country's mountainous regions bordering Iraq against the forces of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) (Düz, 2021, pp. 9-10).

6. American Drone Acquisitions

In addition to the Israeli drone acquisitions, the Turkish leadership began to pursue a kind of soft-push diplomacy with Washington, and in 2008 negotiations were initiated on the acquisition of American drones. The Turkish side started negotiations with the American company General Atomics Aeronautical Systems (GA-ASI) on the purchase of RQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper drones.

a. *The RQ-1 Predator*. These drones were designed for aerial reconnaissance and forward reconnaissance tasks, and later the device was further developed to carry and launch the well-known AGM-114 Hellfire missiles. The RQ-1 Predator was the first drone

[5] Anatolian Eagle is an air force exercise organized by the Turkish Air Force and held in Konya, Türkiye. Both national and international exercises are carried out in the region, the air forces of the United States, other NATO member countries, and other third countries (such as Asian countries) usually take part in the international exercises.

used by the United States Air Force (USAF) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for offensive operations. Regarding the Predator's technical characteristics, it has a take-off weight of 513 kilograms and a maximum payload of 387 kilograms. The total length of the drone is 8.23 meters, its wingspan is 14.8 meters, and its engine is a four-cylinder, air-cooled, turbocharged piston engine. In terms of performance, it can be said that the Predator can spend more than 24 hours in the air, has a range of 1,250 kilometres, and a maximum speed of 217 km/h (Airforce Technology, 2022).

Item	Technical Characteristic
Take-off weight	513 kg
Payload capacity	387 kg
Total length	8,23 m
Wingspan	14,8 m
Engine	Four-cylinder air-cooled turbocharged piston
Time in the air	24 hours
Range	1,250 km
Maximum speed	217 km/h
Altitude	More than 7,620 m

Figure 5: RQ-1 Predator Drone Technical Characteristics Source: Airforce Technology

b. *The MQ-9 Reaper*. This is the US Air Force's primary attack strike unmanned aerial vehicle. Due to its stay in the air, long-range sensors, multi-mode communication system and precision weapons, it is capable of strike measurement, coordination and reconnaissance against strategically important, rapidly changing and time-sensitive targets. Reapers are primarily used for intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, close air support, combat, search and rescue, precision strike measurement, convoy protection, route clearance, target designation and air control tasks (DOTE Annual report, 2008). The Reaper has a take-off weight of 2,223 kilograms and a maximum payload of 2,537 kilograms. The total length of the drone is 11 meters, its wingspan is 20 meters, and its engine is a turboprop engine. In terms of performance, it can be said that the Reaper can spend more than 14 hours in the air, has a range of 1,900 kilometres, and a maximum speed of 482 km/h (General Atomics, World Missiles & UAVs Briefing 2022, pp. 1-14).

Item	Technical Characteristic
Take-off weight	2,223 kg

Payload capacity	2,537 kg
Total length	11 m
Wingspan	20 m
Engine	Turbo Propeller
Time in the air	14 hours
Range	1,900 km
Maximum speed	482 km/h
Altitude	More than 15,000 m

Figure 6. MQ-9 Reaper Drone Technical Characteristics Source: Dote.osd.mil (Annual report).

In December 2008, Turkey requested ten US-made MALE UAVs from General Atomics to support the fight against the PKK. The agreement would have involved the purchase of four MQ-1 Predators and six MQ-9 Reapers. However, in June 2010, President *Barack Obama* told Erdoğan that "Türkiye's diplomatic approach to the Iranian nuclear issue" would make it difficult for the US Congress to approve the purchase of UAVs from Türkiye.[6] There was also a debate about whether the Turkish government would use the American drones in carrying out retaliatory operations against the PKK (Zanotti, 2011, pp. 19-22).

Anatolian Eagle is an air force exercise organized by the Turkish Air Force and held in Konya, Türkiye. Both national and international exercises are carried out in the region, the air forces of the United States and other NATO member countries usually take part in the international exercises. As a result, in March 2014, the US House of Representatives refused to sell the Reaper to Türkiye. Ankara then raised the idea of handing over unarmed versions of US-made drones as a possible alternative. Sensing the American delay in the decision, in May 2016 *Ismail Demir*, the president of the Turkish Defence Industry, stated that Ankara would no longer need American drones, because of the American restrictions on the sale of weapon systems. This prompted Türkiye to develop unmanned aerial vehicle systems with its own technology. President Erdoğan also confirmed that Türkiye will begin its own UAV production program, learning from the US and Israel's difficulties in acquiring unmanned aerial systems. The strained diplomatic relations between Türkiye and the Western countries, as well as Israel, in terms of the procurement of military equipment, therefore led Ankara to make the Turkish drone industry one of the world's leading developers and manufacturers. (Düz, 2011, pp. 10-11).

[6] At this time, a kind of rapprochement of Turkish-Iranian relations could be observed, as a result of which many high-level visits took place.

7. Rise of Turkish Drone Industry

Türkiye has made a huge progress in its domestic UAV development program in recent decades. Under the leadership of the Defence Industries Bureau (SSB), UAV development and production activities, whose initial steps began in the early 1990s, became increasingly intense after 2004. The Turkish military developed a 30-year strategy plan that was backed up by a US$150 billion investment in its modernization program, of which US$60 billion was dedicated to the revitalisation of its land forces. The Turkish military industrial infrastructure slowly began to develop with such rudimentary projects as the first Turkish-made UAV-X1 launched in 1990, the Turna-Keklik drones in 1995, the Pelikan-Baykuş drone projects in 2003 and the Martı digital in 2004 visualization project. These projects were the forerunners of the technological innovation that later defined Turkish drone production. Within a period of 20 years, Türkiye was reputed to be a drone superpower that only trailed countries such as the US, China and Israel in drone technology (Kaya, 2022).

a. Production of TAI ANKA UAV

At the beginning of the 2000s, there were significant advances in the development of Turkish unmanned systems. In 2004, one of the best-known Turkish projects, the ANKA multifunctional system project,[7] was initiated by the state-owned Turkish Aviation Industries (TUSAŞ) company.[8] The first aircraft connected to the project was tested in December 2010. The objective of the project was actually to develop a national UAV system that meets the Turkish Armed Forces' (TAF) reconnaissance, surveillance, target designation, recognition and intelligence requirements. At first, the developments covered three prototypes (ANKA-A, ANKA-B, and ANKA-S), as well as ground service systems connected to UAVs. The research and development processes later continued towards the development of a high-altitude and long-range (HALE) ANKA unmanned aircraft, the ANKA +A. The development also affected the ANKA Block A drone, which was equipped with a larger payload and was thus named ANKA Block B. The most popular and well-known ANKA product to the general public is the ANKA-S, which is currently mass-produced. ANKA-S is equipped with a SATCOM antenna and a national flight control computer. The ANKA-S previously had a Thielert Centurion 2.0S engine, which was further developed and installed the TEI PD170 and PD180st engines developed by Turkish Engine Industries (TEI), which can operate with diesel and JP-8 jet fuel (Karaagac, 2016, p. 36).

ANKA-S can already have a maximum take-off weight of 1,750 kilograms. The total length of the drone is 8.6 meters, its wingspan is 17.5 meters, and its height is 3.25 meters. In terms of performance, ANKA-S can stay in the air for more than 30 hours,

[7] Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.
[8] Turkish Aerospace Inc. (TAI; Turkish: Türk Havacılık ve Uzay Sanayi A.Ş., TUSAŞ) is a technology centre for the design, development, manufacturing, integration, modernization and after-sales support of aerospace systems in Turkey.

has a range of 4,896 kilometres, and a maximum speed of 217 km/h. The S model was regularized in the Turkish navy, land forces, security agencies, and the gendarmerie. In addition to all this, Türkiye and Tunisia signed a cooperation agreement in March 2020, according to which the Tunisian Air Force will receive ANKA-S unmanned aerial vehicles from Ankara. In terms of that agreement, Tunisia would buy three (3) ANKA-S drones for US$80 million (Düz, 2021, p. 13; Hwang & Song, 2022).

Item	Technical Characteristic
Take-off weight	1,750 kg
Payload capacity	2,700 kg
Total length	8,6 m
Wingspan	17,5 m
Engine	Diesel engine rated at 155-hp
Time in the air	30 hours
Range	4,896 km
Maximum speed	217 km/h
Altitude	More than 9,200 m

Figure 7: ANKA-S Drone Technical Characteristics Source: Düz (2021); Hwang & Song, 2022.

The ANKA-I is an improved version of the ANKA-S, which is also equipped with other means of electronic warfare and intelligence. ANKA-2, also known as Aksungur[18], is also a two-engine improved version of ANKA-S. The Aksungur has a maximum take-off weight of 3,300 kilograms. The drone can stay in the air for more than 50 hours and can fly at a height of more than 12,000 meters. The ANKA-3 is expected by 2023, in which case the Turkish designers and developers would already use so-called stealth techniques in order to be more difficult to detect and for greater security. ANKA-3 would have a special water surface surveillance system, anti-submarine weapons, radio electronic intelligence (SIGINT) and electromagnetic signal interception (ELINT) technology. The UAV would also be capable of satellite communication (SATCOM), synthetic aperture (SAR) and ground moving target tracking (GMTI), which would increase its ability to combat moving ground targets (e.g. convoys, off-road carrier vehicles). The ANKA-3's armament would include JDAM-type missiles and anti-tank ammunition produced by Roketsan. With the ANKA-3 drone, Turkish manufacturers can also target Asian markets, where they plan to expand and develop maritime patrol and anti-submarine special defence capacities (Okuyan, 2012).

b. Development of Bayraktar drones

The other significant Turkish drone development is linked to the name Bayraktar. The Kalekalıp-Baykar Makina joint venture started developing the Bayraktar mini unmanned aerial vehicle system in 2005, which was put into use by the Turkish Air Force in 2007. At the same time, another so-called mini-UAV, the Bayraktar DIHA tactical drone, was launched. In 2006, Bayraktar Makina began the development of another mini-UAV, the Malazgirt, which entered the service of the Turkish Air Force in 2009 (Besenyő and Málnássy, 2022, pp. 15-16).

The development of Bayraktar, the Bayraktar TB2 tactical UAV was started in 2007 by the Kalekalıp-Baykar Makina joint venture. The first prototype of Bayraktar TB2 took off for the first time on 08 June 2009. The Bayraktar TB2 is a medium-altitude, long-range (MALE) unmanned combat aircraft (UCAV) capable of remotely piloted or autonomous flight operations. Unmanned aerial vehicles are monitored and controlled, including the use of weapons, by aircrew at a ground control station. The development of the TB2 UAV was largely spearheaded by Selçuk *Bayraktar*, a former graduate student at the American MIT (Kandemir, 2023, pp. 19-21). The Bayraktar TB2 is controlled by three ground controllers, its total length is 6.5 meters, its wingspan is 12 meters, its maximum take-off weight is 700 kilograms, of which the payload is 150 kilograms. The engine is powered by a 100 hp (75 kW) Rotax 912-iS internal combustion engine and two bladed, variable-pitch propellers, with a fuel capacity of 300 litres and runs on gasoline. In terms of performance, TB2 has a maximum speed of 220 km/h, a range of 4,000 kilometres, an operating altitude of 5,500 meters, but it can even go above 7,000 meters, and its operating time can be up to 27 hours (Armed Forces, 2023).

In terms of armament, the Bayraktar TB2 can be equipped with MAM-C and MAM-L laser-guided smart bombs, L-UMTAS long-range anti-tank missiles, Roketsan Cirit 70mm missile, TUBITAK-SAGE BOZOK laser-guided missile, TUBITAK-SAGE TOGAN GPS/INS guided 81 mm mortar and Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System 70 mm laser guided missile. In terms of avionics, an exchangeable EO/IR/LD imaging and targeting detection system or a multi-mode AESA radar can be installed, among which the Aselsan CATS EO/IR/LD imaging and targeting detection sensor, the Hensoldt ARGOS-II HDT, the Wescam MX-15D EO can be highlighted EO/IR/LD imaging and targeting sensor, and the Garmin GNC 255A navigation and communication transceiver (Baykar Catalog, 2023).

The Bayraktar TB2 unmanned aerial vehicle has been used by the Turkish Air Force as part of the Turkish Armed Forces since 2014, as well as by the Gendarmerie and the Turkish National Police, for example, in anti-terrorist operations. The drone was also adopted by the Turkish Navy. Turkey has used and continues to use drones extensively in air strikes against Iraqi and Syrian targets of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the People's Protection Units (YPG). In addition to domestic use, Bayraktar TB2 drones were also exported by Turkey to other countries, including Qatar and Ukraine (Soyaltin-Collela and Demiryol, 2023, p. 2). Bayraktar drones have also been used by other countries in various wars, for example in the Syrian civil war in 2020, Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh war in 2020, and the armed forces of Russia – Ukraine war in

2022.They were also used by the national defence forces of various African countries such as Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Libya, Nigeria, Niger, , Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Somalia. The countries with TB2 drones include Turkmenistan, Pakistan and members of the Turkic Council (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan). As the first NATO and EU member state, Poland first ordered TB2 drones from Turkey in 2021, the delivery of which began in 2022. Other potential buyers of these drones include Romania, Albania, and Iraq (Kandemir, 2023, pp. 4-5).

Another Bayraktar type is the Bayraktar Akinci, which is an air-to-ground or air-to-air attack drone with high firepower. The Akinci can carry the following weapons: MAM-L, MAM-C intelligent "micro" ammunition, as well as the heavier MAM-T anti-tank ammunition, Cirit type missile, L-UMTAS missile, laser-guided Bozok ammunition, MK-81, MK -82, MK-83 guided missiles (JDAM), cruise missiles, Gökdogan air-to-air missile, Bozdogan air-to-air missile, Standoff SOM-A cruise missile, and the TRG-230 tactical ballistic missile. In addition, Bayraktar Akinci can be equipped with Turkish-made systems such as multi-functional active electronic scanning radar system (AESA), SAR/GMTI radar, large area surveillance system, technical solutions to support electronic warfare defence, beyond-line-of-sight (BLOS) satellite communication systems, CATS FLIR camera system, electronic support ESM module and collision avoidance system. Akinci can fly at an altitude of up to 12,000 meters and will be equipped with special reconnaissance capabilities (ISTAR) in the future (Kasapoglu and Ozkarasahin, 2022, pp. 35-39).

c. Other Turkish drone developments

The company Vestel Defence played a key part in the development of Türkiye's national UAV program. Among the developments, the production of the prototype of the Efe Mini UAV system began in 2005, but the mass production of the system did not take place. Then, in 2007, the military industrial company started developing the Karayel tactical UAV prototype. It was the first and only unmanned aerial vehicle designed and manufactured according to the NATO STANAG-4671 standard for intelligence and reconnaissance tasks. The Karayel tactical drone has been used in Turkey since 2015, and the structure's total flight time exceeded 10,000 hours. There is a version of the device without a weapon as well as with a weapon. An example of the latter is the Karayel-SU drone, which was presented at the Dubai Air Show in 2017. In 2018, Vestel Defence launched a new drone development, which aims to further develop and market a partially armed Karayel-SU drone (Düz, 2021, p. 16).

d. Future outlook

With regard to the military technology trends of the past years and the concepts of warfare, it is envisaged that the role and importance of autonomous systems and artificial intelligence is increasing. The development of autonomous systems and

platforms can play a crucial role in reducing threats in hybrid warfare. KARGU autonomous tactical multi-engine UAV (kamikaze drone), ALPAGU autonomous tactical fixed-wing UAV (kamikaze drone) and TOGAN autonomous multi-engine UAV developed by STM Inc. (Savunma Teknolojileri Mühendislik ve Ticaret) in Türkiye, which closely follows industrial development and developments, are the first prototypes of military equipment with autonomous navigation, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities. Mass production of these systems, which offer many advantages especially in urban operational environments, began in 2017. In addition to military developers Turkish Aerospace, Baykar Makina, Vestel Defence Company and STM, several private companies and universities in Turkey continue to work on the development of UAV systems and subsystems, as well as promoting the necessary human resources and know-how (Özdemir, 2022, pp. 3-5).

8. Türkiye in Exporting Drones

Türkiye's national UAV program gained worldwide attention in October 2017, at the start of the country's intervention in Syria. Ankara carried out a new and combined air and ground operation against Syrian regime forces in Syria's Idlib province, demonstrating the combat advantages of using unmanned aerial vehicles. The tactical effectiveness, power and "survivability" of Turkish UAVs in theatres other than Syria, such as in Iraq, Libya and the Kurdish-populated southeast of the country, have allowed Turkish drones to attract the interest of other countries. Considering the operational range of Turkish UAVs, the Minor Asian state is among those ones which are currently involved in deploying military drones overseas. On the one hand, all these characteristics provide Turkey with great authority on the world drone market, on the other hand, competitors may feel threatened by the military technical developments and thus the practical realization of battlefield successes (Kandemir, 2023, p. 6).

The achievements in the defence sector have resulted in greater investments by Turkish companies in the domestic aviation industry. ANKA, developed by Turkish Aerospace, performed its first mission flight on February 5, 2016, in Elazığ Province, eastern Turkey, where it performed a reconnaissance and surveillance flight. ANKA was then equipped with a MAM-L mini air-to-surface missile and a CİRİT laser-guided air-to-surface missile, both military equipment developed and manufactured by Roketsan. ANKA was then deployed in the Oil Branch operation in northern Syria, which achieved significant success in the field of operational support. After these successful tasks, in 2018 Turkish Aerospace, together with the Indonesian state-owned aerospace company PT Dirgantara (PTDI), agreed with Indonesia on the transfer of technology and the development of a new MALE UAV. According to the Turkish-Indonesian framework agreement, the Turkish Aerospace company also shares know-how related to PTDI's N219 and N245 small and regional turboprop projects. The ongoing negotiations with DEFTECH during the 2017 International Defence Industry Fair (IDEF 2017) within the framework of DRB-HICOM Holding proved that ANKA attracted the attention of the Asian market. During the International Exhibition of Weapons Systems and Military

Equipment, KADEX 2018, it was announced that Turkish Aerospace has agreed to cooperate with the Kazakhstan Aviation Industry (KAI) in the production and delivery of ANKA UAV and HÜRKUŞ new generation training aircraft. According to reports at the 2018 International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS) held in Karachi, the Pakistan Navy has shown interest in the ANKA-S and has begun negotiations in that aspect. In March 2020, Turkish Aerospace also signed an agreement with Tunisia. The contract was worth 240 million dollars, for six ANKA-S drones, three ground control stations and the transfer of technology (Düz 2021, p. 18).

Baykar Makina was the first in the history of Türkiye to export advanced unmanned aerial platforms and systems. The Bayraktar TB2 was deployed against PKK targets for the first time in September 2016. The use of armed UAVs in counter-terrorism operations has proven to be an effective military activity. In 2016, Bayraktar UAVs guided Turkish fighter jets in a support operation to destroy Islamic State targets in northern Syria as part of Operation Euphrates Shield. The Bayraktar TB2 carried out 90% of all flights in Operation Oil Branch against the Kurdish-dominated Afrin in northwest Syria in 2018, and 80% of all flights in Operation Spring Shield in Syria's Idlib region in 2020. In the fight against terrorism and cross-border operations, Bayraktar UAV systems have been successfully tested, and this is the first Turkish-made UAV system that has been exported to other countries such as Qatar and Ukraine. During the Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference (DIMDEX 2018), an agreement was signed between Baykar Makina and the Qatari Armed Forces, which included the delivery of six-armed Bayraktar TB2 aerial vehicle platforms, three ground control station systems, other equipment and a UAV training simulator. The contract was seen as an important step in establishing cooperation between the Qatari and Turkish armies. In 2019, Baykar signed a contract with Ukrspecexport, Ukraine's state arms trading company, to purchase six-armed drones, three ground control station systems and equipment (Düz, 2021, pp. 18-19).

At the Unmanned Systems Exhibition (UMEX) held in Abu Dhabi in 2016, the Karayel UAV manufactured by Vestel Defence received significant interest, especially from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, which countries were looking for joint development, production and procurement opportunities. In 2017, the Vestel Defence company signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Saudi Arabia's Advanced Electronics Company for the purpose of cooperation at the Dubai Air Show. In May 2020, the General Directorate of Military Industry (GAMI) of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia announced that they would launch a project to produce six UAVs in 2021 and 40 within five years. Saudi Arabia's Intra Defence Technologies, which holds all sales rights for the Karayel UAV, has been granted project approval to manufacture the unmanned aerial vehicle under a Turkish license. In addition to the Saudi army, the company can also expand the distribution of Karayel to Brazil and Kuwait (Düz, 2021, p. 19).

STM's mini-UAV system attracted a lot of interest at the Africa Aerospace and Defence Exhibition (AAD) held in the Republic of South Africa from September 21 to 25, 2022.

At the exhibition, STM presented its tactical mini-UAV systems, including the KARGU rotary-wing attack UAV, the ALPAGU fixed-wing autonomous tactical attack UAV and the TOGAN reconnaissance UAV. The Turkish company announced during the event that it is already working with more than 20 countries in technology transfer and business development activities (Kasapoglu and Ozkarasahin, 2022, pp. 31-35).

9. Türkiye-Africa Industrial Relations in the Drone Sector

The expansion of Türkiye's defence industry has increasingly intersected with Ankara's Africa policy, with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) emerging as a key element of bilateral industrial and political relations. Since the announcement of Türkiye's 'Opening to Africa' strategy in 2005, and its relaunch as a fully-fledged Africa Partnership Policy in 2013, Ankara has framed Africa as both a political partner and a market for Turkish industrial instruments (Besenyő and Málnássy, 2024, pp. 4-5). While this engagement encompasses trade, infrastructure and education, the defence sector – and within it, drones in particular – has acquired disproportionate significance. UAVs represent a dual tool for Ankara: an export commodity with clear commercial value, and an instrument of foreign policy projection designed to expand Türkiye's presence and influence on the continent (Besenyő and Málnássy, 2024, pp. 6-8).

Several African countries have turned to Turkish drones in recent years, driven by acute operational needs and the relative affordability of Turkish systems. Morocco, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Niger have all procured the Bayraktar TB2, which has become the flagship of Türkiye's drone exports. Additional interest has been reported from states such as Tunisia, Rwanda, and Burkina Faso. The appeal of Turkish UAVs lies not only in their comparatively low cost but also in their proven combat performance in conflicts ranging from Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh to Ukraine (Yasar, 2022, pp. 2-3.).

The acquisition of Turkish drones allows African governments to address pressing challenges in counterterrorism, insurgency suppression, and border surveillance. For example, Somalia has employed Turkish UAVs in operations against al-Shabaab, while Ethiopia reportedly used them during the Tigray conflict (Zelalem, 2025, pp. 2-9).

Unlike traditional arms exporters, Türkiye has sought to frame its defence exports as part of broader industrial cooperation packages. This often entails agreements for pilot training, the establishment of maintenance and repair facilities, and, in some cases, promises of localized assembly. These initiatives are designed to appeal to African governments eager to develop defence-industrial capabilities and reduce long-term dependence on foreign suppliers. Although the extent of technology transfer remains limited in practice, the discourse of partnership is significant. Türkiye presents itself as a supplier that does not merely sell equipment but also engages in capacity building. This differentiates Ankara from Western states, whose arms transfers are typically transactional and embedded in rigid regulatory frameworks (Yasar, 2022, pp. 4-5.).

The diffusion of Turkish drones in Africa carries wider geopolitical implications. At the bilateral level, UAV exports reinforce Ankara's political partnerships with recipient

states, embedding Türkiye within their security architectures. At the regional, drone exports contribute to Ankara's broader ambition of positioning itself as a global actor, capable of projecting influence beyond its immediate neighbourhood (Besenyő and Málnássy, 2024, pp.2-6). The visibility of Turkish drones in African conflicts strengthens Türkiye's international image as an autonomous defence producer. This positioning is particularly relevant given the relative retrenchment of Western powers in parts of Africa and the diversification of African foreign policy choices. By supplying drones, Türkiye not only fills a market gap but also secures political goodwill, which can translate into support in multilateral forums such as the United Nations or the African Union.

Despite these advantages, Türkiye's engagement in the African drone market is not without risks. The operational use of UAVs in civil conflicts, most notably in Ethiopia's Tigray war, has drawn criticism for contributing to civilian casualties and escalating violence. Furthermore, the sustainability of industrial cooperation remains uncertain. Many African states lack the technical infrastructure, trained personnel, and financial resources required to maintain and operate UAV systems over the long term (Besenyő and Málnássy, 2024, pp. 6). Without significant investment in domestic capacities, African partners risk becoming dependent on Turkish technical assistance and spare parts, thereby reproducing patterns of dependency that Ankara claims to challenge. Finally, the proliferation of drones on the African continent could contribute to regional arms races, as rival states seek to match each other's capabilities. While drones offer short-term tactical advantages, their diffusion may inadvertently destabilize fragile security balances (Zelalem, 2025, pp. 1-25).

10. The Progress of Turkish Drone Development and its Implications for Ankara's Geopolitical Thinking

The Turkish political leadership sees the development of unmanned military systems and robotic warfare tools not only as part of the modernization program of the Turkish army, but also as an important factor for geopolitics. Türkiye sees the development and further development of armed tactical drones as an important tool in global power struggles. In addition to Ankara's geopolitical interests, military innovations in the Turkish drone industry also serve the country's defence industrial interests and the possibility of projecting military power. The US arms embargo of 1975-1978, an agreement by EU member states to limit arms exports to Türkiye due to the country's recent offensive in northern Syria, and the reluctance of allies to sell precision weapons and weapon systems prompted Ankara to build a domestic high-tech manufacturing base. Türkiye has significantly improved its military technical capabilities in the last decade. As a result, the country is now able to produce competitive military products not only as a user but also as an exporter in the world market of arms (Zanotti, 2011, p. 2).

Türkiye's UAV program has had a significant impact on the national defence industry has encouraged the emergence of unmanned military platforms and intelligent systems,

as well as boosted military technology exports. The development and production of unmanned vehicles resulted in know-how, qualified human resources and the exchange of experience. This kind of experience has significantly increased Türkiye's capacity and opportunity in the fight against terrorism. The developments resulted in close cooperation between the Turkish Armed Forces, including the Turkish Air Force, and the defence industry. However, there are difficulties in terms of the Command and Control (C2) structure. In this respect, all national forces need an integrated approach, but it is only partially realized in the Turkish defence structure, since ANKA-S is primarily under the command of the Turkish Air Force, Bayraktar TB2 is under the command of the ground forces, and the National Intelligence Organization (MIT). This structure requires a high degree of coordination between organizations. The domestic drone program also had a significant impact on the military warfare employed by Ankara (Düz, 2021, p. 20).

During the military operations launched between 2016 and 2019 (Euphrates Shield, Olive Branch, Spring of Peace, as well as several other anti-terrorist operations), domestically produced UAVs proved successful and had an impact on the transformation of the Turkish Air Force and its combat doctrines. UAVs provide effective intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities to Turkish law enforcement and military forces. That is why this military equipment is increasingly used in the fight against terrorism and making almost indispensable components of this type of low-intensity operations. Unmanned vehicles are considered as "expendable assets" due to their non-existent human resource requirements compared to fighter jets and combat helicopters. At the same time, drones can perform the same tasks, i.e. real-time monitoring, effective area control, reconnaissance and target destruction, as fighter jets or helicopters. With the development of advanced MANPADS (Man-portable air-defence systems) type missile systems and their portability by drones, armed UAVs have become primary strike devices in high-intensity conflicts (Özdemir, 2022, pp. 3-4). Advances in precision strike capabilities have helped Türkiye conduct military operations in remote areas without having to deploy fighter jets. Providing unmanned systems with greater firepower and precision munitions increased the possibilities of destroying targets. The increased targeting capabilities of drones enable more accurate target identification and reduce the number of civilian casualties and collateral losses as well. Modern UAVs are also capable of supporting information operations and can help in the fight against disinformation, for example in the detection and prevention of disinformation campaigns used by terrorist organizations (Düz, 2021, pp. 21-22).

In recent years, Idlib in Syria has made a suitable field for testing the capabilities of Turkish UAVs, as well as for analysing and evaluating the possibilities of electronic and network-centric warfare. In February 2020, Türkiye deployed Bayraktar TB2 and ANKA-S UAVs and several electronic warfare systems in Syria during Operation Spring Shield. During the operation, Turkish military equipment destroyed 3,400 militants; three aircrafts, including two Su-24s and one L-39; eight helicopters; eight air defence systems, including the Pantsir S-1 and Buk missile systems; 156 tanks, including T-55, T-

62 and T-72 MBTs; 108 guns and MLRS; 24 armoured personnel carriers; 49 other vehicles; 99 military vehicles; ten ammunition depots and two airfields. During the operation, the ANKA-S and Bayraktar TB2s also carried out the reconnaissance and designation of targets for the Turkish Air Force and the Turkish Ground Forces. Since it is a small operational area, Ankara deployed a squadron (about 10-15) armed UAVs for the targets in Idlib. ANKA-S used the previously mentioned SATCOM, and Bayraktar TB2s used the LOS data transmission to transmit the image and coordinate data they acquired through the integrated communication system of the Turkish Land Forces (TAFICS) for the purpose of carrying out air and artillery operations. Fire control and coordination jobs were carried out by the Turkish army with the help of the ADOP-2000 automated fire support system, also developed domestically. In combat operations, an armed UAV can function as an advanced artillery observer and air traffic controller or perform tasks that typically associated with a fighter aircraft (Mevlütoglu, 2020).

Türkiye also successfully deployed (and tested) Turkish UAVs in the Libyan conflict in 2019 to support the UN-recognized Libyan Government of National Unity (GNA). In June 2019, the GNA deployed Bayraktar to attack the forces of the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by *Khalifa Haftar* in the area of the Mitiga International Airport (Málnássy, 2022, pp. 67-68). At least three Bayraktar TB2 drones were deployed over Tripoli airspace to prevent Haftar's forces from capturing the capital. In April 2020, an Antonov An-26 cargo plane delivering ammunition to the LNA forces was destroyed by the deployment of GNA Bayraktars near Tarhuna, on one of the supply lines of Al-Jufra Air Base. During the air operations carried out by Turkish drones on May 17-18, 2020, most of the Pantsir-S1 air defence and Krasuhka electronic warfare systems were destroyed in Libya. In several cases, Bayraktar TB2 UAVs destroyed the air defence systems, logistical support vehicles (trucks, cargo planes) and armoured personnel carriers of Haftar's forces. The STM-developed KARGU tactical multi-engine attack UAV was first spotted on May 27, 2020 in the Ain Zara area. On May 18, 2020, the GNA occupied the Watya air base, which is considered a critical infrastructure, with the help of Turkish UAVs (Thomas, 2020, pp. 3-15).

Despite the successes and combat results achieved in the world's conflict zones, it should not be forgotten that Turkish UAVs have shortcomings, too. Such one is that both ANKA and Bayraktar UAV systems are vulnerable to surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) at low altitudes. Furthermore, the extent of control over the given area can also affect the operational range of the drones. In Libya, Ankara overcame the difficulties of Bayraktar UAVs' communication systems by using ground relay stations to extend the drones' range. Likewise, the development of the SATCOM communication system made it possible for ANKA UAVs to fly deep into Syria (Mevlütoglu, 2020).

The use of MAM-L and MAM-C smart munitions helped overcome deficiencies in firepower and payload and increased the accuracy of strike capabilities. The Turkish-made KORAL electronic warfare system helped Turkish UAVs jam and deceive the radars of enemy assets. Türkiye's military technological development has contributed to

increasing the country's strategic and geopolitical room for manoeuvre. Practical experience shows that drone developments and domestic solutions have provided the Turkish Armed Forces with operational flexibility in the Middle East, the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea, and North Africa. Türkiye recently deployed Bayraktar TB2s to Northern Cyprus due to rising tensions between Cyprus and Türkiye (Málnássy, 2022, p. 106). Bayraktar TB2s also provide surveillance of Turkish oil and gas drilling vessels in disputed Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) in the Mediterranean Sea. Another legacy of the development of the drone industry is that with the help of this special military equipment, Turkey can be present on several battlefields at the same time, which can strengthen the country's geopolitical positions (Málnássy, 2022, p. 107).

The Turkish drone diplomacy continued to play a role in the impasse between Türkiye and the Nordic countries that want to join NATO. The President of Finland expressed a desire to engage Türkiye on the purchase of drones once Finland joined NATO. However, this would be subject to Türkiye not exercising its veto rights within NATO to block Finland from joining the security organisation (Milne and Pitel, 2022).

11. Future Outlook - Further Possible Development of Turkish Drones

In 2021, one of the major players of the Turkish defence industry, Bayraktar, announced that it would produce a new combat drone called Kizilelma, with the first prototypes to be tested in 2023. The Kizilelma will have an engine with a special turbofan, its payload capacity exceeds 1,500 kilograms, in terms of its offensive armament, it will have air-to-air, air-to-ground missiles, cruise missiles, and special manoeuvrability, as well as the ability to take off from a short runway. According to Bayraktar, two types of Kizilelma will be produced, MIUS-A and MIUS-B, in which different types of engines will be installed. The Kizilelma can function as a complement to the combat activities of the 4th and 5th generation fighter planes (Kasapoglu and Ozkarasahin, 2022, p. 40).

Another big announcement by Bayraktar was that the Bayraktar TB3 type development will be used in maritime deployments in support of Kizilelma in order to implement the geostrategic vision of the "blue homeland" (mavi vatan). The Bayraktar TB3 drone will be launched from the TCG Anadolu (L-400) flight deck support ship, which can carry up to 80 drones. In 2023, Baykar will continue the integration of the Bayraktar TB3 aircraft with wing tips that can be folded up for storage to the aforementioned Anadolu ship. The TB3 will have a higher payload capacity than the TB2, which could increase the effectiveness of attacks in a maritime environment. The TB3 will be equipped with the PD-170 type engine, and its reconnaissance capabilities will be developed by Aselsan. If these developments are realized in the near future, Turkey will be equipped with new generation drones with very serious combat value, which can significantly increase the possibilities of Turkish naval warfare and land power projection (Kasapoglu and Ozkarasahin, 2022, p. 41).

Conclusion

For Türkiye, which previously relied heavily on foreign technologies, the development of its own military equipment and equipment systems has now become crucial for ensuring the country's strategic independence. This is reflected not only in the fight against terrorism, but also in gaining strategic advantages over Ankara's geopolitical rivals. Within the development of domestic military technology in Türkiye, major progress has been made in recent decades in the development of UAV systems and subsystems, as well as in the promotion of the necessary human resources and know-how. The Turkish Armed Forces are one of the strongest forces within NATO in terms of drone capacities and capabilities.

Türkiye's drone program contributed to the improvement of Ankara's warfare capabilities, while at the same time, as a competitive manufacturer, it also benefited economically from the export of military technological developments. The Minor Asian country's drone program has paved the way for the transformation of traditional military practices and doctrines. In recent years, Turkish UAVs have been deployed mostly as "anti-terrorism tools", serving as advanced observers, aerial controllers, target identification and target destruction tools in difficult operational environments. Through its military technology developments and innovative tools, Türkiye has created the conditions to effectively increase its coordinated and network-centric warfare capabilities.

Türkiye subordinated its drone technology developments to its geopolitical interests and used and is currently using it as a tool to influence military and political processes through the so-called "drone diplomacy". In this study the authors verified their hypothesis that Türkiye asserts its foreign policy and geopolitical interests through its drone industry. Turkish drones may also play an important role in the conflicts and crisis zones of the coming years. Due to their versatility and multi-tasking parameters, these technological tools enable the effective execution of difficult military operations. In a security environment in which the tendency for autonomous systems and artificial intelligence to play an ever-increasing role prevails, further developments in Turkish drone technology and the Turkish military industry can increase the readiness of the Turkish Armed Forces for future warfare.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that he has no competing interest.

Notes on Contributor

András Málnássy holds a PhD in Engineering Science from the Doctoral School of Safety and Security Sciences at Óbuda University, Hungary. He graduated from Zrínyi Miklós National Defense University, Budapest Business School, and the University of Public Service (Hungary). He is a security and defense policy expert with over 15 years of

experience as an analyst in various positions. He is currently a researcher at the Africa Research Institute at Óbuda University in Budapest. His research interests include Türkiye and its defence industry, security and defence policy, and geopolitics.

References

Aeronautics. (2022a). *Aerostar*. Aerostar. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://aeronautics-sys.com/systems/aerostar/

Aeronautics. (2022b). *Dominator*. Aeronautics. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://aeronautics-sys.com/systems/dominator/

Akca, İ., & Özden, B. A. (2021). *A Political-Economic Map of the Turkish Defense Industry*. Heinrich Boll Stiftung. https://tr.boell.org/en/2022/05/23/political-economic-map-turkish-defense-industry

Armed Forces. (2023). *Bayraktar TB2*. Retrieved Maech 10, 2026 from https://armedforces.eu/air_forces/drone/Bayraktar_TB2

Avweb. (2009). Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.avweb.com/news/da42-based-uav-tested/

Baykar Catalog. (2023). Retrieved March 10, 2026 from http://crd.yerphi.am/files/Baykar_catalog_eng.pdf

Besenyő, J. (2021). Turkey's growing interest in the African continent. *Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies (JCEEAS)*, *1*(1-2), 70-89. https://jceeas.bdi.uni-obuda.hu/index.php/jceeas/article/view/4/4

Besenyő, J., & Málnássy, A. (2022). Future Expansion and Prospects of Turkish Defense Industry. *Insights into Regional Development*, *4*(2), 10-21.

Besenyő, J., & Málnássy, A. (2024). Geopolitical Dimension of Libyan Drone Warfare: The Use of Turkish Drones on the North African Battlefields. *Obrana A Strategie / Defence And Strategy*, *24*(1), 3-17.

Defence Talk. (2025). *IAI And Elbit To Supply UAV Systems To Turkish MOD*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.defencetalk.com/iai-and-elbit-to-supply-uav-systems-to-turkish-mod-4726/

Dote. (2008). *Annual report: MQ-9 Reaper Armed Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS)*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.dote.osd.mil/Portals/97/pub/reports/FY2017/af/2017mq9reaperuas.pdf?ver=2019-08-19-113931-413

Düz, S. (2020). *The Ascension of Turkey as a Drone Power History, and Geopolitical Implications Analysis*. SETA. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.setav.org/en/analysis-the-ascension-of-turkey-as-a-drone-power-history-strategy-and-geopolitical-implications/

Düz, S. (Ed.). (2021). *Unpacking the Debate on Turkish Drones*. SETA. https://setav.org/en/assets/uploads/2022/04/R196En.pdf.

Egeresi, Z. (2022). *Törökország és Izrael közeledése (Convergence of Turkey and Israel).* KKI Analyses.

http://real.mtak.hu/142825/1/KE_2022_20_TR_IL_Torokorszag_Izrael_kozelede se_Egeresi_0512.pdf

Fas. (1999). *General Atomic GNAT-750 Lofty View*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://irp.fas.org/program/collect/gnat-750.htm

Frappi, C. (2018). The Russo-Turkish Entente: A Tactical Embrace Along Strategic and Geopolitical Convergences. In V. Tablot (Ed.), *Turkey: To-wards a Eurasian Shift?* (pp. 45-71). ISPI. https://www.ispionline.it/sites/defa-ult/files/pubblicazioni/turkey_report_.pdf

Gideon, R. (1998). Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy. *World Politics*, *51*(1).

Hwang, W.-J., & Song, S.-H. (2022). The extension of Turkish influence and the use of drones. *Comparative Strategy*, *41*(5), 439-458. https://doi.org/10.1080/01495933.2022.2111907

IAI. (2019). *Searcher Mk III Tactical UAS*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.iai.co.il/sites/default/files/2019-05/Searcher%20Mk%20III%20Brochure.pdf

Kandemir, T. (2023). *Erdoğan's flying 'Neo-Ottoman' Diplomats: A holistic analysis of Bayraktar Diplomacy [Master Thesis]* https://studenttheses.uu.nl/bitstream/handle/20.500.12932/43505/Taygun_Kan demir_6433944_MasterThesis_Publicatie.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Karaagac, C. (2016). *İHA Sistemleri Yol Haritası Geleceğin Hava Kuvvetleri 2016-2050*. STM. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://thinktech.stm.com.tr/uploads/docs/1608914423_satm-bb-17-0200-sektor-raporlari-iha-260417.pdf

Kasapoglu, C. (2022). *Techno-Geopolitics and the Turkish Way of Drone Warfare*. Atlantic Council Issue Brief. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/techno-geopolitics-and-the-turkish-way-of-drone-warfare/

Kasapoglu, C., & Ozkarasahin, S. (2022). *Drone Warfare, Drone Wars, Defense Economics and Turkey's Way*. Foreign Policy & Security. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://edam.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/DRONE-WARFARE.pdf

Kaya, K. (2022). *Turkey as a Drone Superpower: A Case Study of a Mid-Size Power Driving the Operational Environment*. Foreign Military Studies Office.

Málnássy, A. (2022). Turkey's Military Role in Libya and Its Wider Strategic Environment (interest) in the Eastern Mediterranean Basin. *Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies*, *2*(2), 104-1231. https://jceeas.bdi.uni-obuda.hu/index.php/jceeas/article/view/66/60

Málnássy, A. (2022). Turkish Military Technology Developments and Military Industry Capabilities of Force Projection in the Light of Geopolitical Goals. *Strategic Impact*, *83*(2), 60-71. https://doi.org/10.53477/1842-9904-22-11

Mevlütoglu, A. (2020). *Bahar Kalkanı Harekatı'na Dair Gözlemler: Türk Tipi Keşif-Taarruz Kompleksi mi?* Siyah Gri Beyaz. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.siyahgribeyaz.com/2020/03/bahar-kalkan-harekatna-dair-gozlemler-1.html

Milne, R., & Pitel, L. (2022). *Finland Woos Ankara with Hint it could Buy Turkish Drones*. Trade Journal. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.ft.com/content/cf154d42-d324-40a9-8478-9f59bee053b5

National Security Council Convenes at the Presidential Complex. (2017). Retrieved March 10, 2027 from https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/73536/national-security-council-convenes-at-the-presidential-complex

Okuyan, E. (2012). *Turkish Aerospace Industries Inc. ANKA Unmanned Aerial vehicle system*. https://doi.org/10.1109/DASC.2012.6383117

Özdemir, G. S. (2022). Conceptualizing the Rise of Türkiye as a Drone Power. *Strategic Paper*(5). https://www.dohainstitute.org/en/Lists/ACRPS-PDFDocumentLibrary/conceptualizing-the-rise-of-turkiye-as-a-drone-power.pdf

Predator RQ-1 / MQ-1 / MQ-9 Reaper UAV. (2022). Airforce Technology. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.airforce-technology.com/projects/predator-uav/

Şener, A. (2013). *Realist Reassessment of Turkish-Russian. Relations, 2002–2012: From the Peak to the Dip?* Caspian Strategy Institute. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from http://home.ku.edu.tr/~sakturk/Ak-turk_2013_Turk_Rus_Relations.pdf

Soyaltin-Colella, D., & Demiryol, T. (2023). Unusual middle power activism and regime survival: Turkey's drone warfare and its regime-boosting effects. *Third World Quarterly*, *44*(4), 724-743. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2022.2158080

Taliaferro, J. W., Lobell, S. E., & Ripsman, N. M. (2009). Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, The State, and Foreign Policy. In W. T. Jeffrey, E. L. Steven, & M. R. ve Norrin (Eds.), *Neoclassical Realism, The State, and Foreign Policy*. Cambridge University Press.

Thomas, A. (2020). The Turkey-UAE race to the bottom in Libya: a prelude to escalation. Recherches & Documents. *Fondation pour la recherche stratégique*(8).

World Missiles & UAVs Briefing. (n.d.) *RQ-1 Predator/MQ-9 Reaper, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from http://tealgroup.com/images/TGCTOC/sample-wmuav2.pdf

Yasar, N. T. (2022). Unpacking Turkey's Security Footprint in Africa - Trends and Implications for the EU. *SWP Comment*(42), 1-7. https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2022C42_Turkey_Security_Africa.pdf

Zanotti, J. (2011). *Turkey-U.S. Defense Cooperation: Prospects and Challenges.* Congressional Research Service, April 8. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc40130/m1/1/high_res_d/R41761_2011Apr08.pdf

Zelalem, Z. (2025). *Deadly Skies: Drone Warfare In Ethiopia And The Future Of Conflict In Africa*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://ecfr.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Deadly-skies-Drone-warfare-in-Ethiopia-and-the-future-of-conflict-in-Africa-v1.pdf

The Political and Legal Fiction of Ethio-Eritrean Federation under God's Mandate of an Ethnocratic and Sacral Empire[1]

Bahlbi Malk[2]

Abstract:

The concepts of federalism and empire discussed in this article are in relation to the 1952-1962 Ethio-Eritrean federation. Eritrea is a pluralist state in the Horn of Africa where accommodation and celebration of diversity enabled the diverse ethnic and religious groups to coexist in peace and harmony for the most part of the pre- and-post-colonial eras. After Second World War, however, the former Italian colony was forced to enter into political, ethnic, religious, and legal entanglements with the Ethiopian Empire which led to 30 years of war. This article examines the compatibility of federal arrangement with a centralist and sacral empire that envisioned a homogenous ethnolinguistic state and distinctively vertical and hierarchised duality between its centre and its peripheries with no supreme constitution to limit the centre's power or protect a federal member state. A "godly anointed" Ethiopian emperor who is neither accountable to humans nor be questioned by human subjects had a misaligned interest, conflicting objectives, and incompatible ethnocritical ideology and "divine right" mythical belief devoid of ethnolinguistic, religious and political pluralism and political decentralisation that federal governance entails. Therefore, the author argues that it was not a genuine federation in a contemporary sense of federal governance that meets the standard of sovereign equality of autonomous state(s) under international law. The article concludes that the UN-legislated federal arrangement was a legal ruse and political cul-de-sac with neither exit options nor guarantor(s) to uphold the integrity of the Federal Act if the centralist empire violates the UN Resolution and Eritrea's autonomy. It was designed to mask the true intention of the initiative-forced annexation, integration, and assimilation of post-colonial Eritrea into a regional empire.

Keywords:
Federalism; Self-Rule; Shared Rule; Sacral Empire; Divine Rights; Ethnocracy; Annexation.

[1] DOI: https://10.12700/jceeas.2026.6.1.366

[2] Senior Research Scholar, Director of Post-war Recovery Programs at the Canadian Partnership for Reconstruction and Development (CPRD); ORCID: 0009-0004-8623-0305; bahlbi.malk@edu.uni-graz.at, bahlbi.y@cprd.ca.

1. Introduction

At the heart of a contemporary federation is the decentralisation of power, which is grounded on the fundamental notion of "unity and diversity" that accommodates the diversity and demands of different states as well on the duality of equals between federation and member state(s) where the equilibrium between "self-rule and shared rule" maintained and formally acknowledged, respected and protected by a supreme constitution (Burgess, 2000: 268). So, the question is: would it be possible for an ethno-linguistically and religiously diverse state to establish a sustainable federal arrangement with an ethnocratic and sacral feudal empire that envisions a uniform and homogenous ethnolinguistic state and distinctively vertical and hierarchised duality between its centre and its peripheries with no constitutional terms that limit the center's power to protect a federal member state? This is because the structure of genuine federalism is often a "two-way street" which involves a "conscious process of institutional design intended to strike and perpetuate a particular balance of interest, forces, and objectives" of shared governance, negotiated compromise, mandated cooperation, consented mutual accommodation, and measures of reciprocated tolerance (Hueglin and Fenna, 2006: 24, 28). However, a federal arrangement with a hegemonic, unitarist, centralist, and ethnocratic feudal empire that upholds a *primordialistic* myth of religious, legal, political, and ethnic entitlements to subjugate others can hardly comply with the idea of sovereign equality of an autonomous state(s) under international law or even modern federation systems when the relationship between the center and periphery(ies) is one of domination, territorial expansion, subordination, superimposition, and top-down clientelism (Olivier, 2018: 1202), which are a proven recipe for conflict and tension (Clapham, 2009: 187; Brosché, 2008: 3). Be that as it may, before we discuss the arrangement of the federal agreement between the state of Eritrea and the Ethiopian empire (1952-1962) that led to a debilitating 30-year conflict, it is important to briefly discuss the nature and origin of the coercive, exclusive, and schismatic doctrines of Ethiopia's centralised empire, as well as its canonical laws from which it derives its legal and political legitimacy.

2. Ethiopia: Sacral Kingship and Ethnocracy vs. Ethno-religious Diversity

"In the Ethiopian Empire supreme power rests in the hands of the emperor"[3]

Christianity was introduced to Ethiopia as early as 330 A.D. when the Axumite state of Abyssinia was converted to Orthodox Christianity by Emperor Ezana, who ruled from roughly 320 to 360 A.D. The Roman Empire, from which the Axumite Empire is thought to have risen and flourished with a strong inspiration, orientation, and influence of the Roman Empire's Christian identity, was a significant influence on Ethiopia's early history in terms of cultural, religious, political, and legal persuasions (Taddesse, 1968: 25, 43).

[3]Article 6 of the 1931 constitution and article 26 of the 1955 revised Ethiopian constitution.

Although Ethiopia is similar to Europe in that it has a long history of adhering to a monotheistic religion founded on strict exclusivity, initially Christianity was said to have been limited to the King's court circles and remained a religion of the upper class (Heron, 2018: 755-756; Kaplan, 1984: 16-17). It gradually trickled down to ordinary people, and later through forced conversions spread widely among the Ethiopian population over the centuries, in contrast to Christianity in Europe, which took off and spread at the grassroots of the Roman Empire (Ibid). Conquests have always been followed by mass forced conversions to Christianity and, in Ethiopia, most of the conversions were carried out by the imperial arms and decrees rather than by churches and religious missionaries (Taddesse, 1968: 2, 170, 330; Larebo, 1987: 1-17).

With the arrival of Christianity in the 4th century, King Ezana subscribed to the Roman Law concept of *divine rights of the king* and a "sacred dynasty" anointed by God. In the beginning, Ezana referred to himself as "The son of the war god *Mahrem*" and later, he elevated himself to a higher divine hierarchy with a new epithet or religious title *Gebra Kristos* "The Servant of Christ," (Munro-Hay, 2001: 49; See also, DeCort, 2023) claiming that divinity was bestowed upon him by God where he cemented the untouchable *divine* status of his Kingship. Since then, the claim of *divine* endorsement became the core Abyssinian/Ethiopian political and legal model employed by the subsequent Kings to establish the legitimacy for their imperial rule as godly kings with unquestionable divine rights to rule. This ultimately laid a foundation for the codification of the 6th-century canonical imperial law of *Kibra Negest* (Glory of the Kings) under the ruler of King Kaleb who also referred to himself as "servant of Christ" (Ibid). The divine endorsement of the kings is clearly detailed in the legal text divulging that God is the source of the law. The *Kibra Negst* states that "Thus hath God made for the King of Ethiopia more glory, and grace and majesty, than for all the other kings of the earth because of the greatness of Zion, the Tabernacle of the Law of God, the Heavenly Zion" (Larebo, 1987: 7). This legal framework was based on the idea that the monarchy, the orthodox church, and Ethiopian nation are inextricably intertwined and sufficiently linked that it was impossible to separate one of the three without eradicating the others. (Ibid). In a way, it's fair to say that the Monarchy was the *de facto* head of the church and the church was a political tool that facilitated the monarch's objectives, but it has also benefited significantly. The symbiotic relationship between the Orthodox Church and the Ethiopian monarchy is claimed to be connected by divine decree and driven by the same interest and work towards the same objective in an interdependent, mutually reinforcing, and complementary manner (Ibid). Therefore, the *Kibre Negest* was the first Ethiopian canonical law that set the precedent for the Ethiopian judicial system and political modes of governance that legitimised the inviolability and indisputability of the political and religious power of the Kings to control the Ethiopian empire and the people through forced conversion and submission to Kings' divine rights for centuries (Brooks, 1996: xiii; Larebo, 1987: 1-17; Pankhurst, 1987: 32).

However, throughout the centuries, the law of *Kibre Negest* was exposed to the influences of the Byzantine Empire and the Old Testaments of the Egyptian Coptic

church (Strauss, 2009: xxxvii) among other things, and thereby fully developed into a collection of laws (*Canons of the Kings)*. Hence, by the 16th century, it evolved into a new divine legal text: the *Fetha Negest*, which translates to "The Law of the Kings". In addition to the common mythical assertion that the divine legal text "fell from heaven during the reign of Constantine" of the Roman Empire (Haberland 1965 as cited in Strauss, 2019: xlii), the *Fetha Nagest* was sometimes referred to in the Amharic language as *yabahirya hegg* which is translated as "the law from abroad" which precisely reflects its foreign origin of the canonical laws (Messing, 1957: 309) of *Fetha Negest* and *Kibre Negest* of Ethiopia. While the Church and the state were conceived as one entity, the Orthodoxy's God and the King were two masters to be worshiped by the multi-faith population in which the master-servant relationship has shaped the contemporary Ethiopian religious and political identity which entirely neglected the religious and ethnocultural diversities of its subjects until late 20th century. So, *Fetha Negest* was the *nomocanon* of the Christian theocratic state of Ethiopia which enabled the King(s) to control the religious, administrative, civil, criminal, and political apparatus of the country with no account for their actions before the court. This is because it was the governing law of almost absolutely everything on land including matters of ecclesiastic law, public laws (criminal and administrative laws) and private laws (civil) placing the king(s) at the top of the legal, sociopolitical, and religious hierarchy with monarchical absolutism (Fleiner and Fleiner, 2009: 241). Also, the *Fetha Nagast's* regulations governing the appointment of judges are utterly discriminatory against non-Christian ethnic groups, women, and disabled people, because it clearly declares that judges had to be older and non-disabled Orthodox clergymen who are well-versed in the bible, which equates to legal diligence, mental intelligence, moral superiority and sense of justice than any other groups in the country (Heron, 2018: 771). Since Orthodox Christianity and the divine will serve as the basis for the national laws, it coheres with the principles of Ethiopian canonical and the privileged status of the Church to have religious leaders with deep knowledge of the church interpret the laws and legitimise the imperial power of the godly rulership. Although women were one of the groups who were perceived to be lacking the moral standard and intelligence to sit as judges, the reason they were forbidden from serving in the judiciary was because they were forbidden from serving in the church (Ibid).

The basic premise of the *canonical law* of the feudal empire was grounded on the divine belief that "the higher up in the hierarchy someone is, the closer they are to God and thus to truth and justice" (Fleiner and Fleiner, 2009: 241). This accorded the priest-judges, the King's viceroy, and administration (King's servants) a privileged and authoritarian position in the socio-economic and legal hierarchy, above the general populace, with no obligation to answer to the people they purport to represent (Ibid). Therefore, to reflect the "divinely ordained" authority of the kings, all Ethiopian monarchs and emperors bore multiple divine titles until 1974. For instance, Emperor Menelik, who ruled Ethiopia from 1889 to 1913, had a *Ge'ez* (ancient Semitic language) title that reads *Neguse Negest and Seyoume Igziabeher* which is the English translation

of "King of Kings, Elect of God". As a sign of imperial submission, this was sometimes accompanied by the title *Moa Anbessa Ze Imnegede Yehuda* (Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah), which was an allusion to the title of God and placed God's office above the name of the emperor (Pankhurst,1987: 32) to depict the king as an embodiment of God legitimised by the "divine royal right vested in him by the grace of God, and is the highest law-making authority and the highest judge. He is the absolute sovereign, subject not even to his own law" (Fleiner and Fleiner, 2009: 226-227). At the top of the judicial hierarchy of the Supreme Imperial Court was an imperially appointed "Minister of Justice" with the title of *Afe Negus* 'the Mouth of the King' who presided over the imperial courts and the judges of the country and was solely accountable to the emperor (Vibhute, 2015: 5). The same was true with the subsequent King, Emperor Haile Selassie, who controlled the national courts and the judges through his *Afe Negus*.

Emperor *Haile Selassie* was named *Tafari Makonnen* at birth, but later he assumed a divine imperial name and divine title *Haile Selassie* "the power of the trinity" "His Majesty, *Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah and King of Kings of Ethiopia, Elect of God"* (Asserate, 2015: 1529). Another historical narrative that was "propelled" by the *Kibre Negest* was the covenant thinking of divine blessing and mythical belief that the Kings and emperors had *Solomonic* bloodline claiming direct ancestral roots to the Biblical King Solomon of Israel and that the Tabernacle of the Law of God (The Ark of Covenant) was brought from Jerusalem to *Axum* by Solomon's son (Zewde, 2000: 4; Brooks, 1996: xiii). Incorporated in the legal, socioeconomic, political, and religious spheres of the state, the king's divine rights narratives not only have served the feudal Ethiopian kings as a basis for sacralisation and legitimatisation of their imperial authority, but also shaped the historical, political, cultural, religious and psychosocial mindset of the society (Pankhurst,1987: 32). This results in what Kebede Messay (1999) refers to as the "*luctuating hierarchy*," in which people's accomplishments and status fluctuates not because of their merits or lack thereof, but at the whims of the imperial or divine power which sustains the principle of socioeconomic and political asymmetry (Messay, 1999: 203). On the asymmetrical and hierarchical power relations in Ethiopian society he has eloquently summarised it:

> "*[T]he modern meaning of equality before the law is not what Ethiopians have in mind when they speak of justice. In fact, the high respect for social hierarchy empties justice of the notion of equality. Nonetheless, the ranking of justice above all the other virtues may mean that it contains them all … The riddle is solved if the whole thinking is referred to as clientelism. God is expected to be just in the sense of rewarding those who obey and worship Him … Rewards should be bestowed on them, not for their merits, but for their submission, for their acceptance of the role of God's servants. Divine justice does not, therefore, implicate equal treatment; rather, it leans toward favoritism, especially for those chosen by God Himself*" (Ibid).

The Church provided a moral standard that emphasised traditions of conformity, glorification of authority, and adoration of divine right tradition, which contributed to the development of a psychosocial scheme tolerable for the political hierarchy to exploit citizens while maintaining the social order. Gebru Tareke (1991) highlighted the role of the Church in shaping the historical, ideological, and socio-economical aspects of the Abyssinian society as follows:

> "*By extolling the virtue of social hierarchy, the Orthodox Church helped to stabilise the Abyssinian social formation; it was the continuing edge of relations of exploitation… Central to the Church's code of morality was the belief in divine omnipotence, the sanctity of royal authority, the justness of overlordship. Supported by a tradition of awesome antiquity, enjoying direct access to land and the product of the peasants, and exercising a virtual monopoly in education, the Church affected every facet of rural life*" (Tareke, 1991: 15).

As Larebo (1987) explains,

> "*The major agent in the process is the monarchy, which the Kibre Negest, through a genealogical link with Solomon, brings into blood relationship with the House of David and, ultimately, with Christ Himself. Underlying this assumption is that the rule of the Solomonic dynasty over the Ethiopian nation is presented as divinely ordained, and its legitimacy is put on a footing which is beyond human challenge*" (Larebo, 1987: 6).

If the command "*that none except [King Solomon] the male seed of David, shall ever reign over Ethiopia*" [emphasis added] is ever contested, the *Kibre Negest* warns the worst possible outcomes (Ibid). Although Ethiopia is known for the ethnolinguistic, cultural, and religious diversity of its population, at the heart of the Solomonic dynasty were the Amharan and the Tigrayan ethnic groups. Scholars often use the name *Abyssinia* and Ethiopia interchangeably, but the existence of Ethiopia as a state in the present geographical boundaries was created by Emperor Minelik in the 19th century through a process of brutal conquest, subjugation, annexation, and incorporation of autonomous territories and peoples (Bulcha, 1988: 33). The imperial history of *Abyssinia* has largely been limited to these two Semitic Abyssinian ethnic groups who settled in the Ethiopian Northern highlands (Tigray, Gonder, and Gojam), "resulting in the creation of ethno-nation of Ethiopia as solely made up of Amhara and Tigrayan ethnic/racial groups" (Yates 2020: 3) while the rest of the ethnic and religious groups are either left out or treated as "objects rather than subjects of history" (Zewde, 2000: 4). Hence, the Ethiopian legal and political governance stands against the basic principle of common law that "men should not be ruled by men but by law" (Fleiner and Fleiner, 2009: 247), because the system was controlled mainly by Amhara or Amharanised men who claim a divine right to govern and oppress subjects.

Moreover, the Amhara ethnic group gained a special status after the *Abyssinian*/Ethiopian Kingdom moved its center to the *Shoawan* plateau, where they became direct *apanages* of the royal court, the church, and the state (Taddesse, 1968: 122, 186). The Kings' *modus vivendi* and *modus operandi* were designed to ensure the intended hereditary success of power to Amhara, which promoted and preserved the political, linguistic, and religious identity of the Amhara ethnic group until late 20th century. As Regassa (2021) explains, "It was the Amhara ethnic group and coopted elites from other groups that dominated the country for over a century" where all aspects of Amhara culture were imposed on the subjugated peoples, and members of other groups had to become "Amharised" in order to work in the state apparatus (Regassa and Emmenegger, 2023: 67-68). Monarchs from the Amhara ethnic groups may not represent transcendence, but they are rather guided by the principles, ideas, and values codified in a *priori* given transcendent belief system that gives them a transcendent moral authority and ethnic superiority over the other ethnic groups that even king(s) from the Tigrigna ethnic groups (i.e Tigrinyan Emperor Johannes IV, who led a program of enforced Amharanisation in the 1880s) caved into the hegemony of a single group and promoted and enforced the Amharanisation of the Ethiopian empire (Levine, 2012: 35-37). Therefore, the last two *Shoan* emperors, *Minelik* and *Haile Selassie*, who claimed direct descent from King Solomon continued the mythical narrative of the Solomonic religious dynasty and the *Amharanisation* of the political, socio-cultural and religious aspects of the country until the latter was overthrown in 1974 by a military *coup d'état*.

The reign of Emperor Haile Selassie was the longest monarchy spanning from 1930 to 1974. Under the pretext of modernisation and secularisation of Ethiopia, the Emperor wrote Ethiopia's first constitution when he came to power in 1930, but it was not his intention to depart from the law of *Fetha Negest*, because he made it very clear that the goal of his work was to "revise" the canonical law to "better serve modern society", not to fundamentally alter it to accept diversity and representation (Fleiner and Fleiner, 2009: 226). According to Regassa, the asymmetrical power relations and top-down repressive archaic system that were created to maintain the assimilationist, hegemonic, and exclusionist feudal empire through violence, exploitation, injustice, inequality, and religious manipulations are incompatible with federal governance. He states that:

> "*...the historical formation of the empire through brutal wars of conquest that eventually made the country a prison house of nations, rather than accommodating diversities of culture, history, and political representations. Throughout Ethiopian history, hegemonic narratives depicting kings/emperors as divine rulers with indivisible sovereign power were codified into popular culture and legal documents. Such legitimisation of the inviolability of the power of the rulers was an antithesis of the right to self-rule because principles of self-rule entail*

the devolution of centralised power to subnational units and groups" (Regassa, 2021: 76).

Although the new constitution asserted its intention to secularise Ethiopia, the claim to divine authority was codified in the constitution stating that because of his lineage from King Solomon and the anointing he got from God, "the emperor's person is sacred, His dignity is inviolable, and His power indisputable" (Strauss, 2009: xxxviii; Levine, 2012: 58). In explaining Ethiopian feudal empires and their appeal to divine rights to assert ultimate legitimacy to repress, oppress, conquer, and rule as well as to solidify the notion of divine omnipotence and the primacy of royal authority above the laws of the land, Regassa highlighted that:

> "*The history of Ethiopia until 1974 reveals that kingship/emperorship was associated with absolute sovereignty of the emperor: unlimited power, supremacy of the emperor above the law, inviolability of the power of the emperor (Semay ayitares, Negus ayikeses— the sky shall not be tilled, the king shall never be prosecuted/litigated), the entangled nature of the personal and divine status of the king, and the king being the absolute adjudicator in any judicial matters. These narratives and features of a despotic system were legitimated and legally codified in the imperial constitutions*" (Regassa, 2021: 72-73).

Also, among those claimed cosmetic changes included in the imperial constitutional provisions was the introduction of a two-chamber parliament: the Senate (*yeheg Mawossena Meker-bet*), and the Chamber of Deputies (*yeheg Mamria Meker-bet*). Although the Senate and Chamber of Deputies were set to act the roles of the judiciary and the legislative branches consecutively, neither of them was elected by the public nor had legal power (Markakis and Beyene, 1967: 199). They were appointed by the emperor to serve and enable him to maintain a fictional narrative of the existence of constitutional terms bound by fundamental law to limit power or protect and guarantee the rights of individuals, groups or people against an arbitrary exercise of power. As stated above, this monarchical absolutist King did, however, maintained the highest authority over the legislative and the judicial branches, having absolute power to enact new legislation, change existing legislation enacted by parliament, and interfere with court procedures to overturn any decisions including common law precedents.

3. The Eritrean Federation with a Sacral and Ethnocratic Feudal Empire

When the British-led allied powers defeated the Italians in East Africa in World War II, the 50 years of Italian colonial rule in Eritrea came to an end. In April 1941, the British earned a temporary mandate to administer Eritrea under its military administration until September 1952. Therefore, the Treaty of Peace between Allied Powers and the defeated European countries which went into effect on September 15, 1947, required Italy to renounce all claimed titles to its territorial possessions in Africa, including Libya,

Italian Somaliland, and Eritrea (Schiller, 1953: 376). However, instead of allowing the Eritrean people to decide their fate, the Four Powers—Great Britain, the Soviet Union, France, and the United States—were tasked with the decision to dispose or expose the former Italian colony to potential regional occupation. The United Nations General Assembly was to be consulted in the event that the Four Powers were unable to reach a consensus after a year. Consequently, the issue was turned over to the General Assembly after the four countries presented four distinct solutions none of which they could agree on (Ibid). As a result, in November 1949, the General Assembly established a United Nations Commission for Eritrea, which consisted of representatives from Burma, Guatemala, Norway, Pakistan, and the Union of South Africa with a 20-person administrative secretariat. Between February and June 1950, the Commission conducted a survey of the Eritrean populace and also sought inputs from the governments of Egypt, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the Ethiopian feudal monarchy as to the best course of action. But once more the Commission offered three conflicting solutions (Ibid., 366-377). While the representatives of Burma and the Union of South Africa wanted Eritrea and Ethiopia to become a federation "on terms compatible with the self-respect and domestic autonomy of both countries", Norway, on the other hand, sought the reunification of Eritrea with Ethiopia, with the possibility that the Western Province, the lowlands bordering Sudan, would remain under British Administration. The exclusion of the Eritrean lowlands from the unification proposal was because the Eritrean lowlanders (predominantly Muslims) had largely rejected the idea of unification or federation with the ethnocratic sacral empire and demanded full independence.

Of all the commissioners, the representatives from Guatemala and Pakistan seem to have read the subjective and objective conditions of Eritrean society and suggested Eritrea should be placed under a UN trusteeship for a maximum of ten years, after which it should become fully independent. As Albert Dicey (1885) wrote about federalism in his groundbreaking compendium of constitutional law, at least two prerequisites must be met before a federation may be established: objective and subjective preconditions (Albert V. Dicey, 1885: 75-76). The subjective precondition being the people's sentiments, the emotional and psychosocial attachment of the state population with the federal state or federal state to be. The objective precondition of federalism, on the other hand, relates to common memories (memories of war, colonization, etc.), shared historical experience, political creed, ethnic/religious harmony, collective consciousness (i.e., shared mythical/religious beliefs, ideas, attitudes and knowledge) and binding common national identity with the state that intends to share the same political future. Therefore, if the inhabitants don't have the subjective desires and objective features to unite or federate, there is clearly no basis for federalism. The Eritrean people in general, and the Muslim lowlanders in particular, shared neither subjective ambitions nor objective attributes with the Ethiopian empire to aspire for federalism. More importantly, the two types of state unions, federation, and empire, are incompatible with each other in that the former is founded on the consent of the member state(s), whereas the latter is based on force and conquest where the center dominates and

controls the dependencies or peripheries (Olivier, 2018: 1199). Basically, the imperial concept rejects the principal tenet of sovereign equality of states that forms the basis of both contemporary international law and all modern federations (Ibid., 1202). With that context in mind, the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie was seeking the blessing of Great Britain and the United States to occupy Eritrea under the guise of "federation". Although *Abyssinia* lost access to the Red Sea trade routes when the Axumite civilisation crumbled more than 1,300 years earlier, Emperor Haile Selassie continued the mythical and romantic interpretation of history and divine power to maintain and sustain Minelik's legacy of conquest and annexation of adjacent territories that goes as far as claiming historical ownership of Eritrean Red Sea, which was under the Ottoman empire (1517-1865) and then under Italian colonisation (1890-1941). He was campaigning for a regional conquest under a façade of liberating Eritreans from foreign colonial powers stating that "[t]he Ethiopian Government worked continuously for the liberation of the Eritrean brothers and sisters from alien rule, and also to recover the ancient Ethiopian ports in the interests of the prosperity of the whole Ethiopian population…" (Pankhurst, 1952: 59).

While pursuing the international community, Emperor Haile Selassie sent his agents to Eritrea to recruit and bribe some Christian working class, political elites and priests and provided them material resource to buy their loyalty, while terrorizing and demonizing nationalists, neutral politicians, and anyone who stood in the way of the empire's ambition for Sea ownership (Johnson, and Johnson, 1981: 183). To that end, on December 2, 1950, at the United Nations' Fifth Session, the General Assembly drafted and adopted a UN Resolution No. 390 (v) which essentially embodied the proposals of Burma and the Union of South Africa to federate Eritrea with the Ethiopian feudal empire no later than September 15, 1952 (Cumming, 1953: 25). This was contrary to the United Nation's Charter on the principle of self-determination that was ratified in 1945 into the framework of international law and subsequently enshrined in several international treaties which signifies the legal right of people to determine their own fate in the international order (United Nations Charter arts. 1(2); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, art. 1). However, the UN General Assembly voted to federate an autonomous Eritrea with Ethiopia "under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian crown" for ten years, until the end of November 1962, at which point the Eritrean people would vote in a referendum to choose their future (UN Doc. /RES/390 (V), 2 December 1950). The UN General Assembly made the choice for the Eritrean people. The UN Resolution had fifteen articles, the first seven of which laid out the Federal Act or Constitution of the new Federation in which the General Assembly had also adopted the role of legislator (Ibid). As voluntariness is the foundation of consensual federalism or cooperative federalism to achieve mutually shared objectives of the parties involved, the UN had endeavored to make the process appear as voluntary or coercion-free. But it can be argued that playing the roles of legislature, judiciary, and executive from inception to delivery of the imposed federal arrangement constitutes coercion. Hence, a United Nations Commissioner, Dr. Eduardo Anze

Matienzo (Bolivia), was appointed to draft the Eritrean constitution in consultation with the Administering Authority, the Government of Eritrea, and the Eritrean people and to have it adopted by the Eritrean Representative Assembly, approved by the United Nations Commissioner, and ratified by the Emperor of Ethiopia (Ibid., 26). Consequently, the United Nations Commissioner oversaw the election of a Constituent Assembly in accordance with the UN resolution, drafted a constitution, had it ratified by all parties concerned, and witnessed the federation coming into effect on September 15, 1952. So, the autonomous federal unit constituted a democratically elected government (with legislative, executive and judicial powers in domestic affairs including internal police), parliament, and its own flag, free trade unions, and two official local languages (Tigringna and Arabic) to be used in courts, public administration and schools. This was done knowing full well that the imperial laws and the fundamental nature of the empire prohibited everything autonomy entails. Because, nowhere in Ethiopian history can be found any empirical evidence that suggests the existence of any legal instrument, policy principle, or practice that fosters diversity, pluralism, political consensus, politico-economic freedom, ethnolinguistic autonomy, peaceful integration and coexistence between the center and the peripheries. It was all a violence-ridden socioeconomic extraction, religious imposition, ethnic dominance, and forced assimilation into and subordination under a predominantly Amhara-Orthodox-driven colonial empire-building model. Although the Eritrean Assembly was working for the population that elected them, they had neither constitutional protection nor physical security required to pursue the population's best interests, but were driven largely by the emperor via bribes, threats, and fear.

So, it was a "federation" that existed only in the minds of the authors, and it remotely resembles a federation in a contemporary sense. Therefore, the survivability of the cultural, religious, linguistic, economic, and political autonomy of the population and of the democratically elected government operating within an absolutist, assimilationist, ethnocratic, and sacral empire devoid of policy or legal provisions to allow or protect the establishment of a distinct federal government was remarkably predictable. As the political culture was mainly built on the "divine right of king" doctrine, the system of governance is "antithesis of multinational federalism because the former vests all power in the hands of the king in contrast to the federal system, which devolves power not only to lower administrative structures but also to the nations" (Regassa, 2021: 72-73). In the context of a historically framed hierarchal order of the "chosen" *vs.* the "despised" (Ibid., 60), superior vs. inferior, dominant vs. subjugated, and coercive force *vs.* obedient subject modes of dichotomy and asymmetrical relations, "the federal state" had unrestricted power in principle and practice that it's "not so much the existence of a *de facto* federal-like institution but the absence of the liberal principles of consent", self-rule, shared rule, equal rights, accommodation of diversity, the rule of law, and protection of minorities among other things, which defines the nature of the relationships between the center and the periphery (Araya, 1989: 42). In his writing on federalism and union, Burgess highlights the incompatible nature of a sacral, ethnocratic,

and unitarist empire anchored on central control and domination with a contemporary sense of federation as follows:

(1) Federation: A federation is a state with a single people which is characterised by the accommodation of the constituent units of the union in the decision-making procedure of the central government on some constitutionally entrenched basis;
(2) Federation is based on unity and diversity which are formally recognised by the combination of 'self-rule and shared rule' in a written and supreme constitution;
(3) Self-rule and shared rule are combined in at least two orders of government/ governance, each acting directly upon its citizens, in which the constituent units enjoy significant autonomy in matters of local concern but have voluntarily agreed to pool their sovereignty in matters of common concern;
(4) The federal constitution incorporates a formal allocation of powers and competencies between the central and constituent units with a firm basis in sources of revenue and expenditure which provide the framework for fiscal federalism;
(5) The constitution of the federation is not unilaterally amendable by any single order of government. It can be amended only by an overwhelming majority of both the central legislative institutions and the legislative institutions of the constituent units of the federation;
(6) The federation has an umpire in the form of a supreme court to regulate the relations between the central authority and the constituent units, and between the constituent units themselves. It has the unchallengeable legal authority to adjudicate on disputes regarding the constitutionality of respective actions (Burgess, 2000: 268).

While a great number of Eritreans were seeking Eritrean independence like most post-colonial African countries, Great Britain and the United States had favored the concept of a federation of Eritrea under an emperor who was "the highest law-making authority and the highest judge" who was above all laws to freely exercise unrestricted power without being subject to any parliamentary or judicial oversight. As firm allies of their client state emperor, the United States and Great Britain, not only they have initiated the "federal" arrangement but also utilised international law to legitimatise the process and furnish a legal ground suitable for occupation all under the auspices of the United Nations. Consequently, the multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multi-religious Eritreans, who historically were governed by polycentric customary laws were "federated" under a centralized, homogenizing, and assimilationist feudal imperial state. An imperial state that was driven by the dynastic ethos and by the legal dictums of an exclusionary and authoritative ecclesiastical law to expand the imperial nation-building project with *Amharanised* political culture and identity outside the wishes and welfare of the inhabitants of the territories. As expected, two weeks after the formation of the federation, on September 30, 1952, the Ethiopian feudal empire established a Federal

Supreme Court with appellate jurisdiction from the Supreme Court of Eritrea and the authority to interpret the Federal Act—without the consent of the Eritrean people or even consultation of the new Eritrean government—placing the entire federal arrangement at the whim of this imperial court (Cumming, 1953: 31). In genuine federalism, constitutional change necessitates at least the consent of two levels of government: the federal government and the federal member state. Without consent, neither constitution nor political powers can be altered or removed. As Lahra Smith notes, "a citizen is one who makes laws by which he or she lives, whereas a subject doesn't have such claim or ability" (Smith, 2013: 3). Smith's observation underscores that the Eritrean status was drastically relegated from the temporarily assumed citizen to a mere subject of domination who was reduced to fulfill the ambition of the centralised will of a single man veiled behind a "divine power". Be it out of an utter ineptitude or an innocent aspiration for peaceful coexistence, the Eritrean Assembly accepted the fake federalism and believed that they could resuscitate and operate an arrangement that arrived dead. It didn't take much for the emperor to bypass the Eritrean local authorities and begin working directly with the local population to dilute the Assembly's their legitimacy and administrative power, tamper the integrity of the autonomy, and mobilise the public to align with the Christian monarchy.

With the fictional federal arrangement, Eritrea entered into a deep political complication, but also inherited many of Ethiopia's own problems, including the religious and mythical culture of supremacy, domination, exclusion, discrimination, and violence against non-orthodox groups. The *Ethiopianisation* of Eritrea including the vilification of non-Christians and the superimposition of a monotheistic Orthodox Christianity, which was conceived as a prime criterion of Ethiopian identity. It was employed to create a rift among the ethnolinguistically and religiously diverse Eritreans who coexisted in peace, tolerance, and harmony for generations. So, a federal system that elevates a minority-majority, Christian-Muslim, and Amhara-nonAmhara asymmetrical power relations and political dichotomies through its *primordial* fallacies of common biological and religious descent and *priori* ethnolinguistic homogeneity of the dominant group by suppressing the diversity and the voices of minorities is a blueprint of fascism, racism, and ethnonationalism (Marko, 2019: 138-177), which led to conflict and violence. An empire that tolerated only Orthodox Christianity began spreading a toxic political dictum *aslamay ente negese mharede ember aymfereden* "if a Muslim ruled, he would slaughter, not judge" to mobilise Christians against Muslims but also to legitimatise the historical myth that *only Christians have the moral, cognitive and intellectual capacity to rule and to judge*. The imperial campaign of amplifying Christian supremacy and seeking moral justification for religious inequality had an apparent tactical objective of dividing Muslims and Christians, which had resulted in religious and ethnic violence "between Muslim *Tigre* and their Christian counterparts from *Hamassien* and *Serai*, and between the Muslim *Saho* and their Christian neighbours in *Akelle Guzay*. There were frequent Christian assaults on the Muslim minorities in the highlands, known as "*Jiberti*" (Araya, 1990: 86-87). Although the political strategy of

dividing people, driving fear of the "other," and forcing them into total dominance and submission had resulted in temporary polarisation and political turbulence, it had also greatly exacerbated grief and resentment towards the Ethiopian empire, which served the indigenous populations as a rallying point to increase political consciousness and galvanise nationalist aspirations.

While emphasizing on *Amharnizing* Eritrean schools and replacing native teachers with Amharic-speaking Ethiopians (mostly from the Amhara ethnic group) in order to dilute the sociocultural, political, and linguistic diversity, the emperor banned the Eritrean flag, eliminated the press, trade unions, political parties, and instituted Amharic as the official language in violation of the Eritrean constitution before the 10-year grace period had expired. On paper and in principle all matters related to education, labour, tax, public services, social security, exploration and management of natural resources as well as regulation of the industry, internal commerce, trades and professions, and various branches of law (criminal law, civil law, commercial law, etc.) among other elements were within the legal jurisdiction of the autonomous unit (The 1952 Eritrean Const. art. 5 and 6). However, in addition to the number of school teachers assigned by the center, 20% of government workers came from Amhara ethnic groups and occupied the navy, the air force, and the army almost exclusively. Additionally, more than 22% of the remaining employees who managed the social and financial sectors were brought from third countries, despite the fact that unemployment among Eritreans had significantly increased (CIA, 1964; Johnson, and Johnson, 1981). Moreover, the emperor had blocked any foreign investment in Eritrea, including the FIAT car assembly plant, in order to weaken the economic prospects of an autonomous Eritrea. This was done while extracting and diverting away 80.6% of the unit's revenue and resources to the center and dismantling several industries to relocate to Addis Ababa, "a policy reminiscent of the British period when the Protectorate administration had removed Italian docks and factories and sold them off to foreign buyers" (Ibid). Although the purpose of this devious political exercise was designed to destroy and disintegrate a peaceful autonomy, the exploitative and manipulative economic practice of the empire fits Motyl's description of imperial economic monopoly: "a hierarchically organised political system with a hub-like structure–a rimless wheel – within which a core elite and a state dominate peripheral elites and societies by serving as intermediaries for their significant interactions and by channeling resource flows from the periphery to the core" (Motyl, 2001: 4).

In the end, Haile Selassie unilaterally decided to abolish the Federation and annex Eritrea in December 1962 after surrounding the parliament with his forces pressuring the Eritrean Assembly to accept the abrogation of Eritrea's federal status (Johnson, and Johnson, 1981: 83-84). According to UN Commissioner Eduardo Anze Matienzo, the Federal Act was the product of the UN, so the organisation ought to at the very least act as a guarantor of the federal agreement or assign guarantors to ensure Ethiopia upholds its commitments to respect the integrity of the autonomy and protect the collective rights, welfare, dignity, and liberties of the local population pursuant to the

resolution. In his report, he wrote: "[If] it were either to amend or interpret the Federal Act, only the General Assembly as the author of that instrument would be competent to take a decision. Similarly, if the Federal Act were violated, the General Assembly could seize the matter" (United Nations General Assembly, 1952) However, neither the United Nations nor the Allied Powers opposed the annexation. On the contrary, the American counselor to the Ethiopian imperial government, John Spencer, had signaled what the end goal of the federal initiative was and how the UN should react: "if at some time the Eritrean Assembly and Ethiopia should agree to terminate that agreement, the federation itself would be automatically dissolved without any possible recourse or objection by the United Nations" (Spencer, 1983: 236-237). What was even more astonishing was that the US was one of the biggest military aid donors to the emperor in the years following the annexation (Araya, 1989: 46).

Therefore, although the authors and designers of the initiative never intended for Eritrea to establish true federalism, it is possible to argue that the annexation of Eritrea violated international law. It is also possible to demonstrate that supporters of international accords like the United States and Britain had little regard for Eritrea's rights when they supported Ethiopia (in exchange for which the US received the *Kagnew* communications base in Asmara, Eritrea's capital) (Johnson, and Johnson, 1981: 183) and endorsed the annexation. It's worth noting that the annexation took place on the secondary anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The declaration was the decision of the United Nations General Assembly affirming independence for countries and peoples who were under colonial rules which states that "All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development." (UN General Assembly, 1960). Therefore, illegally revoking an autonomy that was crafted and recognised by international law marked the beginning of a 30-year armed struggle, which resulted in the demise of the imperial feudal system. In 1974, Ethiopian armed forces known as the *Derg* (the committee) led by a military colonel, *Mengistu Haile Mariam*, overthrew the emperor and assumed power declaring a "Democratic Republic of Ethiopia". It gave the impression that the revolution had intended to build a democratic state "on the ashes of the archaic empire," but it has practically "perfected the tradition of authoritarianism in the modern setting," (Araya, 1989: 43) with a new benefactor: the Soviet Union. Although the collapse of the sacral monarchy marked the end of the "divine king rights" doctrine and the beginning of the secularisation of the judiciary, a powerful and highly centralised Leninist and Amhara-dominated regime has created a State that was "matched only by Nature and God in unpredictability and power," (Aspen, 2022: 63) where the head of the state was the supreme judge of the land that embodied the emperor's central power consolidation and absolute judicial authority. He perceived that the war in Eritrea was a civil war between *And Hizb* (one people) in an ethnically, religiously and politically homogenizing rhetoric. He swore to continue the emperor's war, massacres, and forced assimilation, and integration, and did so with impunity for

17 years until he was defeated by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). That ended the decades-long bloodshed and resulted in Eritrea's *de facto* independence.

4. Conclusion

Federal systems can be established only if every participating sovereign unit in the system possesses a shared set of goals, interests, and aspirations and are each represented by elected officials who are willing to cooperate with and acknowledge their respective authorities to maintain the equilibrium between "self-rule and shared rule". However, the Ethiopian imperial state institutions, the unelected politicians, and the "godly anointed" emperor who is not accountable to humans and cannot be questioned by human subjects (i.e., only accountable to God) had no federal supreme constitution to limit their coercive powers. Indeed, they had misaligned interests, conflicting objectives, and incompatible ethnocritical ideology devoid of ethnolinguistic, religious and political pluralism and political decentralisation that federal governance entails. Federalism is as good as the intentions of those implementing it, just like any other system of institutions or practises (Hueglin and Fenna, 2006: 357). Hence, the federal arrangement was a trap with no practical exit clause or legal instrument for the autonomy to assert any constitutional rights against the "federal government". There was neither an international guarantor nor a supreme federal constitution to uphold the legal integrity of the federation and to prevent a potential breach of the Federal Act or avoid the accretion of power to the "federal government". Therefore, it is fair to conclude that the federal arrangement was a legal ruse and political *cul-de-sac* designed to mask the true intention of the initiative-forced annexation, integration, and assimilation of post-colonial Eritrea into a regional empire.

Notes on Contributor

Dr. Bahlbi Y. Malk is a senior research scholar and international development practitioner who works at the intersection of migration, (mis)governance, human (in)security, human rights, capacity building, post-war recovery and development, with a particular emphasis on fragile and conflict-affected societies in Africa. He earned his undergraduate degree in Sociology and Social Anthropology from the University of Asmara. He subsequently pursued graduate and postgraduate studies in International Development Studies and Post-war Recovery Studies at Dalhousie University and the University of York. Building upon his earlier academic pursuits, he went on to receive a Ph.D. in Law and Politics from the University of Graz, Faculty of Law. With an interdisciplinary background, he often transcends academic boundaries, operating at the intersections of diverse fields, with a primary interest in the domains of critical security studies, critical refugee studies, and human security studies. Dr. Malk considers himself a product of the global south and north, enabling him to integrate academic and policy perspectives derived from both contexts.

Conflict of Interest

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

References

Albert, V. D. (1885). *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*. All Souls College.

Araya, M. (1989). Preliminary Notes on State and Society: The Current Crisis in Ethiopia. *Northeast African Studies*, *11*(3). https://www.jstor.org/stable/43660383

Araya, M. (1990). The Eritrean Question: An Alternative Explanation. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *28*(1).

Aspen, H. (2022). Models of Democracy – Perceptions of Power. In B. Zewde & S. Pausewang (Eds.), *Ethiopia: The Challenge of Democracy from Below*. Nordiska Afrikainstitutet and Forum for Social Studies, Uppsala.

Asserate, A. W. (2015). *King of Kings: the triumph and tragedy of Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia*. Haus Publishing.

Beaud, O. (2018). Federation and empire: About a conceptual distinction of political forms. *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, *16*(4), 1199-1206. https://doi.org/10.1093/icon/moy103

Brooks, M. F. (Ed.). (1996). *A Modern Translation of the Kebra Nagast: The Glory of Kings*. The Red Sea Press.

Brosché, J. (2008). *Darfur: dimensions and dilemmas of a complex situation*. Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University.

Bulcha, M. (1988). *Flight and integration: Causes of mass exodus from Ethiopia and problems of integration in the Sudan*. Nordic Africa Institute.

Burgess, M. (2000). *Federalism and European Union. The building of Europe 1950–2000*. Routledge.

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). (1964). *Assessment of Eritrea, State Department document (July 14, 1964), declassified and released in November 2002*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP78S05450A000100140003-1.pdf

Clapham, C. (2009). Post-war Ethiopia: the trajectories of crisis. *Review of African Political Economy*, *36*(120).

Cumming, S. D. (1953). The UN disposal of Eritrea. *African Affairs*, *52*(207).

DeCort, A. (June 18, 2023). *Christian Nationalism Is Tearing Ethiopia Apart. Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed's Christian Nationalism Is Tearing the Country Apart*. Foreign Policy (FP). Retrieved Maech 10, 2026 from https://foreignpolicy.com/

The Eritrean federal constitution as ratified, 11 September. (1952). S.n.

Fleiner, T., & Fleiner, L. B. (2009). *Constitutional democracy in a multicultural and globalised world*. Springer Science & Business Media.

Heron, C. A. (2018). A Christian Oasis: The Role of Christianity and Custom in the Laws of Ethiopia. *Cornell International Law Journal*, *51*(3). https://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/cilj/vol51/iss3/

Hueglin, T. O., & Fenna, A. (2006). *Comparative federalism: A systematic inquiry*. Broadview Press.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Dec. 19, 1966, art. 1, 999 U.N.T.S. 171. (1966). S.n.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Dec. 16,1966, art. 1, 993 U.N.T.S. 3. (1993).

Johnson, M., & Johnson, T. (1981). *Eritrea: The national question and the logic of protracted struggle. African Affairs, 80 (319)*. Oxford University Press on behalf of The Royal African Society.

Kaplan, S. (1984). *The Monastic Holy Man and the Christianization of Early Solomonic Ethiopia*. Wiesbaden.

Levine, D. N. (2012). A revised analytical approach to the evolution of Ethiopian Civilization. *International Journal of Ethiopian Studies*.

Mariam , L. H. (1987). The Ethiopian Orthodox church and politics in the twentieth century: part I. *Northeast African Studies*, *9*(3). http://www.jstor.com/stable/43660244

Markakis, J., & Beyene, A. (1967). Representative institutions in Ethiopia. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *5*(2).

Marko, J. (Ed.). (2019). *Law and Sociology: the constructivist and interpretative turn", in Human and Minority Rights Protection by Multiple Diversity Governance: History, Law, Ideology and Politics in European Perspective*. Taylor and Francis Publishing Group.

Messay, K. (1999). *Survival and Modernization—Ethiopia's Enigmatic Present: A Philosophical Discourse*. Red Sea Press.

Messing, S. D. (1957). *The Highland-Plateau Amhara of Ethiopia [PhD Thesis]* Univercity of Pennsylvania]. Pittsburg.

Motyl, A. J. (2001). *Imperial ends. The decay, collapse, and revival of empires*. Columbia University Press.

Munro-Hay, S. (2001). A sixth century Kebra Nagast? Persée-Portail des revues scientifiques en SHS. *In Annales d'Ethiopie*, *17*(1).

Pankhurst, E. S. (1952). *Eritrea on the Eve: The Past and Future of Italy's ''First Born'' Colony, Essex*. Times and Ethiopia News.

Pankhurst, R. (1987). *Fear God, Honor the king": The use of biblical allusion in Ethiopian historical literature, part II.* Northeast African Studies.

Regassa, A. (2021). Self-Determination, Multinational Federalism and an Emerging Threat in Ethiopia: A Decolonial Approach. *Northeast African Studies 21*(2).

Regassa, A. D., & Emmenegger, R. (2023). *The emperor, the lion and the peacock: Monuments and contested state sovereignty in contemporary Ethiopia*. Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space.

Schiller, A. A. (1953). Eritrea: constitution and federation with Ethiopia. *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, *2*, 375. https://doi.org/10.2307/837485

Smith, L. (2013). *Making Citizens in Africa: Ethnicity, Gender, and National Identity in Ethiopia*. Cambridge University Press.

Spencer, J., H. (1983). *Ethiopia at Bay: A Personal Account of the Haile Sellassie Years*. Reference Publications Inc.

Strauss, P. (Ed.). (2019). *The Fetha Nagast: The Law of Kings (translated from Geez by Abba Paulos Tzadua)*. Carolina Academic Press.

Strauss, P. L. (Ed.). (2009). *The Fetha Nagast*. Carolina Academic Press.

Taddesse, T. (1968). *Church and state in Ethiopia, 1270-1527 [PhD Thesis]* University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies]. United Kingdom.

Tareke, G. (1991). *Ethiopia, Power and Protest: Peasant Revolts in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge University Press.

United Nations (UN). (n.d.). *Charter arts. 1(2), 55 (discussing "respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples")*.

United Nations General Assembly. (1952). *Final Report of the United Nations Commissioner in Eritrea. General Assembly Official Records supplement no. 15 (A/2188)*. S.n.

United Nations General Assembly. (1960). *G.A. Res. 1514, U.N. GAOR, 15th Sess., Supp. No. 16, at 66, U.N. Doc. A/L323*.

Vibhute, K. I. (2015). The Judicial System of Ethiopia: From'Empire'to'Military Junta'to'Federal Democratic Republic': A Legacy Perspective. *Christ University Law Journal (ULJ)*, *4*(1).

Yates, B. J. (2020). *The other Abyssinians: the northern Oromo and the creation of modern Ethiopia, 1855–1913*. University of Rochester Press.

Zewde, B. (2000). A century of Ethiopian historiography. *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, *33*(2).

A Critical Appraisal of the Tragedies of Military Coups and Political Instability in Guinea (1984-2021)[1]

Olukayode Bakare[2]

Abstract:

This article examines Guinean political instability and coups from 1984 to 2021, with a focus on events following the death of the country's first president, Touré, in 1984. This is a qualitative study using narrative and historical methods, drawing on documentary evidence, journal articles, textbooks, and online sources. This article contends that, from 1984 to 2021, coups and instability in Guinea have weakened the country's institutional political culture, undermined the constitution, and led to socioeconomic hardships and social polarization. The findings show that the political reality and military intervention in the country's politics cannot be intertwined with an ethnic configuration, but rather with the narrative and the dysfunctional nature of the Guinean political system. The study concludes that for Guinea to transition from the current military rule to civilian rule, it is essential to establish a constructive, participatory democracy that uses state resources for the common good of its citizens. This involves redistributing profits fairly among citizens without relying on ethnic divisions and investing in infrastructure for all, which is essential for political stability and growth.

Keywords:

Authoritarianism; Democracy; Guinea; Insecurity; Military Coups.

[1] DOI: https://10.12700/jceeas.2026.6.1.449

[2] Department of Political Science University of Colorado Denver Colorado, United States. Email: olukayode.bakare@ucdenver.edu; ORCID: 0000-0002-2457-0484

Introduction

Among the complex histories of independence in post-colonial African states, one of the most important is that of the West African nation of Guinea since its independence in 1957 (Whiteman, 1971). After gaining political independence in 1957 and the rise of President Ahmed Sekou Toure's government (1958–1984), through Lansana Conté Camara's rule (1984–2008), President Alpha Condé's administration (2010–2021), to Mamady Doumbouya's leadership (2021-present), the military has played a significant role in Guinean politics (Bah, 2015; Rosenje, Onyebuchi, and Adeniyi, 2021) than any countries in the sub-Saharan Africa. Given the country's abundant natural resources and following the assumption of military rule since the death and ouster of President Ahmed Sekou Toure in 1984, the military has effectively controlled the heart of Guinean politics for more than a quarter-century (Bah, 2015). Guinea's particularity and defining traits of protracted instability are underscored by the long illness of President Conté, which caused a power vacuum, and deep crisis, characterized by weak governance, distrust and serious economic and financial misappropriation, limited capacity of the State to mitigate threats to the population, failed local institutions, and country's proximity to border conflicts (Foumbi, 2012). Despite its internal challenges, its small population, and being in the West African region, where countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Cote d'Ivoire, had experienced civil wars fuelled by natural resources and humanitarian crises, Guinea remains one of the few countries in West Africa that has avoided large-scale, deadly, and humanitarian crises over the past decades in its political affairs with structural problems that have threatened to shatter its fragile peace (Kanafani, 2006) in decades. Nevertheless, the relative peace and the absence of civil war or major conflicts, as witnessed under both the military regimes and short-lived civilian rule in Guinea, in contrast to its volatile neighbours in the West African sub-region, could be likened to a graveyard, characterized by dysfunctional State institutions.

The above raises the question of why and how the prolonged military rule and the alarming poverty rate have contributed to Guinea's political instability since 1984. There is also the question of whether, and to what extent, the military's engagement in Guinea's political affairs since 1984 is a function of the failure of the civilian government and political institutions to stabilize the economy and obey the rule of law, rather than the issue of ethnic polarization within the military, as the driver of military intervention, as much of the existing scholarly literature has argued (Mandian, Daud & Kamaruddin, 2017; Bah, 2016; Ammann & Kaufmann, 2012). Although the ethnic narrative of Civil-Military relations and the military incursion into African politics is long overdue, the conventional reality underpinning the failure of African political institutions to organize and administer an egalitarian political order has been a longstanding issue confronting the continent since decolonization. However, looking at the relatively under-researched case of Guinea's political instability, underpinned by the involvement of the military institution in the country's politics since 1984, this paper argues that the political reality and dynamics of the Guinean political trajectory and instability cannot be intertwined with an ethnic configuration, but rather the narrative and the function of the

dysfunctional nature of the Guinean political system. Thus, this paper examines Guinea's political instability and military involvement in politics following the death of its first executive President, Ahmed Sekou Toure, in 1984.

This paper contributes to the existing debate about Guinea's political affairs. It contributes to evidence-based historical analysis of political events by highlighting the chain of socioeconomic and political factors that have fuelled the country's political instability since its early years of political independence. Also, it contributes to the scholarly debate on understanding the factors behind Guinea's political instability and military coups by proffering diagnostic remedies and measures to address its political challenges and return to democratic, elected governance. It explores the political evolution of Guinea, including military involvement, term extensions, and constitutional crises from 1984 to 2021.

The literature on Guinean political instability since 1984 has examined the significance of the ethnic wedge crisis, such as practices of ethnic manipulation within security institutions, as the leading cause of coup attempts (Harkness, 2016; Ammann, 2012; Kanafani, 2006; Kposowa & Jenkins, 1993). However, there is limited systematic analysis examining the theoretical and empirical links between societal conditions that enable coups and the dominance of military institutions in African politics (Bukari & Braimah, 2023; Wells, 1974). This literature tends to essentialize ethnicity, viewing it as the primary driver of coups d'état and long-lasting rule in Guinea, rather than recognizing it as a social condition rooted in Guinea's socio-economic and authoritarian context from 1984 to 2023. This oversight prevents scholars and analysts from gaining a complete and nuanced understanding of Guinean coups and political instability within the development framework. It also limits the consideration of socio-economic factors and the guardian perspective, which sees these as the main motivating forces behind military coups and constitutional violations in Guinea since 1984.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Section One explains the conceptual and theoretical frameworks. Section Two examines the country's early political history. The third section traces the development of military intervention in Guinea's politics. Section Four investigates the political transition and the roles of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) in Guinean politics. Section Five discusses democracy in disguise and the state of chaos in Guinea. Section Six considers the political environment surrounding tenure extensions and the decline of democracy in Guinea. Section Seven focuses on the end of authoritarian rule and the disruption of democracy in Guinea, while the final section offers a conclusion.

Conceptual and Theoretical Discussion

Coup d'État

In this study, I define coup d'état as the sudden and violent overthrow of an existing government by a faction or small group within the armed forces (McGowan, 2003). While a coup d'état can involve illegal and overt attempts by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to remove the sitting official (Powell & Thyne, 2011), I use

this concept to illustrate both successful and attempted removals of the chief executive or head of state (including his assassination), the displacement of regime officials or leaders by the coup perpetrators, the suspension of constitutional order, and even the dissolution of legislatures and banning of political parties in Guinea from 1984 to 2025.

Modernization Theory

According to modernization theory (Huntington, 2006), postcolonial states, or new nations that have emerged from imperial socio-economic and political dominance, have struggled with economic development, social mobilization, and political participation among the people. As postcolonial societies, they inherited weak institutional systems characterized by patrimonial and clientelist practices that lacked enough coherence to govern effectively (Huntington, 2006). Many African nation-states have manipulated and adopted constitutional autocracies characterized by factionalized multiparty systems, resulting in political divisions, deadlocks, and unresponsive governments. When civilian regimes fail to keep up with socio-economic progress and mass political involvement, the military often intervenes and enacts exclusionary measures, which then trigger further political instability (Jenkins and Kposowa, 1990). From a development or governance standpoint, analysts in this school of thought argue that coups d'état happen when the military believes that either the economy or regime legitimacy is in crisis. In such cases, coup plotters see it as an unavoidable and illegal action – the only way to save the situation (Londregan & Poole, 1990; Belkin & Schofer, 2003; Thyne, 2010). For instance, after the failed coup attempt against Liberian President Samuel Doe, Thomas Quiwonpka was "captured, tortured, castrated, dismembered, and parts of his body publicly eaten by Doe's victorious troops" (Hubband, quoted in Thyne & Powell, 2016). To purge and save the system, Doe ruthlessly murdered about 3,000 members of the Gio and Mano ethnic groups in retaliation. In military coups, leaders seeking regime change often prefer to exhaust other legal avenues before resorting to violence (Thyne & Powell, 2016).

Development Thesis and Guardian Perspective

The guardian perspective on a coup d'état suggests that the military intervenes in politics to protect the nation from widespread discontent and a lack of progress in nation-building, which is exacerbated by tribalism and the systemic failure of the civilian ruling elite (Onwumechili, 1988) to promote development, integration, and a cohesive political culture within the state. For instance, Wiking (1983) notes that the coup launched and executed by Major General Juvenal Habyarimana in Rwanda in 1973 was justified solely on the grounds of ongoing national polarization and disunity during President Gregoire Kayibanda's leadership. Similarly, Idi Amin's military intervention in Uganda in 1971 aimed to prevent further deterioration of Ugandan leader Milton Obote's ethnic policies against the Ganda people.

McBride (2004) and Collier and Hoeffler (2007) emphasize internal factors within the military that contribute to coups d'état. McBride (2004) argues that the military intervenes in politics, driven by personal greed and motivated by a desire for wealth and privilege, leading them to seize power or control state resources. According to Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler (2007), the motivations for violent military coups in Africa are rooted in economic, political, and social grievances. Regarding the difference between rebellion and coup from a grievance perspective, the military establishment is considered part of the state. In the African context, it is often integrated into the clientelist and primordial state structure. Collier and Hoeffler note that rebellions and coups against civilian regimes tend to occur when the military is excluded from power and its benefits. Furthermore, government policies of sectional redistribution are likely to favour and provoke the section or group that dominates the military.

Methodology

The scope of this study is Guinea, which has experienced more political instability and military coups than any other country in sub-Saharan Africa since the post-colonial period. Since the death of Guinea's longest-serving president, Sékou Touré, in 1984, the country has been embroiled in a political quagmire and a democratic deficit. Bah (2015) notes that since Guinea gained independence in 1958, the country has faced threats to its stability stemming from deep-seated divisions among its major ethnic groups, which are aligned along clear cultural fault lines. Guinea is also one of the West African countries plagued by constitutional tinkering, tenure elongation, and military intervention, which have not only endangered democratic stability and consolidation but also threaten the sustainability of democracy in the West African sub-region (Rosenje, Onyebuchi, and Adeniyi, 2022). While the historical and ongoing political instability in Guinea is not unique itself, other West African states such as Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and Chad have also been experiencing military coups. However, given the history of political instability and successive military coups in Guinea, ECOWAS's sanctions have been ineffective and counterproductive in stopping the wave of coups in the region. The data collection method for this study is qualitative, relying on secondary sources, and the analysis was conducted using historical and thematic approaches.

Guinea and its Early Political History

An examination of Guinea's political histories, regimes, and military coups highlights how leadership has extended its tenure and manipulated the constitution to stay in power. Since gaining independence in 1957 and the rise of Ahmed Sekou Toure's regime (1958–1984), Guinea has struggled with threats to stability stemming from polarization among its main ethnic groups (Bah, 2015). Successive leaders have faced insecurity due to the region's unstable neighbours in the Sahel. Ahmed Sekou Toure, the first elected President of Guinea, governed from 1958 until he died in 1984. Under the slogan of "freedom in poverty rather than slavery in affluence," he rallied the population to vote

95.5% "no" against maintaining ties with France. Subsequently, accusations of destabilization plots against regional rivals, including Côte d'Ivoire's Houphouet Boigny, Senegal, and France, became common. These accusations culminated in the failed 1971 invasion led by Portuguese officers based in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (Kamara, 2001). Ironically, with the active involvement of the National Militia, Toure stayed in power despite polarization and politicization within the military.

The militia was alleged to have been 'materially spoiled' by President Toure, weakening the army's ability to perform its national duties despite resource shortages and blockades from the East. Recognized alongside the Guinean army, the militia played a key role in repelling the Portuguese-led attack on Guinea on 22 November 1970. After defending against the invasion, the National Militia was further strengthened and placed directly under the Presidency's supervision, with minimal ties to the Ministry of National Defence (Bah, 2015). Given the continuous dominance of the Guinean National Militia in the country's political life and defence apparatus, amid divisions within the army, President Ahmed Sékou Touré's 26-year rule (1958–1984) was marked by violence against political opponents. Many prominent activists and opponents he suspected of disloyalty were either forced into exile or killed (Bangura, 2018).

Furthermore, as economic conditions worsened, insecurity, smuggling, and illegal market activities increased; Touré's public trust and support steadily declined. His actions no longer impressed most Guineans, who faced a deteriorating standard of living. Touré aimed to meet and satisfy the demand for improved economic conditions without losing his tight control over the nation. However, despite some economic reforms he introduced for the masses, the changes implemented in late 1982 triggered significant upheaval, ultimately leading to the 3 April 1984 coup d'état, which ended thirty years of Touré's government since 1958. On 26 March 1984, Touré died in a hospital in Cleveland, Ohio (United States), where he was undergoing heart surgery following a major heart attack (O'Toole & Baker, 2005). The military, which Touré had built and equipped for regime stability and to defend the nation against invasions and existential threats, later turned against the state and overthrew his government due to ongoing political repression, authoritarianism, and declining socio-economic development.

The Journey of Military Intervention in Guinean Politics

The military intervention in Guinean politics began after the death of Touré and the removal of Louis Lansana Beavogui, who had succeeded Touré as interim president. However, because little has changed since Touré's death and because of the insecurity posed by unstable neighbouring countries bordering Guinea, as well as Touré's failure to build democratic institutions that ensure peaceful political transitions, Beavogui's interim government was short-lived. It was overthrown on 3 April 1984 by the military led by Lieutenant Colonel Lansana Conté (Darboe, 2010). Ordinances, decrees, and presidential declarations govern the new military regime. It established the Military Committee of National Recovery (CMRN), which drafted the new constitution and

created the Supreme Court of Guinea in 1990. The government pledged to liberalize the economy and promote foreign direct investment to utilize the country's natural resources (Darboe, 2010). As the economy continued to decline, and after his newly formed Party of Unity and Progress (PUP) won the elections of 1993 and 1998 with over 51% and 71.4% of votes cast respectively, Conté announced in mid-June 2000 his plan to hold a referendum to amend the constitution, enabling him to run for a third term (Darboe, 2010; O'Toole & Baker, 2005). Amid international pressure, widespread social movements, and pro-democracy protests, the Conté government introduced a new constitution, which was adopted by referendum in 1990 (Camara, 2016).

On 30 June 2002, the Guinean legislative elections were reported to be marred by irregularities and boycotted by opposition parties led by Alpha Condé and Sidia Touré. Subsequently, his third disputed election on 21 December 2003 was followed by strikes and demonstrations in 2006 and 2007. The long-time president, after severe repressions and brutality that caused thousands of injuries and deaths, finally bowed to the unrest and pressure from the population, appointing a Prime Minister chosen by unions and civil society organizations (Bangoura, 2015). News about Conté's health that emerged in September 2004 resembled the case of President Sekou Touré's final hours. During his rule, Conté seemed to play a political game of managing factions against each other to prevent anyone in his government from unseating him. His failure to groom a successor led to political instability after his death (Darboe, 2010; O'Toole & Baker, 2005).

In the context of a worsening, stagnant national economy, as experienced throughout Conté's administration, multiparty politics was introduced amid unfavourable terms and conditions imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for economic reform. A socio-economic crisis and a lack of free and fair elections made democratization impossible. They hampered the process from 1993 to the end of Conté's presidency in 2008, with international and regional organizations employing "stick-and-carrot" diplomacy to manage the situation and eventually achieve lasting stability. The interventions of both international and regional organizations that were crucial in bringing relative peace and stability proved more significant after Conté's death on 22 December 2008, when an unknown army captain named Moussa Dadis Camara – until then barely recognized and unknown outside military circles – staged a coup "on behalf of a junta called Conseil national pour la démocratie et le développement (CNDD) [National Council for Democracy and Development]" and unseated Conté (Souare, 2009).

As a standard practice among all military juntas during a coup, the new military regime announced the dissolution of the National Assembly and then suspended the state constitution. While the military juntas were said to have received widespread support across the country and from Guineans living abroad, the coup was condemned and opposed by the international community, including the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (Souare, 2009). The new military regime quickly began dissolving the national legislature and suspending the constitution;

rumours suggested rivalry and disunity could cause tension between Daddis Camara's supporters and opponents, and looming economic challenges may threaten Guinea's future stability. Although Camara initially appointed a civilian prime minister and promised to transfer power back to civilians within six months, in August 2009, elections were postponed from late 2009 to early 2010. He also expressed his intention to run for president, contradicting his earlier statement that neither he nor any other members of the CNDD would seek office during the elections. Following these events, on 28 September 2009, soldiers opened fire on protesters gathered in various locations in Conakry who were protesting the CNDD and Daddis Camara's alleged presidential ambitions. It is estimated that the death toll exceeded 150 persons, and reports indicate that many women were raped and dehumanized by soldiers (Arieff & Cook, 2009). Once again, the international community did not hesitate to press against Camara's regime. For example, after the September 28 crackdown, the United States condemned Camara's actions, called for his resignation, and announced visa sanctions against CNDD members and other supporters. Similarly, the AU, the ECOWAS, and the EU imposed arms and economic embargoes, with the AU and EU implementing additional targeted sanctions on CNDD members and affiliates (Arieff & Cook, 2009) to destabilize the regime and prevent a return to civilian rule.

Despite regional and international efforts following the 2008 coup, it can be argued that the actions were mainly aimed at restoring democracy and constitutional governance rather than preventing massacres and atrocities, leaving many perpetrators unprosecuted and atrocity risk factors unaddressed in Guinea (Stefan, 2021). As divisions and unrest grew within the military ranks of Camara's-led junta, with increasing tensions and crackdowns on Guineans, dialogue about the democratic transition process broke down: the junta blocked the creation of a National Transitional Council – a crucial step toward civilian rule; media and political discussions were banned; civil society organizations and political party leaders became targets of military crackdowns; intimidation and the formation of CNDD-related militias across the country created a destabilizing environment locally and fostered mistrust among military perpetrators (Kaye, 2018). Camara's lack of commitment to genuinely returning the government to civilian control, along with ongoing delays in electoral preparations, fuelled suspicions and fears among many CNDD members and Camara's supporters that the junta was hesitant to relinquish power (Arieff & Cook, 2009). While Camara maintained control amid human rights abuses, sanctions, membership suspensions, and the ICC's preliminary investigation cast doubt on his regime, stigmatizing the junta and its allies, further emphasizing Guinea's departure from human rights principles, and isolating the country from the international community (Stefan, 2021).

Following a series of domestic revulsions and intense outside condemnation, and amidst the brutality of the Camara-led regime, it is recorded that "tens of thousands of Guineans were victims of political violence. Thousands more were imprisoned for opposing the government, and federal forces drove as many as one million citizens into exile" (Fogarty, 2010). Captain Camara was shot in the head by his aide-de-camp,

Aboubacar Sidiki Diakité, in December 2010. Camara was flown out of Guinea for treatment. Later, the de facto leadership, led by General Sékouba Konaté, who was reportedly not in Guinea during the massacre, quickly acquiesced and adopted a reconciliatory stance (Harsch, 2010). The failed assassination of Moussa Dadis Camara on 3 December 2009, carried out by Aboubacar Sidiki Diakité, destabilized and unsettled the country, which was already on the verge of collapse and disintegration after four decades of political turmoil (Koko, 2010).

It is important to recognize that ECOWAS diplomatic efforts were part of the broader and concerted actions of the international community, which were deeply involved in maintaining peace and stability in West Africa (Camara, 2016). From this perspective, and following transitional guidelines, the two parties brokered a peace agreement on 15 January 2010. Captain Camara and General Konaté signed an agreement in which Camara agreed to stay in exile. General Konaté promised to consult Guinea's political parties, civil society, and unions to prepare for a democratic transition (Harsch, 2010).

Political Transition and the Role of ECOWAS and the African Union

After a long period of democratic deficit and political instability in Guinea, on 27 June 2010, with support from the ECOWAS, the AU, and the International Coalition on Guinea, under the leadership of General Konaté, Guinea peacefully held its first democratic elections amid allegations of election fraud and an inconclusive result that sparked protests and clashes by demonstrators against security forces (Obi, 2011; Kikoler, 2015). However, after the first round held on June 27, the two leading candidates, Cellou Diallo and Alpha Condé, qualified for a second, "decisive round," scheduled for 19 September 2010, which was postponed due to political infighting (Engel, 2010). Although run-off elections took place in November, the leading candidates fuelled an ethnic political crisis, tensions, and polarization along ethnic lines: "the former represented the Malinke (believed to have produced all presidents to date and well represented in the junta), and the latter represented the Peul or Fulani ethnic group" (which had not produced a president) (Obi, 2011).

Moreover, the two leading candidates have different political backgrounds: Condé is a long-standing opposition leader and politician who spent time in exile, particularly after Guinea's post-independence period. Meanwhile, Diallo was widely seen as a political insider (Arieff, 2014). However, after the November run-off election, amid protests, objections, and accusations from the opposition, Alpha Condé was declared the winner. The new government took steps to calm the unrest that marred the election. At the same time, international observers noted that the overall conduct of the election was acceptable, though they highlighted challenges related to logistics, delays in the run-off, ethnic tensions, and election-related violence (Obi, 2011; Arieff, 2014). Therefore, Guinea successfully transitioned from military rule to democratic governance following highly contested elections in 2010. Still, the sustainability of this new democracy under President Alpha Condé's leadership will depend on the government's ability to address

societal contradictions constructively, fairly, and inclusively. This involves engaging the country's diverse groups and stakeholders, as will be discussed in the next section.

Democracy in Disguise and a State of Anarchy

Following the turmoil and political experimentation after Guinea's era of military autocracy and authoritarianism, and amid ongoing tensions from 2009 to 2010, a political transition occurred in 2010. Alpha Condé was elected Guinea's first democratically elected president in November 2010 and later re-elected in October 2015 for a second term. Additionally, local elections were finally held in February 2018, after a thirteen-year delay (Kaye, 2018). Both the 2010 and 2015 presidential elections reportedly experienced violence; several people were killed, and serious clashes broke out between security forces and opposition parties, while legislative elections were postponed multiple times (Stefan, 2021). Following the political unrest and insecurity that preceded the electoral process that brought President Alpha Condé to power, President Condé, who was declared the winner of the 2010 election, announced and requested a complete overhaul and reform of the national security system through the creation of a Security Sector Reform Advisory Team (SSRAT) to provide strategic guidance to the national government (Kaye, 2018). Central to Guinea's successive regimes are: the civilian autocracy of President Sékou Touré, who led Guinea from independence in 1957 until he died in 1984; the military and authoritarian regimes (1984-2008) under General-President Lansana Conté; and finally, the regime (2008-2009) of Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, who was ousted from power after a failed coup attempt and an assassination attempt on his life. President Alpha Condé became the first political leader in Guinea to demonstrate clear commitment and political will toward security sector governance, with support from various state and non-state actors (Bangoura, 2015; Kaye, 2018). Later, President Condé established the National Human Rights Commission, led by Mamady Kaba, "a civil society activist and former president of the Guinean chapter of the African Assembly for the Defence of Human Rights," aimed at improving the country's human rights situation (Bangoura, 2015). Despite security reforms, the justice system remains very weak, as growing concerns and allegations by Human Rights Watch highlight human rights abuses, "including the beating to death of two men and the rape of a woman by mobs linked to the opposition" (Human Rights Watch, 2016). The elections were highly controversial and were followed by widespread protests and political violence, with the opposition boycotting (Philipps, 2021). During Alpha Condé's second term, impunity was extended to the security sector and militias involved in criminal acts and violent activities, including "the alleged killing by the security forces of some 130 unarmed demonstrators in 2007, some 60 opposition supporters protesting the delay in holding parliamentary elections in 2013-14, and at least 10 people in the run-up to the 2015 presidential poll" (World Report, quoted in Kaye, 2018).

The Political Climate of Tenure Elongation and the End of a Failed Democracy

A referendum on constitutional reforms and amendments was held during President Conté's rule on 11 November 2001. In this vote, 98.4% of ballots supported President Conté's bid for a third term, extending his tenure from a five-year limit to a ten-year limit, despite an opposition boycott (Heath-Brown, 2015). Although the attempt to secure a third term did not succeed during President Conté's administration, rumours have circulated in political discussions since President Condé's second term in 2015, suggesting he would seek a third term by amending the constitution. Condé pointed out that the 2010 constitution lacked legitimacy because it was adopted under the National Transitional Council and "had not been submitted to a referendum; therefore, it was not 'legally constitutional'" (Philipps, 2021). Although the world hoped that Guinea's transition to democracy in 2010 would strengthen its democratic processes in future elections, it did not achieve the expected success. For example, many diplomatic missions and authorities in Guinea made multiple efforts to persuade Condé not to pursue a third term and to ensure free, fair elections with an equal playing field for all political parties. However, he rejected these efforts from the international community, leading to consequences that undermined the democratic process and electoral laws. Condé took drastic measures and encouraged the military to strike (Ilo, 2022), allowing him to run for another presidential term. The 22 March 2019 referendum on a third term resulted in 89.76% of votes in favour. However, it was challenged by the EU, ECOWAS, the US, and the AU, all of which declined to oversee the referendum because one-third of registered voters lacked official voting materials. Condé and his party, RPG – Rassemblement du Peuple Guinéen – organized a strategic move commonly used by many African leaders to cling to power as "life presidents".

President Condé's drive and ambition to serve a third term and alter the constitution faced significant obstacles and are an exception. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, President Ouattara secured a third term after a flawed constitutional debate, "with regional bodies papering over the fundamental flaws of the process and its grave consequences for the country's post-civil war reconciliation" (Ilo, 2022). When President Talon of Benin amended the constitution to facilitate his re-election, he faced no pushback from regional bodies, and dissenting voices within Benin were ignored (Ilo, 2022). The case of President Condé changing the constitution to pursue a third term took on a different dimension from that of his counterparts, who had successfully amended their constitutions to extend their tenures in sub-Saharan Africa.

Condé's approach reflected a political strategy to shift the narrative around his third-term bid into an ethnic-religious power play (Bangura, 2022). Meanwhile, amid fierce demonstrations, protests, and calls for ECOWAS to restore constitutional order and democracy in Guinea, civil society organizations, youth groups, the National Front for the Defence of the Constitution (NLF), and the Guinean opposition mobilized protesters and activists demanding the resignation of Alpha Condé (Ghirardello & Benedikter, 2020). Since Condé's counterparts in other sub-Saharan countries had secured their

terms without facing state backlash, Condé's efforts to extend his tenure took a different path. He leveraged the state machinery to pass a referendum on March 22, which led to the presidential election on 18 October 2020. Amid the polarization and tension following his successful bid for a third term, opposition parties had no choice but to participate in the elections. All Guinean nationals living abroad, including in France, Switzerland, and Germany, criticized the elections, deeming them undemocratic and fraudulent (Ghirardello & Benedikter, 2020).

The End of the Authoritarian Reign and the Truncation of Democracy

Incumbent President Alpha Condé won the election with 59.5% of the vote, followed by the leading opposition candidate, Cello Calein Diallo of the United Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG), who received 33.49% (Amoah, 2023). Meanwhile, the constitutional limits for Condé's two-term presidency expired in 2020. It is essential to recall that the March 22 referendum revised the maximum term limits to three terms, thereby enabling Condé's re-election in October 2020. However, in the interest of Guinea's democratic principles, on 5 September 2021, an American-trained military officer, Mamady Doumbouya, led a coup d'état to overthrow President Alpha Condé (Thrall & Cohen, 2021), ending his eleven-year rule in Guinea (Ilo 2022). The junta justified Condé's ouster based on constitutional violations, human rights abuses, poor socio-economic performance, insecurity, and financial mismanagement (Adetuyi, 2022). Doumbouya then became president of the National Committee for Reconciliation and Development, known as the Comité National de Rassemblement et du Développement (CNRD). On 28 September 2021, he was sworn in as interim president. Mohamed Beavogui, a former UN employee and agricultural expert, was also sworn in on 6 October 2021, as interim prime minister (Benedikter, 2021). Furthermore, Doumbouya's commitment to returning power to civilians included a pledge to rely heavily on the interim prime minister, to ensure that no member or associate of the CNRD would run for elective office in future elections, and that a return to democratic order was expected in early 2022 (Benedikter & Barry, 2021).

The African Union, as usual, responded by issuing a statement condemning the coup and calling for the military junta to release Condé (Ginsburg, 2022). The AU and ECOWAS responded by suspending Guinea's membership. Meanwhile, the US expressed concern that the ECOWAS bloc has not made progress in establishing a transitional timeline or organizing elections, as previously agreed upon by the military junta (US Department of State, 2021; Samb, 2012). It is also important to note that the coup was welcomed by some Guineans who saw it as an end to the atrocities and impunity committed by Condé. For example, Guinea's prominent opposition leader, Cellou Dalein Diallo, supported the military coup, saying it represented a new beginning for Guinea and expressing his readiness to participate in a transition to a new government (BBC, 2021; Samb, 2012).

The military overthrow by the junta and their commitment to restore Guinea to civil rule since 2021 have received mixed reactions from both local and international

communities. For example, Nzally (2022) argues that many political transitions in Africa often hinder and delay the possibility of holding transparent and credible elections due to instability, political violence, coups, and authoritarianism. Similarly, political developments such as military coups or conflicts in many African countries, including Burkina Faso (2022), Niger (2023), Gabon (2023), Liberia (2011 to date), Somalia (1991 to date), Mali (2021 to date), and Chad (2021 to 2025), have led to election delays and an unstable democratic transition to civil rule. Thus, democratic transition in these countries has remained uncertain due to a fragile, unstable political environment (Nzally, 2022), as evidenced by numerous military coups and conflicts across Africa. Consequently, since the military's takeover of Guinea in September 2021, the situation has remained unchanged.

Similarly, Guineans welcomed the coup to address the wrongs committed by the deposed Condé and to restore constitutional order. In that case, the question remains whether the coup plotters are prepared to meet the transition's deadline. Additionally, there is concern about ECOWAS and the AU's ability to restore constitutional order, enforce sanctions, and ensure compliance with the framework on unconstitutional changes of government in Guinea. However, given the failures and experience of both the AU and ECOWAS in conflict management, condemning coups, and restoring democracy in Africa, except Gambia (2017), Sierra Leone (1997-98), and Burkina Faso (2015), it is unlikely that the current military junta in Guinea will soon return the country to constitutional governance. Benedikter (2022) supports this view and notes that the young military junta has tasted power and is being encouraged by their families, allies, cronies, and ethnic groups "towards securing spaces of influence and thus cannot, or does not want to, organise a transition quickly to hand over responsibility to civilian representatives."

Conclusion

This paper examines the impacts stemming from Guinea's long history of failed socioeconomic development, weak institutional structures, and political control by military and civilian regimes from 1984 to 2021. As discussed in this paper, considering Guinea's history of coups from 1984 to 2021, successive military juntas and authoritarian civilian governments have predominantly shared power, often citing the need to protect the country from insecurity, economic hardship, and political corruption by elites. However, public support for coups is closely linked to Guinea's ongoing political instability. Democracy suffers when elected governments fail to uphold fundamental democratic principles, such as free speech, regular elections, and economic prosperity for the people. As demonstrated in many African countries, the justification for military coups in Guinea since 1984 has frequently been the need to save the nation from imminent collapse. In many cases, the various military regimes in Guinea since 1984 have failed to demonstrate strong political will and commitment to transforming the country. For example, as Phillips (2022) argues, since Doumbouya's installation as military Head of State in 2021, "critical voices from civil society and political parties

remained few and low." The various military regimes in Guinea have deprived the country of an effective institutionalized political system and culture, disrespected the constitution, and caused socio-economic hardships and social polarization.

This paper highlights important policy implications and historical reflection from Guinea's political instability since 1984. For example, as noted by Koonings and Kruijt (2002), military regimes have become synonymous with widespread violation of human rights and repression by the state security apparatus against their population, unaccountable and corrupt governments, and illegitimate status within the international community. After the transition to civil rule in 2010 and following a 2008 military coup and decades of authoritarian governance, Guinea's political landscape has been characterized by political corruption, crackdown on dissent, and flagrant abuse of citizens by the State Special Security Forces. Since September 2021, coup leaders have delayed the transition to civilian rule, with increased incarceration of critics and brutalization of protesters (Freedom House, 2024). The coups in Guinea have not led to significant changes or positive developments, as successive military juntas have often claimed to justify their actions. Likewise, the brief periods of civilian rule in the country have not improved the system but have instead taken it in the wrong direction. Ultimately, what the future holds for Guinea's political transition remains uncertain, and it is doubtful that the current transitional military government will yield to pressure from regional and international organizations to restore constitutional governance. The military's involvement for four decades underscores the country's unusual endurance of a long period of internal peace in the absence of a democratic order, compared with other West African nations with relatively stable democracies that have experienced devastating civil wars and political violence.

Guinean society is currently in a transition phase, and it is essential to establish a constructive and effective participatory democracy to use state resources for the common good. This involves redistributing profits fairly among citizens without relying on ethnic divisions and investing in infrastructure for all, which is essential for political stability and growth. Furthermore, aligning Guinea's financial, mining, industrial, and economic policies with those of open democratic societies, rather than with those of authoritarian powers such as Russia or China, could help Guinea move toward meaningful development and build closer ties with Western democracies (Benedikter, 2022). However, the case of Guinean political instability since 1984 is not an exception in the current political landscape in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, the unfolding political dynamics, the rise of illiberal democracies, such as Cameroon, Mozambique, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, and military coups in Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali, threaten Western democracy in the absence of strong sub-regional and regional institutions to enforce compliance with the norms of the liberal order. It appears that the way African leaders practice democracy differs from that in the West. ECOWAS and the AU must fulfil their mandate to promote and strengthen democracy in the region, as many have criticized these organizations' inability and inefficiency in enforcing democracy and imposing sanctions against many authoritarian

civilian African leaders, who often provoke the military to overthrow them due to poor socio-economic conditions, corruption, insecurity, and electoral crises ravaging the region. Given the peculiar and resilient nature of Guinea's military rule and short-lived democracy from 1984 to 2021, further research could extend beyond the study's findings by examining the role of key external factors, such as the USA, France, and the United Nations, in Guinea, particularly in the context of the absence of internal political violence and a devastating civil war that may have been triggered by persistent military incursions into the country's politics since the past decades.

Acknowledgement

This is to acknowledge that this paper has not benefited from any funding.

Notes on Contributor

Dr. Bakare earned his PhD on international relations from the University of Aberdeen, UK, and has held teaching and research roles at various universities in Nigeria and the United Kingdom. Dr. Bakare has played key roles in academic forums within his field and has presented at many international conferences. He recently serviced as a visiting scholar and researcher in International Relations at the Department of Politics, School of Global and International Affairs, State University of New York at Oswego, New York, USA. He has also been a Visiting Fellow in Security and Statecraft at the London School of Economics and Political Science's Department of International Relations, UK. Additionally, he has served as a Teaching Associate, Seminar Leader, and Visiting Fellow in international affairs at Durham University's School of Government and International Affairs in Durham.

Conflict of Interest

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

References

Adetuyi, A. (2022). Resurgence of Military Coups in Africa: Reassessing the Role of the African Union and ECOWAS. *Relevant and Candid Dialogue*, *17*.

Ammann, C., & Kaufmann, A. (2012). Politics Of Ethnicity In Monrovia, Liberia And Kankan, Guinea – A Comparative Analysis. *Mande Studies*, *14*, 57-97. https://doi.org/10.2979/mnd.2012.a873585

Amoah, M. (2023). Extending term limits, constitutional referendums and elections in francophone Africa. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, *7*(1), 100454. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2023.100454

Arieff, A. (2014). *Guinea: In Brief*. Congressional Research Service. https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20141219_R40703_c0408908fa72d1579006812f42d18528c2b0c125.pdf

Arieff, A., & Nicolas, C. (2010). *Guinea: Background and Relations with the United States*. Congressional Research Service. https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20100322_R40703_33ec11a8e85e64a2103f62202cff613c4b7f798c.pdf

Bah, M. (2015). The Military and Politics in Guinea: An Instrumental Explanation of Political Stability. *Armed Forces & Society*, *41*, 69-95. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X13495391

Bah, M. D. (2016). Stability in deeply divided societies: escaping ethnic-based armed conflict in Guinea. *African Identities*, *14*(4), 291–307.

Bangura, I. (2018). Young People and the Search for Inclusion and Political Participation in Guinea. *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, *8*(1), 54-72. https://doi.org/10.2979/africonfpeacrevi.8.1.03

Bangura, I. (Ed.). (2022). *Youth-led social movements and peacebuilding in Africa*. Routledge.

Belkin, A., & Schofer, E. (2003). Toward a Structural Understanding of Coup Risk. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *47*(5), 594-620. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3176221

Benedikter, R. (2021). *Prospects for Guinean elections after the coup are uncertain*. Africa at LSE. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/113016/1/africaatlse_2021_11_23_prospects_for_guinea_elections_democracy_after.pdf

Benedikter, R. (2022). *Ethnic politics is complicating Guinea's transition to elections*. Africa at LSE. Retrieved December 07, 2025 from https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/113016/1/africaatlse_2021_11_23_prospects_for_guinea_elections_democracy_after.pdf

British Broadcast Corporation (BBC). (September 8, 2021). West African leaders suspend Guinea from ECOWAS following coup. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-58487925

Bukari, G., & Braimah, A. I. (2023). The re-emergence of coup d'états in Africa: Theoretical and empirical connections. *Russian Law Journal*, *11*(5), 1-9.

Camara, M. (2016). Political Crisis and ECOWAS-Mediated Transition in Guinea. Stichproben. *Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien*(16), 9-35.

Cellou, B. (March 11, 2015). *Guinea's Condé wins re-election in disputed presidential vote*. Retrieved November 10, 2025 from https://www.france24.com/en/20151017-guinea-conde-wins-election-disputed-presidential-vote

Collier, P., & Hoeffler, A. (2005). *Coup Traps: Why Does Africa Have So Many Coups D'etat?* University of Oxford Working Paper.

Cort, L. L. (1982). *The quest for socio-economic and political change in Guinea: aspects of the political ideology of Ahmed Sekou Toure*. Boston University Graduate School.

Darboe, A. (2010). *The Gambia: 1994–Present. Summary of the Events Related to the Use or Impact of Civil Resistance*. International Center for Nonviolent Conflict.

Deutsch, K. (1961). Social mobilization and political development. *American Political Science Review*, *55*(3), 493-514.

Diallo, G. (1990). *The philosophy of Ahmed Sekou Toure and its impact on the development of the Republic of Guinea: 1958-1971*. City University of New York.

Engel, U. (2010). *Unconstitutional Changes of Government: new AU policies in defence of democracy* (Vol. 9 Working Paper Series). Leipzig University.

Fogarty, B. (2010). Guinea's golden boy: Dore's dangerous balancing act. *Harvard International Review*, *32*(1), 22-25.

Freedom House. (2024). *Guinea*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://freedomhouse.org/country/guinea/freedom-world/2024

Galetovic, A., & Sanhueza, R. (2000). Citizens, autocrats, and plotters: A model and new evidence on coups d'état. *Economics & Politics*, *12*(2), 183–204.

Geertz, C. (1963). *Peddlers and princes: Social change and economic modernization in two Indonesian towns—Chicago*. University of Chicago Press.

Ghirardello, L., & Benedikter, R. (2020). Why Guinea is a powder keg for West Africa and beyond. *Physical Review*(47), 777-780.

Ginsburg, T. Democracies and International Law: An Update. *Chicago Journal of International Law*, *23*(1), 1. https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cjil/vol23/iss1/1

Guardian. (October 17, 2015). Guinea president Alpha Conde wins second term with clear majority. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/17/guinea-president-alpha-conde-election

Harkness, K. (2014). The Ethnic Army and the State: Explaining Coup Traps and the Difficulties of Democratization in Africa. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *60*(4), 587–616. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002714545332

Harsch, E. (2010). Africa defends democratic rule. *Africa Renewal*, *24*(1), 10-12.

Heath-Brown, N. (2015). *Guinea. The Statesman's Yearbook 2016: The Politics, Cultures and Economies of the World*. Springer.

Holmes, A. A. (2019). *Coups and revolutions: Mass mobilization, the Egyptian military, and the United States from Mubarak to Sisi*. Oxford University Press.

Human Rights Watch. (2015). *Guinea: One Year On, No Justice for Election Violence*. Retrieved October 13, 2025 from https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/10/10/guinea-one-year-no-justice-election-violence

Huntington, S. P. (2006). *Political order in changing societies*. Yale University Press.

Ilo, U. J. (2022). *Requiem for Democracy? Interrogating Democracy Decline in West Africa*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.cddwestafrica.org/reports/requiem-for-democracy-interrogating-democracy-decline-in-west-africa/

Jenkins, J. C., & Kposowa, A. J. (1990). Explaining Military Coups d'Etat: Black Africa, 1957-1984. *American Sociological Review*, 861–875.

Joseph, F., Nsika, E. M., & Conakry, G. (2012). *Fragility and Development in Guinea. Fragile States and Development in West Africa* (Vol. 89).

Kaba, L. (1977). Guinean politics: A critical historical overview. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *15*(1), 25-45.

Kamara, T. (2001). *Guinea: Confronting Insecurity in the Midst of Unstable Neighbours*. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=159808ac8735f106af41be333b55727c9fef4928

Kanafani, S. B. (2006). Guinea: an island of stability? *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, *7*(1), 153–159.

Kaye, J. L. (2018). *Republic of Guinea 2009-17* (Vol. 1-15). United Nations University Centre for Policy.

Kikoler, N. (2015). *An overlooked case of responsibility to prevent in practice. The Responsibility to Prevent: Overcoming the Challenges of Atrocity Prevention, 304.*

Kposowa, A. J., & Jenkins, J. C. (1993). The structural sources of military coups in postcolonial Africa, 1957-1984. *American Journal of Sociology*, *99*(1), 126-163.

Lamb, D. (1988). A Different Path. *The Wilson Quarterly*, *12*(4), 114–131.

Londregan, J., & Poole, K. (1990). Poverty, The Coup Trap, and the Seizure of Executive Power. *World Politics*, *42*(2), 151–183. https://doi.org/10.2307/2010462

MacDonald, M. S. (2011). A "Frontal Attack on Irrational Elements": Sékou Touré and the Management of Elites in Guinea. In *Elites and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (pp. 195–215). Palgrave Macmillan.

Mandian, T. C. A., Daud, S., & Kamaruddin, R. (2017). Ethnicity, Cultural, and Political Leadership about Instability in the Republic of Guinea Conakry. *International Journal of Innovation and Applied Studies*, *20*(1), 380.

McBride, M. (2004). *Crises, Coups, and Entry-deterring Reforms in Sub-Saharan Africa* Paper presented at the Public Choice Society Seminar at the University of California, June,

McGowan, P. (2005). Coups and conflict in West Africa, 1955-2004: Part I. Theoretical perspectives. *Armed Forces & Society*, *32*(1), 5-23. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X05277885

McGowan, P. J. (2003). African military coups d'état, 1956–2001: frequency, trends and distribution. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, *41*(3), 339-370.

Nzally, J. (2022). Contemporary Democratization Processes in Africa: Post-Dictatorship and The Gambia's Fragile Democracy. *International Journal of Political Science and Public Administration*, *2*(2), 1-15.

O'Toole, T., & Baker, J. E. (2005). *Historical Dictionary of Guinea*. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC.

Obi, C. I. (2011). Are elections really enough?: The transition to democratic peace in West Africa. In *Annual Report, 2010. The rise of Africa: miracle or mirage?* (pp. 14-16).

Onwumechili, C. (1998). *African democratization and military coups*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Philipps, J. (2021). *Guinea in Africa Yearbook*. Brill.

Powell, J. M., & Thyne, C. L. (2011). Global instances of coups from 1950 to 2010: A new dataset. *Journal of Peace Research*, *48*(2), 249-259.

Rosenje, M. O., Onyebuchi, U. J., & Adeniyi, O. P. (2022). Tenure Elongation and Democratic Consolidation in Africa: Lessons from the 2021 Coup d'Etat in Guinea. *Benue Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 253-272.

Samb, S. (2021). *West African regional bloc suspends Guinea after coup*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/guinean-political-prisoners-freed-regional-bloc-discuss-coup-2021-09-08/

Souare, I. K. (2009). Explaining the December 2008 Military Coup d'État in Guinea. *Conflict Trends*, *9*(1), 27-33.

Souaré, I. K. (2006). *Civil Wars and Coups d'État in West Africa: An Attempt to Understand the Roots and Prescribe Possible Solutions.* University Press of America.

Stefan, C. G. (2021). Lessons in Atrocity Prevention: A Closer Look at Guinea. *Journal of International Peacekeeping*, *24*(3-4), 367–401.

Thrall, A. T., & Jordan, C. (2021). *Guinea's Coup Is the Latest Example of Risks from US Military Aid*. Cato Institute. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://policycommons.net/artifacts/1818419/guineas-coup-is-the-latest-example-of-risks-from-us/2555916/.

Thyne, C. (2010). Supporter of stability or agent of agitation? The effect of US foreign policy on coups in Latin America, 1960—99. *Journal of Peace Research*, *47*(4), 449–461.

Thyne, C. L., & Powell, J. M. (2016). Coup d'état ou coup d'autocratie ? How coups impact democratization, 1950–2008. *Foreign policy analysis*, *12*(2), 192–213.

United State Department of State. (2022). *U.S. Support of ECOWAS Sanctions on Guinea. U.S. Department of State*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.state.gov/u-s-support-of-ecowas-sanctions-on-guinea/

Wells, A. (1974). The coup d'état in theory and practice: Independent Black Africa in the 1960s. *American Journal of Sociology*, *79*(4), 871–887.

Whiteman, K. (1971). Guinea in West African Politics. *The World Today*, *27*(8), 350-358.

Wiking, S. (1983). *Military coups in sub-Saharan Africa: how to justify illegal assumptions of power*. Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

Invisible Yet Resilient: Understanding the Vulnerability and Integration Pathways of South Sudanese Older Refugees in Uganda[1]

Frank Ahimbisibwe[2], Samuel Opono[3], Specioza Twinamasiko[4], Kabasiita Maria Goretti[5]

Abstract:

Forcibly displaced older persons in Africa have not largely been the object of academic research. Recent scholars conducted a scoping review about the situations of displaced older persons in Africa and identified several gaps in the literature, including paying attention to the displaced older persons' integration in the host societies. Our current study contributes to filling this gap by examining the vulnerability of older refugees and identifying hidden opportunities for resilience and integration in the host communities. The study is based on the primary data collected from South Sudanese refugees in Pagirinya Settlement in Uganda, analysed in conjunction with the available literature. The study finds that despite the vulnerability of older refugees; windows of opportunities exist to develop their resilience and integrate them in the host communities. It concludes that leveraging skills of older refugees and social gatherings in the settlements helps them to curtail vulnerabilities, develop resilience and integrate in the host communities.

Keywords:
Vulnerability; Older Refugees; Integration; South Sudan; Uganda.

[1] DOI: https://10.12700/jceeas.2026.6.1.450

[2] Senior Lecturer, Department of Planning and Governance, Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Mbarara, Uganda; ORCID: 0000-0002-1371-9888; fahimbisibwe@must.ac.ug, frank.ahimbisibwe@uantwerpen.be.
[3] PhD-Candidate, Institute of Development Policy (IOB), University of Antwerp, Belgium; ORCID: 0000-0001-7352-1331; Samuel.Opono@student.uantwerpen.be, oponosamuel@gmail.com.
[4] Lecturer, Department of Community Engagement and Service Learning, Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies (FIS), Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Mbarara, Uganda; ORCID: 0000-0001-5431-7941; specioza@must.ac.ug.
[5] Assistant Lecturer, Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, University of Saint Joseph Mbarara, Uganda; ORCID: 0009-0003-8395-4140 ; mgkabasiita@gmail.com.

Introduction

By the end of 2024, 36.9 million refugees were forcibly displaced worldwide, out of whom 4% of displaced populations were elderly. Elderly or older refugees as interchangeably used in this article refers to those that are 60 years or above, as delineated by the World Health Organization (UNHCR, 2000). Therefore, the older refugees aged 60 years and above form a significant undercounted group (UNHCR, 2025:2; UNHCR, 2021), which often result into their less inclusion in specific welfare access because of barriers such as disability, lack of documents, language challenges, or fear of disclosure (UNHCR, 2021:16). As a result, they remain largely invisible in humanitarian statistics, policies, and programs.

However, in 2021, Africa hosted the largest number of older displaced populations. In their computation of UNHCR's data, Böcker and Hunter (2022) found that over 400,000 persons forcibly displaced were either 60 years or over and the highest numbers were found in the three regions of East, Southern and the Horn of African continent. In Uganda, by February 2022, the number of older refugees were 45,171, equivalent to 3% of the total refugees in the country (Office of the Prime Minister [OPM] & UNHCR, 2022). Of these, Adjumani district with several refugee zones including Pagirinya had 8,057 older refugees (OPM & UNHCR, 2022 & 2020).

The existing studies on refugees and migration in Africa overwhelmingly focus on youth (Böcker & Hunter, 2022), overlooking the specific risks faced by older populations and the opportunities for their integration into host societies (Ebere & Mwesigwa, 2021; Tulibaleka et al., 2022; Humble et al., 2020). This neglect leaves older refugees dependent, excluded from meaningful participation, and vulnerable to social and economic marginalization, much as refugee studies indicate that older refugees can play vital roles as custodians of cultural knowledge, mediators in community disputes, and caregivers within households (de Simone, 2020).

Uganda, as a country has the record of hosting refugees and asylum seekers ever since it attained its independence in 1962. Uganda has been globally lauded for enacting one of the best progressive and generous refugee laws and policies on earth. The 2016 United Nations Summit for Refugees declared Uganda Refugee policy as a model. According to the 2006 Refugee Act and 2010 Refugee Regulations, refugees are supposed to be integrated in the Ugandan society with right to accessibility of public services just like citizens. Refugees are free to move in search of livelihood options, including job accessibility and venturing into entrepreneurship (UNDP, 2017; GoU, 2010; GoU, 2006). Uganda's progressive polices contrast approaches of refugee hosting in other African refugee hosting counters where, although they have ratified international norms such as "1951 UN Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol or the 1969 Organization for African Unity Convention on Refugees", they do not have proper legal framework to guide the granting of asylum status; they usually only open their borders to refugees without integrating them into the host communities. Refugees are confined in rural camps, restricting their freedom of movement and rights to work, leading to their heavy reliance on humanitarian assistance to survive (Zamfir, 2017:1).

On the other hand, Uganda's refugee policy grants refugees rights and freedom just like nationals, including "freedom of movement, right to employment, education and health, as well as right to start a business" (Sulaiman, 2019). Uganda's refugee policy is tailored towards empowering refugees to be economically self-reliant while enjoying the rights that nationals enjoy (Sulaiman, 2019). However, just as few older Ugandans benefit from the grants given to Uganda's older citizens, it is not clear how older refugees are widely included in the available development and protection programs that are meant to benefit both refugees and Ugandans in the refugee hosting communities. Moreover, data on older refugees in Uganda are scarce and scattered, making older people in the process of migration including older refugees face the risks of being ignored, which could be prolonging and compounding the vulnerabilities and inequalities of the older refugees (Migration Data Portal, 2020).

The aim of this research is, therefore, to examine the vulnerability of older refugees with the objectives of firstly analysing specific vulnerabilities faced by older South Sudanese refugees in Pagirinya Settlement and, secondly, assessing the resilience strategies and evidence-based opportunities and pathways for integrating older refugees into host communities. These objectives are examined under the two research questions: what are the sources of challenges that make older refugees more vulnerable? What are the resilient strategies for the older refugee's survival and integration? To achieve this research aim, the study applied a qualitative methodology, with respondents purposively chosen and data collected through Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) and individual interviews, as detailed in the section titled "Materials and Methods". Based on the findings, we argue that despite the vulnerability of older refugees, windows of opportunities exist to develop resilience and integrate in the host communities. This article contributes to the literature by identifying possible windows for curtailment of vulnerabilities of older refugees and opportunities for integrating them in the host societies just like younger refugees. Following this introduction, the conceptual frameworks and materials and methods are discussed. These are followed by the findings and discussion section and, finally, conclusion and recommendations are presented.

Conceptual Frameworks

The paper is drawn from vulnerability framework which illustrates the dynamic relationship between vulnerabilities, resilience, and integration of older refugees (Zarafshani et al., 2016). Vulnerability refers to the 'tendency for an entity to be damaged' and exposure to adversity or risks (SOPAC, 2023:1; Kiteki, 2016:7). An entity takes different forms, that "can be physical (people, ecosystems, coastlines, etcetera) or abstract concepts (societies, communities, economies, countries etcetera) that can be damaged" (SOPAC, 2023:1). Vulnerability and resilience are different sides of one coin. When we discuss the topic of vulnerability, we automatically invite discussion on resilience, because something is vulnerable as long as it is not resilient, and the reverse is true (SOPAC, 2023:2). Resilience is thus the converse of vulnerability, and it denotes the capacity of an entity to put up resistance or recover from the inflicted damage

(SOPAC, 2023:1). For example, having a supportive social environment (Andrew & Keefe, 2014:1), mechanisms of adaptation (Mckeown, et al., 2021:2), and "resources available for coping with the exposure to vulnerabilities, and how these resources are distributed and by which institutions" (Adger, 2006: 277).

The concept of social vulnerability is usually tailored to certain social groups' insecurities and risks in regards to the looming danger - be it natural disaster, disease, or violence and conflict (Delore & Hurbert, 2000) - and differences in accessibility of resources among groups or individuals (Kalipeni, 2000).Vulnerability captures the challenges older refugees face, such as poor health, poverty, social exclusion, and limited access to humanitarian support (Schröder-Butterfill & Marianti, 2006).

The global debate on refugees often prioritizes the experiences of children, youth, and women of reproductive age (Young & Chan, 2015; Shishehgar, et al, 2017), leaving older populations largely invisible in research and policy (Böcker & Hunter, 2022). Studies indicate that humanitarian programming such as in vocational training and livelihood programs, too, tends to focus on youths and individuals deemed "economically active" or "productive," sidelining older refugees who are assumed to be dependents or passive recipients of aid (Burton & Breen, 2002; Ebere &Mwesigwa, 2021; Tulibaleka et al., 2022). Similarly, Lupieri (2022) indicates how vulnerable groups such as women and children are usually prioritized in a crisis, yet older persons are usually neglected despite being categorized as vulnerable by humanitarian agencies. This invisibility is not only a matter of lack of statistics but also a structural problem in humanitarian governance, where needs assessments, registration processes, and socio-economic programs often exclude older persons due to lack of proper documentation (UNHCR, 2021). Such exclusions further reinforce stereotypes of older refugees as burdens rather than integrating them into the community and recognizing their social and cultural roles through specific consideration (Bolzman, 2014).

However, within these constraints, resilience emerges through individual and collective agency, reliance on social networks, cultural roles, and coping strategies that enable older refugees to adapt and contribute to their communities (Schröder- Butterfill & Marianti, 2006). These resilience factors create entry points for integration pathways, which include socio-economic support programs, active participation in settlement activities, and recognition of older refugees in leadership and community decision-making. The framework emphasizes that addressing vulnerabilities alone is insufficient; leveraging resilience is essential for designing interventions that promote meaningful integration and improve the well-being of older refugees (Ciaramella et al., 2022). Meaningful and successful integration can be assessed by tracking the indicators enshrined in the integration framework with 4 domains of refugee integration. First are the "makers and means" with indicators such as employment, housing, education and health. Secondly, the types of social connections which are social bridges, social bonds and social links. Thirdly, there are facilitators of connection that include language, culture, safety and stability. Lastly is the foundational domain of rights and citizenship (Ager & Strang, 2008).

However, existing research tends to highlight resilience in general terms, with limited attention to appropriate mechanisms and conditions that allow older refugees to move from survival to integration. This gap indicates a need to examine the interplay between vulnerabilities, agency, and institutional support in shaping older refugees integration pathways, as Ebere and Mwesigwa (2021) and Tulibaleka et al. (2022) stated that eelderly refugeesare least likely to be often visible in labor market participation and long-term residency pathways. Therefore, having the agenda and models that majorly focus on integrating them in specific areas of management and welfare consultancy and other areas of education can answer the question of inclusivity (Costa, et al., 2021). This paper, therefore, focuses on firstly analysing specific vulnerabilities faced by older South Sudanese refugees in Pagirinya Settlement and subsequently, based on integration framework, assesses the resilience strategies and evidence-based opportunities and pathways for integrating older refugees into host communities. This further links vulnerability, resilience, and integration, as the paper aims to reframe older refugees as both at risk and resourceful, thereby strengthening humanitarian and development responses in Uganda.

Materials and Methods

The fieldwork site was Pagirinya settlement in Adjumani district in Northern Uganda where we purposively selected older refugees and leaders following the administrative structure of the settlement. Pagirinya settlement was selected because it was the latest refugee settlement at the time (UNHCR, 2016) with refugees less involved in research. Although the official government and UNHCR map of the settlement shows a site with several blocks, in practice, the settlement is divided into six blocks: A, B, C, D, E and F. Each block is led by Refugee Welfare Council 1, commonly referred to as Block Leader.

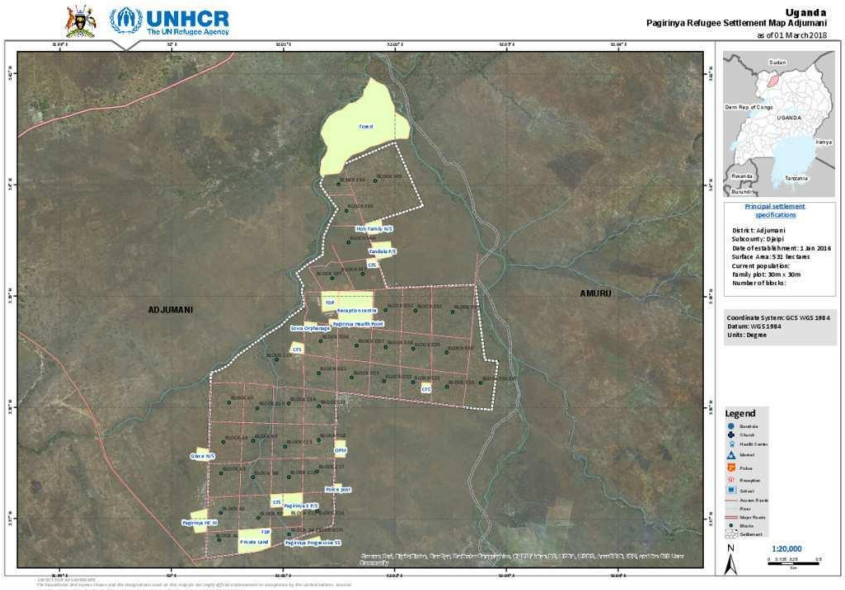

Figure 1: The map of Pagirinya Refugee Settlement. Source: OPM & UNHCR, 2018.

This research aimed at examining the vulnerability of older refugees, while attempting to identify opportunities for reducing their vulnerabilities and integrating them in the host societies. The study, therefore, adopted a qualitative approach with case study design, which was most appropriate for exploring the lived experiences of older refugees in Pagirinya Settlement, Uganda. The case study design enabled an in-depth understanding of the complex interplay between vulnerability, resilience, and integration pathways among a specific refugee population within a defined context (Yin, 2014).

Qualitative research methodology was most suitable, due to its peculiar attributes of enabling the researcher to "identify issues from the perspectives of the respondents and understand the meanings and interpretations that they give to behaviors, events or objects'' (Hennink et al., 2011:9). Data collection methods were mainly qualitative in nature, where interview guides to conduct in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with purposively sampled respondents were conducted (Ibid: 49 & 171; McIntyre, 2008). Data was collected in clusters of blocks.

Each block is divided into clusters, and each cluster is led by a Cluster Leader. In this research, we conducted individual interviews with the government representative in the settlement, block leaders and Refugee Welfare Council II; Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with all the cluster leaders; FGDs with women and men of Block B and D, choosing first and last cluster for female and male respondents respectively. It was important to include refugee leaders for interviews because of their daily interface with the general refugee population as the first contact in handling their concerns, conflict resolutions, welfare and any issues requiring redress. The refugee leaders shared their views on refugee reception and integration, protection and care of older refugees and refugee-host relations and interactions. They assisted us to compare, contrast and clarify on the views received from the older refugees. Besides, some of the leaders were older refugees and they shared their personal experiences on integration. Their views supplemented those got from non-leaders.

We also conducted personal interviews with 50 older refugees (25 women and 25 men) in Block F where majority of older refugees resided, since the block was nearer to the community centre where food distribution took place. Older refugees were mainly Madi - the predominant ethnic group in Pagirinya settlement – and came from Eastern Equatorial region in South Sudan and were 60 and above years. They answered questions on issues of integration including the obstacles and opportunities, refugee-host relations, protection and assistance. This research was about the vulnerability and integration of older refugees; thus, it was vital to gather the views of the older refugees themselves and later triangulate them with those of their leaders and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as Lutheran World Federation and Medical Teams International (MTI) that were working with them. These categories of respondents are represented in the table below

Respondents	Numbers	Methods

Assistant Settlement Commandant	1	Personal interview
Refugee Welfare Council II	1	Personal interview
Block leaders	6	Personal interviews
Cluster leaders	43	FGDs
Elderly refugees (men)	25	Personal interviews
Elderly refugees (women)	25	Personal interviews
NGOs' staff	2	Personal interviews
Refugee women (non-leaders)	20	FGDs
Refugee men (non-leaders)	16	FGDs
Total	139	

Figure 2: Categories of respondents. Source: Field data.

In terms of data analysis, we transcribed the recorded data and applied content and thematic analysis of data, after coding and systematically identifying subthemes and themes which emerged from the collected qualitative data, which helped us to derive meaning and draw appropriate conclusion from the data (Hennink et al., 2011; Vaismoradi et al., 2013; Young et al., 2018; Enago Academy, 2024). We substantially used secondary data in discussing the results to supplement primary data and triangulate information to enrich the analysis (Alvesson & Skölberg, 2007: 21; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007:121). Data analysis was further deepened by the vulnerability and integration frameworks as analytical lenses for this research.

It is important to point out that the research could have been affected by the selection bias as we relied on only purposive sampling strategy to choose respondents for the interviews. This potentially affected the internal validity of the information gathered. We however curtailed this validity gap by triangulating information obtained from all the aforementioned categories of respondents, which aided in enhancing data quality and validity. In terms of positionality, our position as researchers from the university placed us in a more powerful position which could have prompted older refugees to overstate their challenges with the hope that we could help them provide practical solutions, especially in financial or project terms. We however clarified from the beginning of interviews that we were university researchers and data collected would not directly translate to project initiation but rather would help in amplifying their voices to the wider audience after publication of the report.

Findings and Discussion: Vulnerability and Integration Pathways of South Sudanese Older Refugees in Uganda

The results presented in this section illuminate the lived realities of older South Sudanese refugees in Pagirinya Settlement, Uganda. The findings are drawn from primary qualitative data triangulated with existing literature and are organized around two interlinked dimensions: (1) the vulnerabilities that confronted older refugees' daily lives, and (2) the hidden opportunities and resilience strategies that enable their integration within host communities, which align with the research questions: what are the sources of challenges that make older refugees more vulnerable? What are the resilient strategies for the older refugee's survival and integration?

Challenges that Make Older Refugees More Vulnerable

Indirect Exclusion from Service Provision

Putting in mind that at the reception and distribution of services to new refugees at different reception centres is done in a general form with limited focus on the vulnerable groups of people including the elderly, inclusion approaches continue to none of the strategies. Therefore, among other affected groups, the elderly were found to be severely affected by the practice. Indirect exclusion from the available services such as welfare services by NGOs and other humanitarian organization continue to abandon the physically visible persons. For instance, out of fifty older participants interviewed, ten narrated how they missed receiving their portions especially when they were undergoing health challenges as excerpted by an older refugee man: "*when it is pick time to receive our welfare, most of the sick and unable elderly people miss out. This is because there are no clear structures that care for us*" (A 81-year-old refugee, September 2020).

Similarly, older persons were susceptible to resource access loss due to limited communication delivery, most especially by the unaccompanied ones. One refugee woman aged 75 years narrated that:

> "*For me I arrived and registered normally and later, I felt weak and tired. I was living in my relatives' makeshift who had gone to stay with her friend in the nearby town and missed out the communication about the land and construction materials. I stayed without any thing and when the owner of the accommodation came back with her family, I was taken to another person I was not familiar with, and my suffering continued up to today*" (Interview, 15th September 2020)

Food Insecurity and Hunger

Additionally, it was found out that, most older refugee persons were prone to food insecurity and hunger than other refugees. According to the empirical data, majority older men and women are weakened and sometimes silently die of hunger and of limited continuous care by family members and the humanitarian agencies. Most of the

interviews done in the settlement camp, one head of the clan stated that, majority very aged people get the food portions that sustain them, in addition to missing receiving them. He stated that: "*We lose at least one elderly person each month in this community, but the whole issue is poor food access and feeding. Their age requires special care and reliable feeding which is totally lacking*" (Interview with a 65years old, 21st September 2020).

Nonetheless it is observed that the elderly vulnerability is not only about "biological age," but about how age intersects with mobility constraints, and weak social protection within the settlement. Food insecurity emerges as a central to causes of harm on the elderly refugees as the older refugees are vulnerable to more likely to miss rations, less able to supplement their diet, and more reliant on irregular family or community support. More health risks emerged as a result of unmatching nutrition which put older refugees to deficiency in food and nutrition vulnerability. Older refugees appreciate the available feeding situation, however, call it challenging because of being poor, insufficient inefficient and unreliable feeding. A government representative demonstrates that food rations for refugees had dwindled due to reduced funding following the outbreak of corona virus pandemic. Before the pandemic, every refugee was receiving 12kg of maize flour per month but, after the pandemic, maize flour was reduced to 8kg per month per person from one-year-old and above. These food rations were obviously inadequate. By April 2022, in our subsequent fieldwork in the settlement, monthly food rations had been reduced further to 6kg of maize, 2.4 kg of beans, 0.9kg of salt and 2.4litres of cooking oil. There was an option of cash which was 19,000 Uganda shillings (approximately 5 US dollars) monthly. This amount is too little to cater for them in a month.

Worst still, some older refugees require more than food to support their weakening bodies thus leading to change on their survival strategies, one of them being selling the limited food supplied to them in need for money to acquire medicine and other food cooking supplements. The act epitomizes the situation of many older refugees in the settlement. For instance, the unaccompanied elderly refugees would sell part of their little rations to hire younger refugees to help them transport food home as exemplified in this excerpt: "…*when I sell part of my food rations, I send their children to buy for me charcoal for cooking and other needs and pay them little money too*…" (An older refugee woman, interview, 01 October 2020).

The vulnerability of elderly refugees under unclear circumstances are increasing yet unreported officially. It is a common practice that when older persons die, the family members do not intentionally report because of the need to maintain the households welfare flow. The old men and women are buried silently to the extent of not even alerting the close neighbours because of fear of forfeiting welfare and other benefits. This has heightened their vulnerability to life continuity. According to the settlement's government representative, it is common practice that refugees normally keep the deceased's card, because they keep them as an additional family ration. He stated that "refugees normally do not report death cases because under normal circumstances,

when a death case is reported, the name of the deceased is removed from the register and food ration for that individual is cut off" (OPM Settlement official, Interview, 03 October 2022).

Our findings on deficiency in food and nutrition corroborate previous studies that portray the challenge of poor feeding as a common source of vulnerability to refugees especially older refugees in developing countries. Previous study of Syrian refugees in Lebanon reported that diet was inadequate with older refugees reporting regularly reduced portion sizes, skipping meals, and limiting intake of fruits, vegetables, and meats. Often this was done to provide more food to younger family members (Strong et al., 2015:2).

Furthermore, earlier research show that inadequate and inappropriate food and nutrition for the older people including older refugees negatively affects their health. For example, according to Allaire (2013) and HelpAge International (2002), older persons require special nutrition - easily edible and digestible food; yet neglecting these specific nutritional needs have continually put older persons in forced displaced settings at risk of malnutrition. The available complementary feeding programs under UNHCR are mainly for infants, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and seldom pay attention to the feeding requirements of the older people in displacement (Crisps & Mayne, 1998). UNHCR (2016) confirms that food aid is always not appropriate to the needs of the older people.

Although food and nutrition are not explicitly mentioned in the integration framework (Ager & Strang, 2008), they directly affect health, which is one of the aspects of a successful integration. As the literature and our empirical findings have shown, older refugees suffer from poor feeding, reductions in food rations and unbalanced diet. There were stories of deaths of older refugees in Pagirinya settlement, due to ill-health caused by malnourishment and poor feeding. This was a challenge in the integration process of older refugees as poor nutrition and, by extension, poor health led to weakness and inactivity, and less movement and interactions. These findings extend Mestheneos and Loannidi (2002:315) argument that you cannot integrate people who do not have food to eat.

Poor Healthcare

The Susceptibility of limited specialized health care of the elderly refugees emerged as a major challenge that makes older refugees extremely vulnerable to health deterioration. Older refugees reported chronic sicknesses such as knee pain, general body weakness and vision impairment and mental illnesses compounded by improper treatment and limited specialists. The alternative treatment strategies by using un-prescribed herbs, self-treatment and consulting traditional doctors has been the appropriate practice. Moreover, there are some elderly persons who are amputated by war and those that are naturally impaired who deserve specialized care but in vain. One 68 years old with one arm and leg amputated narrated how they are looked at as a gone case:

"*One day I went to the health centre to see if I can get advice on my endless pains on my amputated body and the doctor stated that I need a specialist and I was referred to referral hospital which requires 50000=Uganda shilling (12$). I gave up*" (interview, 04 October 2020)

In a related way, older men and women with unique health challenges narrated their levels of uncontrolled unique health challenges that increase their vulnerabilities to survive in a challenging situation. They understand their conditions as a double suffering; being refugees and, at the same time, enduring severe sicknesses. One older woman in her 80's stated:

"…*My knees pain me a lot, Paracetamol pain killer cannot do anything to relieve any pain. According to our consultant doctor, I need to go for a scan which is at a cost. I am treated using local herbs by cutting the knee using the razorblade and applying the herb but the response is minimal. Me, I may end-up dying or crippled forever*…"(Older refugee man, interview, 25 September 2020).

In another conversation with a 72-year-old head of the family who has spent 10 years in the settlement, painfully observes that death rates among the refugees beyond 60 years old is alarming. He shared his concern:

"*My concern is death. Currently, the rate of death is high in the settlement, unlike in the past. I am scared, I feel if I was able, I would rather go back to South Sudan and die from there instead of dying in another country where no one will even know about your death because we cannot disclose. You disclose it at your family's loss*" (Older refugee man, interview, 26 September 2022).

Older refugee men and women are prone to severe internal and external trauma than other age counterparts because of the affected larger families. For instance, in addition to the war experiences in South Sudan which led to loss of lives of relatives and friends, loss of property, family separation, there is a worse off trauma stressor of hard life in the settlement. Among other vulnerability triggers to some older refugees, is finding themselves alone and the related psychological consequences. Although organizations such as LWF, Tutapona, War Child, among others, supplemented the work of Medical Teams International (MTI) by providing counselling services, they were understaffed. Furthermore, the mobility of older persons to reach out for the offered services is so limited, in addition to accessing appropriate services with efficient and available specialists. For example, by the time of conducting this research, Tutapona was not on ground and LWF reported the challenge of inadequate staffs. Moreover, it was reported by the MTI staff that psychiatric clinical officers were only two to deal with mental issues; one at Nyumanzi Health Centre and another one in Adjumani East. Each officer

serves more than 60 refugees a day. This not only limits the access to services, but also less care to the vulnerable refugees groups. Consequently, the mismatch between high mental-health needs and limited availability of specialized support, with only two psychiatric clinical officers serving entire zones, deepens the older refugees vulnerability and entrenches unmet psychosocial distress.

Some refugees found solace and comfort in the bible and church community, while others suggested integration of psychosocial support with monetary and other assistance to improve livelihood and accelerate recovery, rather than relying exclusively on counselling. They noted with concern that some organizations go to the settlement and promise assistance to older people to help them improve their livelihood, but they never return, which disappoint older refugees and makes it difficult to mobilize them in case of any subsequent humanitarian interventions. This was confirmed by a staff of LWF that material support combined with psychosocial support was more effective, however, the challenge was inadequate funding. In the follow-up field work in April 2022, the challenges of psychological torture further featured such as stress and depression because of joblessness and helplessness confirmed by an older male refugee whose wife and children abandoned him because he could not provide for them. This older refugee confessed to be depressed and requested for counselling and vocational training to empower him acquire a job.

Another peculiar health challenge that emerged was that some older refugees either had given up with life and did not want to seek medical attention, or they would report late when their condition was already severe, or sometimes their relatives did not take their conditions seriously. A respondent made this statement:

> "*When I was in South Sudan, my vision was still fair, but when I reached here, it worsened. In South Sudan, I used to go to the health centres and get eye drops for my eyes but ever since I came here, I have never gone to the health centre. The place is far and no one takes me there… My daughter is aware of the condition of my eye, but she has not taken me to the hospital*" (Older refugee woman, interview, 24 September 2020).

Late reporting to health centres or refusal to report makes it challenging for health workers to manage the health conditions of older refugees, making them very weak, constraining their movements and interactions with fellow refugees and members of the host communities, and ultimately limiting their integration in the settlement and in the host communities.

Our findings on poor health conditions and higher death rates among the older refugees complement previous studies that also link vulnerabilities of older refugees to their health conditions. For instance, a study of conditions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon (Strong et al., 2015:2), and a study in the Middle East which found non-communicable diseases such as cancer, diabetics and strokes common among the older refugees, on top of mental and psychosocial problems such as depression (UNHCR, 2022).

Whereas in our study trauma was mainly attributed to experiences of war in South Sudan; in other places, high frequency of depression among older refugees is arguably because of mental attachment to their country of origin, loss of social support and social status in the refugee community and having no hope for future prospects, on top of other stressors like poverty, improper housing, inadequate food and family split up (Burton & Breen 2002; Abdalla & Musa, 2010). However, it is important to note that mental health problem is not only prevalent among older refugees in developing countries but also in developed countries. Research by Schuster et.al. (2022) reported that immigrants and refugees in Sweden suffered from mental health problems, the difference is in the limited staff capacity in poor refugee hosting countries such as Uganda to deal with these challenges, yet psychological torture has impact on the mental health and wellbeing of refugees and affects their integration (Schuster et.al., 2022). Efforts for psychosocial support, counselling and other mental health interventions were crucial for integration.

Additionally, much as older refugees seemed to have given up with life and either reported late or refused to report to the health centres due to long distances, transportation challenge, long waiting time, chronic illnesses and poor health seeking behaviour; in other studies, older refugees face difficulty in accessing existing health services because of physical barriers such as non-age-friendly healthcare establishments, and nonphysical barrier such as negative attitude towards older refugees manifested in less prioritization of their wellbeing unlike their younger counterparts. For example, in Bosnia, chemotherapy was only available to children, yet cancer was more prevalent to older refugees than children (Hutton, 2008; International Centre for Evidence in Disability & HelpAge International, 2018). Overall, good health is an important resource for active engagement in a novel society (Ager & Strang 2008:172) and access to good healthcare services is key to one's health and wellbeing and integration in the host society (Ager & Strang, 2008).

Resilient Strategies for the Older Refugee's Survival and Integration

Older Refugees Resilience and Skills Applicability

This study revealed that some older refugees had skills such as brewing, fishing, construction, hair dressing, weaving, dancing, singing and playing musical instruments such as guitar. Apart from fishing, because of the absence of a nearby water body, some older refugees with these skills were using them to earn a living, except those who had grown very old and weak. These are captured in these excerpts: "*I also play a guitar. Sometimes when I play, somebody may give me some money like 15,000 or 20,000*" (Older refugee man, interview, 27 September 2020).

In another narrative a 72-year-old man indicates how, he was self-reliant through his brewing skills.

> "*In Sudan, I was not getting financial support from my children or relatives, I used to brew alcohol and get money from it. When I reached here, I looked for natives*

and started volunteering, I taught them new tricks of brewing smart and now they hire me at 5000Ugx(1.5$). When I do more than 3 times a week, I buy myself medicine and the food I need" (Older refugee woman, interview, 26 September 2020).

Additionally, some elderly refugees were engaged in handicrafts and settlement authorities, and Lutheran World Federation encouraged this skill among older refugees. The settlement leaders provided them with raw materials and encouraged them to organize in groups in order to capture wider market with enough supply. This practice has supplemented their little food rations and enhance their income levels and livelihoods. The following statement illustrates this point:

"*Yeah, you know those older people, most of them are now degenerating in their efforts and so on, but the ones that have got the skills for crafts, we supported them in groups... We once supported them in making baskets, so they sell this and they get income out of it; and making ropes for tying goats, we give them support in form of raw materials that they need for making these things*" (LWF official, interview, 02 October 2020).

The idea of bringing older refugees together to engage in handcrafts seems to be a good idea not only for socialization, keeping them busy, and relieving pains; it is also an opportunity in bridging the interaction gap between older refugees and host communities to integrate, as older refugees take their products to the market for sale and get income to improve their livelihoods. This idea needs to be followed up and improved by the humanitarian organizations, to help older refugees earn a living and integrate well in the settlements and host communities. This is related to employment, one of the four domains that serve as "potential means to support the achievement of integration" (Ager & Strang, 2008:169). Making of handicrafts is a form of self-employment for older refugees. In fact, article 18 of the UN 1951 Convention on Refugees is about right to self-employment for refugees. This right is in the context of engaging in agriculture, industry, handicrafts, commerce etcetera. Article 29(1) of the 2006 Refugees Act grants refugees right to engage in agriculture, industry, handicrafts and commerce.

Social Gatherings in the Settlement

Another opportunity for reduction of various vulnerabilities and encouraging integration are the social gatherings within the settlement. This is related to what Ager and Strang (2008) call the social connection domain with specific reference to social bonds and bridges. These include religious gatherings in places of worship such as churches and mosques, and cultural events where older people actively participate in more than the younger refugees. They find relief at places of worship and older church

leaders also have some of their needs met by the congregation in forms of small financial assistance, housework, among others. Besides places of worship older refugees, as the vanguards of culture, actively participate in cultural events organized within the settlement. This helps them to remain physically active, and it is a source of solace to some as revealed during the fieldwork: "*I am a traditional dancer, and I like those dances very much. I have a lot of skills in traditional songs. Even up to now, when an old person dies, we usually sing traditional songs*" (An older woman, interview, 24 September 2020).

Members of the host communities come and spend their leisure time within the settlement here. So, in most cases when I go to the trading centre there, I link up together with some people from the host communities. I go to social places where people are seated playing cards and other things and the host communities also come around and participate (Older refugee man, interview, 17 September 2020).

It was further disclosed during the fieldwork that cultural dances were normally performed when humanitarian officials were visiting the settlement. Before COVID lockdown, LWF used to organize cultural gala in which refugees from different settlements participated and the winning teams would be given prizes. Members of the host communities also come and watch cultural performances, and it is thus important for these social gatherings in the camps and settlements to be encouraged as a way of alleviating psychological pain, socializing and integrating with the host communities. These findings support previous studies which show that refugee community gatherings for different cultural activities provide opportunities for refugees to provide or receive emotional support from fellow refugees and collect information about people that may need more attention because of their particular needs or vulnerable situations. Local refugee community may also connect refugees to other refugees in the country (Goodman, 2004). Besides helping to maintain the connections with cronies and relations in the country of origin, local communities are also important for linking refugees to the available resources, for example "financial for adults, accessing basic needs such as food, clothing, healthcare services, among others" (Weine et al., 2014, cited in Kiteki, 2016:9).

Besides, our finding on the theme of religion above supplements previous findings, such as in Dar-es-Salam where refugees faced barriers in accessing institutional humanitarian support available in the refugee camps. Older refugees were instead assisted with clothing, food, and given shelters by religious groups (Tippens, 2020; Pieterse & Ismail, 2003). Additionally, religion and spirituality are the main source of developing resilience in African setting. After facing different risks of fleeing to refuge, refugees find strength to adapt in the host country as they meditate, pray and surrender their fate to God, and the church supports them emotionally and materially (Kiteki, 2016:10 & Khawaja et al., 2008:504). Refugees find strength to cope by believing that God did not allow them to die in war for a purpose (Goodman, 2004:1187; Carlson et al., 2012). In fact, there are refugees who find comfort in the awareness that Jesus Christ suffered for them, so their current suffering is an example of following the example of

the suffering of Jesus Christ; therefore, they do not question their current difficult situation (Sherwood & Liebling-Kalifani, 2012:100). Moreover, many refugees are not used to professional counselling as a therapy to mental problem (Savic et al., 2016), many consider praying to God as a means of therapy available to them to overcome past trauma (Betancourt et al., 2015:120, cited in Kiteki, 2016:10).

Conclusion and Recommendations

As pointed out in the introduction, The existing studies on refugee and migration in Africa overwhelmingly focus on youth (Böcker & Hunter, 2022), overlooking the specific risks faced by older populations and the opportunities for their integration into host societies (Ebere & Mwesigwa, 2021; Tulibaleka et al., 2022; Humble et al., 2020). Specifically in the case study of Uganda, despite liberal policies aimed at empowering refugees to be self-reliant, it is not clear how older refugees are widely included in the available development and protection programs that are meant to benefit both refugees and Ugandans in the refugee hosting communities, taking into account scarce and scattered data on older refugees which potentially place them into risk of neglect which could be prolonging and compounding their vulnerabilities (Sulaiman, 2019; Migration Data Portal, 2020).

This research thus thought to examine the vulnerability of older refugees, guided by two research questions: what are the sources of challenges that make older refugees more vulnerable? What are the resilient strategies for the older refugee's survival and integration? Under the first research question, vulnerabilities of older refugees were heightened by indirect exclusion from service provision due to limited communication, sometimes leading to missing of food rations.

Secondly, food insecurity and hunger increased the vulnerability in that majority older men and women are weakened, malnourished and sometimes silently die of hunger and of limited continuous care by family members and the humanitarian agencies. Our findings on deficiency in food and nutrition corroborate previous studies. For instance, Syrian refugees in Lebanon reported that diet was inadequate with older refugees reporting regularly reduced portion sizes, skipping meals, and limiting intake of fruits, vegetables, and meats. Often this was done to provide more food to younger family members (Strong et al., 2015:2). These findings extend Mestheneos and Loannidi (2002:315) argument that you cannot integrate people who do not have food to eat.

Thirdly, susceptibility to poor and limited specialized health care of the elderly refugees emerged as a major challenge that makes older refugees extremely vulnerable to health deterioration. Older refugees suffered from chronic sicknesses such as knee pain, general body weakness, vision impairment, mental illnesses and trauma due to war and family separation. These findings complement previous studies that also link vulnerabilities of older refugees to their health conditions. For instance, a study of conditions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon (Strong et al., 2015:2), and a study in the Middle East which found non-communicable diseases such as cancer, diabetics and strokes common among the older refugees, on top of mental and psychosocial problems

such as depression (UNHCR, 2022). Whereas in our study trauma was mainly attributed to experiences of war in South Sudan; in other places, high frequency of depression among older refugees is arguably because of mental attachment to their country of origin, loss of social support and social status in the refugee community and having no hope for future prospects, on top of other stressors like poverty, improper housing, inadequate food and family split up (Burton & Breen 2002; Abdalla & Musa, 2010). Overall, good health is an important resource for active engagement in a novel society (Ager & Strang, 2008:172) and access to good healthcare services is key to one's health and wellbeing and integration in the host society (Ager & Strang, 2008).

Under the second research question on identifying resilient strategies for the older refugee's survival and integration, the first strategy was *older refugees resilience and skills applicability,* which revealed that some older refugees had skills such as handicrafts, brewing, fishing, construction, hair dressing, weaving, dancing, singing and playing musical instruments such as guitar. Apart from fishing, because of the absence of a nearby water body, some older refugees with these skills were using them to earn a living, except those who had grown very old and weak. This is related to employment, one of the four domains that serve as 'potential means to support the achievement of integration' (Ager & Strang, 2008:169). The second strategy was social gatherings (religious and cultural) in the settlement. This is related to what Ager and Strang (2008) call the social connection domain with specific reference to social bonds and bridges for integration.

Our study intrigues a rethink in the implementation of social policies that guides the work of humanitarian actors, to be more inclusive in their responses in a manner that does not neglect the older refugees. This is also important for refugee studies to include the issues of aging population in displaced situation in their various courses, to stir up discussions about the welfare of aging displaced people among the students who will later become practitioners and/or researchers on these issues at the later stage of their lives.

We have put forward the following recommendations for considerations by humanitarian actors in developing resilience and integrating older refugees. We suggest setting up and financially supporting the monitoring teams from among the refugees in the different settlements to monitor and report on the situations of older refugees to the relevant refugee authorities for necessary actions.

In terms of poor nutrition, we suggest that humanitarian organizations do not only consider children and lactating mothers in the special diet programs, but also older refugees as more fundings potentially become accessible. This should be integrated at the project design stage, especially when applying for fundings.

Furthermore, it is thus imperative to improve information flow so that older refugees can access this information and access services that could help them improve their lives in the settlement and integrate more easily and faster. One of the refugee leaders suggested passing of information by 'word of mouth' by the information officers who move around the settlements spreading the information about events and available

services and opportunities using the loudspeaker. Spreading of information at places of worship could also help older refugees to access information as many older refugees confessed regular attendance of prayers at designated places of worship in the settlements.

Lastly, we believe that if these proposed mechanisms are taken up by relevant humanitarian actors, they could curtail vulnerabilities of older refugees and augment their integration in the host communities.

Acknowledgments

We thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments. We are grateful to VLIROUS for approving and financially supporting this project. We are grateful to God for the gift of life, wisdom, knowledge and understanding, without which we would not exist to do this research.

Notes on Contributors

Frank Ahimbisibwe is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Uganda. He is also a visiting associate professor at the Institute of Development Policy (IOB), University of Antwerp, Belgium, and a visiting associate professor at the African Studies Centre, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan. His research focuses on refugees, forced migration, human security and international relations in the Great Lakes region and Horn of Africa.

Samuel Opono is a PhD Candidate at the Institute of Development Policy (IOB), University of Antwerp, Belgium. He was formally a Research Assistant at the Department of Planning and Governance, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Uganda. His research interests revolve around refugees, forced migration, drivers of conflict and post conflict reconstruction and development in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

Specioza Twinamasiko is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST), Uganda. She is a coordinator of Service Course in the department of Community Engagement and Service Learning in the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies, MUST. Her research focuses on development induced displacement, forced migration, and gender relations in extractives.

Kabasiita Maria Goretti is an assistant lecturer, Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, University of Saint Joseph Mbarara, Uganda. She teaches sustainable development, political science and public administration related courses. Her research focuses on politics, democracy and governance in Uganda.

Funding Details; Data Availability Statement

This work was supported by the VLIR-OUS, Ref. No. G2019TEA491A102; Not applicable.

Disclosure Statement

The authors declare that they have no financial or any competing interests.

References

Abi Chahine, M., & Kienzler, H. (2022). Ageism, an invisible social determinant of health for older Syrian refugees in Lebanon: a service providers' perspective. *Conflict and Health*, *16*(1), 62. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-022-00491-9

Adger, W. N. (2006). Vulnerability. *Global Environmental Change*, *16*(3), 268-281. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2006.02.006

Ager, A., & Strang, A. (2008). Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *21*(2), 166-191. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fen016

Ahimbisibwe, F. (2018). Uganda and the Refugee Problem: Challenges and Opportunities. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, *13*(5), 62-72. https://doi.org/10.5897/AJPSIR2018.1101

Akar, S., & Erdoğdu, M. M. (2019). Syrian Refugees in Turkey and Integration Problem Ahead. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, *20*(3), 925-940. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-018-0639-0

Alvesson, M., & Skolberg, K. (2007). *Reflexive methodology: New vista for qualitative research*. Sage Publications.

Andrew, M. K. (2010). Social vulnerability in old age. In H. M. H.M. Fillit, K. Rockwood, & K. Woodhouse (Eds.), *Brocklehurst's textbook of geriatric medicine and gerontology (7th ed.)* (pp. 198-208). Saunders Elsevier.

Andrew, M. K., & Keefe, J. M. (2014). Social vulnerability from a social ecology perspective: a cohort study of older adults from the National Population Health Survey of Canada. *BMC Geriatrics*, *14*(1), 90. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2318-14-90

Betancourt, T. S., Abdi, S., Ito, B. S., Lilienthal, G. M., Agalab, N., & Ellis, H. (2015). We left one war and came to another: Resource loss, acculturative stress, and caregiver-child relationships in Somali refugee families. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *21*(1), 114-125. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037538

Böcker, A., & Hunter, A. (2025). Older refugees and internally displaced people in African countries: findings from a scoping review of literature. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *38*(1), 16-30. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feac023

Bolzman, C. (2014). Exil et errance. *Pensée plurielle*, *35*(1), 43-52. https://doi.org/10.3917/pp.035.0043

Bolzman, C. A. (2014). Older refugees. In E. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, G. Loescher, K. Long, & N. Sigona (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of refugee and forced migration studies* (pp. 409-420). Oxford University Press.

Burton, A., & Breen, C. (2002). Older refugees in humanitarian emergencies. *The Lancet*, *360*, s47-s48. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(02)11819-8

Carlson, B. E., Cacciatore, J., & Klimek, B. (2012). A Risk and Resilience Perspective on Unaccompanied Refugee Minors. *Social Work*, *57*(3), 259-269. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/sws003

Ciaramella, M., Monacelli, N., & Cocimano, L. C. E. (2022). Promotion of Resilience in Migrants: A Systematic Review of Study and Psychosocial Intervention. *Journal*

of Immigrant and Minority Health, *24*(5), 1328-1344. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-021-01247-y

Costa, A. L., Coimbra, S., Pinto, M., Teixeira, E. G., & Caramelo, J. (2021). Professionals' key knowledge, competences and practices to promote social inclusion of refugees. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *25*(1), 81-93. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1678777

Crips, J., & Mayne, A. (1998). *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) assistance to older refugees. EVAL/01/98 REV.1*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.unhcr.org/publications/unhcr-assistance-older-refugees

De Simone, S. (2020). Individual and collective agency and identity construction among South Sudanese Refugees in Adjumani District, Uganda. *Afriche e Orienti*, *22*(1), 85-101. https://doi.org/10.23810/1345.RIFUGIATIUGANDADESIMONE

Delor, F., & Hubert, M. (2000). Revisiting the concept of 'vulnerability'. *Social Science & Medicine*, *50*(11), 1557-1570. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(99)00465-7

Ebere, R. N., & Mwesigwa, D. (2021). The effectiveness of social inclusion of refugees in Kiryandongo refugee settlement community of mid-western Uganda. *Asian Journal of Sustainable Business Research*, *2*(2), 76-94. http://aiipub.com/journals/ajsbr-200916-031130/

Enago Academy. (2024). *Choosing the right analytical approach: Thematic analysis vs. content analysis for data interpretation*. Retrieved February 17, 2024 from https://www.enago.com/academy/content-analysis-vs-thematic-analysis/

Getanda, E. M., Papadopoulos, C., & Evans, H. (2015). The mental health, quality of life and life satisfaction of internally displaced persons living in Nakuru County, Kenya. *BMC Public Health*, *15*(1), 755. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-015-2085-7

Gichunge, C., Mutiso, D., & Brynjarsdottir, J. (2020). Predictors of social support, physical health and mental health among food insecure internally displaced persons in Turkana, Kenya. *Conflict and Health*, *14*(1), 58. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-020-00303-y

Glaser, B., & Strauss, L. A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine de Gruyter.

Goodman, J. H. (2004). Coping With Trauma and Hardship Among Unaccompanied Refugee Youths From Sudan. *Qualitative Health Research*, *14*(9), 1177-1196. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732304265923

Goverment of Uganda. (2010). *Uganda: The Refugees Regulations, 2010*. Refworld. Global Law & Policy Database. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.refworld.org/legal/decreees/natlegbod/2010/102127

Government of Uganda. (2006). *Uganda: The Refugee Act 2006*. Refworld. Global Law & Policy Database. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.refworld.org/legal/legislation/natlegbod/2006/en/102125

Hamid, A. A. R. M., & Musa, S. A. (2010). Mental health problems among internally displaced persons in Darfur. *International Journal of Psychology*, *45*(4), 278-285. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/00207591003692620

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in practice (3rd ed)*. Routledge.

Hampshire, K., Porter, G., Kilpatrick, K., Peter, K., Michael, A., & Oppong, G. (2008). Liminal spaces: Changing inter-generational relations among long-term Liberian refugees in Ghana. *Human Organization*, *67*(1), 25-36. https://doi.org/10.17730/humo.67.1.447531p7r4647n62

HelpAge International. (2016a). *Older people in situations of migration in Africa: The untold migration story*. HelpAge International.

HelpAge International. (2016b). *Older voices in humanitarian crisis: Calling for change*. Retrieved April 18, 2024 from https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Older%20voices%20in%20humanitarian%20crises%20-%20HelpAge.pdf

HelpAge International. (2018). Older people in displacement: Falling through the cracks of emergency responses. HPG Commissioned Report.

HelpAge International. (n.d.). Crisis-affected older people in Kenya and Somalia. HelpAge briefing.

HelpAge International & The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center. (2012). The neglected generation, the impact of displacement in older people.

Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2011). *Qualitative research methods.* Sage Publications.

Horn, V., & Fokkema, T. (2025). Editors' introduction—older refugees: Who are they and how are they faring? *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *38*(1), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feaf017

Humble, D., Tukundane, C., Paparu, C., & Clarke, R. (2020). *Visualising Youth Futures: Refugee Youth and Mobile Technology Use in Uganda: A Review of Literature* https://doi.org/10.57711/jf6w-rk56

Hunter, A., & Böcker, A. (2023). Older refugees and internally displaced people. In S. Torres & A. Hunter (Eds.), *Handbook on Migration and Ageing* (pp. 151-161). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Hutton, D. (2008). *Older people in emergencies: Considerations for action and policy development*. World Health Organization.

Kalipeni, E. (2000). Health and disease in southern Africa: a comparative and vulnerability perspective. *Social Science & Medicine*, *50*(7), 965-983. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(99)00348-2

Khawaja, N. G., White, K. M., Schweitzer, R., & Greenslade, J. (2008). Difficulties and Coping Strategies of Sudanese Refugees: A Qualitative Approach. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, *45*(3), 489-512. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461508094678

Kiteki, B. N. (2016). *The case for resilience in African refugees: A literature review and suggestions for future research*. VISTAS.

Kohn, N. A. (n.d.). *Vulnerability theory and the role of government*. Retrieved August 1, 2025 from https://openyls.law.yale.edu/entities/publication/0db87198-c5fb-43b4-9cd7-e6fe8ca6bc6f

Lupieri, S. (2022). 'Vulnerable' but not 'Valuable': Older refugees and perceptions of deservingness in medical humanitarianism. *Social Science & Medicine*, *301*, 114903. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2022.114903

Mason, M. (2010). Sample size and saturation in PhD studies using qualitative interviews. *Forum Qualitative Social Research*, *11*(3), 1-19. https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-11.3.1428

McGadney-Douglass, B. F., & Douglass, R. L. (2008). Collective Familial Decision-Making In Times Of Trouble: Intergenerational Solidarity in Ghana. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology*, *23*(2), 147-160. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10823-008-9064-8

McKeown, A., Hai Bui, D., & Glenn, J. (2022). A social theory of resilience: The governance of vulnerability in crisis-era neoliberalism. *European Journal of Cultural and Political Sociology*, *9*(1), 112-132. https://doi.org/10.1080/23254823.2021.1997616

McIntyre, A. (2008). *Participatory action research. Qualitative research methods series* (Vol. 52). Sage Publications.

Mestheneos, E., & Ioannidi, E. (2002). Obstacles to Refugee Integration in the European Union Member States. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, *15*(3), 304-320. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/15.3.304

Migration Data Portal. (September 29, 2020). *Older persons and migration*. Retrieved November 7, 2020 from https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/older-persons-and-migration

Missing millions. How older people with disabilities are excluded from humanitarian response. (2018). International Centre for Evidence in Disability at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine., & HelpAge International. Retrieved April 18, 2023 from BPRMReport-LowRes.pdf

Momodu, S. (2019). Uganda stands out in refugees hospitality: The country hosts the largest number of refugees in Africa — more than a million. *Africa Renewal*, *32*(3), 18-19. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18356/38215ab0-en

NSW Refugee Health Service & NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS). (2003). *Working with refugees, a guide for social workers*.

Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) & United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2018). *Adjumani_Pagirinya-Settlement_March-2018*. Retrieved February 20, 2026 from https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/64485

Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) & United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2020). Uganda- Refugee Statistics March 2020.

Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) & United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2022). *Uganda-refugee statistics, February,*. Retrieved June 30, 2022

from file:///C:/Users/FRANK/Downloads/Uganda%20Dashboard%20Statistics_Feb2022%20(2).pdf

Okot, F. (2016). *No pride in ageing: The plight of elderly refugees in Uganda*. Retrieved November 21, 2020 from https://www.refugeelawproject.org/index.php/blog-menu/mhpwb-blog/no-pride-in-ageing-the-plight-of-elderly-refugees-in-uganda

Pace, M., & Simsek, D. (2019). *The politics of integration: Adjusting to new lives in host societies. (pp. 1-14).* SIRIUS. https://scispace.com/pdf/the-politics-of-integration-adjusting-to-new-lives-in-host-2uegmqgd47.pdf

Pieterse, S., & Ismail, S. (2003). Nutritional risk factors for older refugees. *Disasters*, *27*(1), 16-36. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7717.00217

Pieterse, S., Manandhar, M., & Ismail, S. (2002). The association between nutritional status and handgrip strength in older Rwandan refugees. *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, *56*(10), 933-939. https://doi.org/10.1038/sj.ejcn.1601443

Richardson, G. E. (2002). The metatheory of resilience and resiliency. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, *58*(3), 307-321. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.10020

Savic, M., Chur-Hansen, A., Mahmood, M. A., & Moore, V. M. (2016). 'We don't have to go and see a special person to solve this problem': Trauma, mental health beliefs and processes for addressing 'mental health issues' among Sudanese refugees in Australia. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, *62*(1), 76-83. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020764015595664

Schatz, E. J. (2009). Reframing Vulnerability: Mozambican Refugees' Access to State-Funded Pensions in Rural South Africa. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology*, *24*(3), 241-258. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10823-008-9089-z

Schröder-Butterfill, E., & Marianti, R. (2006). A framework for understanding old-age vulnerabilities. *Ageing Soc*, *26*(1), 9-35. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0144686x05004423

Seyidov, I. (2021). On social integration process with refugees in Turkey: how can NGOs be more effective? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *25*(1), 7-21. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1673955

Sherwood, K., & Liebling-Kalifani, H. (2012). A grounded theory investigation into the experiences of African women refugees: Effects on resilience and identity and implications for service provision. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, *13*(1), 86-108. https://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?httpsredir=1&article=1058&context=jiws

Shishehgar, S., Gholizadeh, L., DiGiacomo, M., Green, A., & Davidson, P. M. (2017). Health and Socio-Cultural Experiences of Refugee Women: An Integrative Review. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, *19*(4), 959-973. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-016-0379-1

SOPAC. (2023). *Reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience in SIDS*. SOPAC Environmental Vulnerability Project. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from

https://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/indicators/idsd/pdf/reducing_Vuln_increasing_resiliency.pdf

Stevan Merrill, W., Norma, W., Leonce, H., Toni, T., Madeleine, C., Gonwo, D., Maureen, W., Chloe, P., & Jacqueline, W. (2014). Fostering Resilience: Protective Agents, Resources, and Mechanisms for Adolescent Refugees' Psychosocial Well-Being. *Adolescent Psychiatry*, *4*(3), 164-176. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.2174/2210676604031409121624l0

Strong, J., Varady, C., Chahda, N., Doocy, S., & Burnham, G. (2015). Health status and health needs of older refugees from Syria in Lebanon. *Conflict and Health*, *9*(1), 12. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13031-014-0029-y

Tippens, J. A. (2020). Generational perceptions of support among Congolese refugees in urban Tanzania. *Global Social Welfare*, *7*(1), 69-80.

Tulibaleka, P. O., Tumwesigye, K., & Nakalema, K. (2022). Protracted refugees: Understanding the challenges of refugees in protracted refugee situations in Uganda. *Journal of African Studies and Development*, *14*, 1-11. https://doi.org/10.5897/JASD2021.0647

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2017). *Uganda's contribution to refugee protection and management*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.undp.org/uganda/publications/ugandas-contribution-refugee-protection-and-management

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (n.d.). *Sustainable development goals. What are the Sustainable Development Goals?* . Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2000). *UNHCR's policy on older refugees*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://emergency.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%2C%20Policy%20on%20Older%20Refugees%2C%202000.pdf

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2013). *Working with older persons in forced displacement - Need to know guidance*. UNHCR. https://www.onlinelibrary.iihl.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2013-UNHCR-Working-with-Older-Persons.pdf

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2016). *UNHCR working with Government of Uganda and emergency response partners to contain cholera outbreak amongst the newly arrived South Sudanese refugees in Adjumani district, Uganda*. Retrieved January 06, 2019 from http://www.unhcr.org/57b5a3544.html

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2020). *Global Trends in Forced Displacement – 2020*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.unhcr.org/media/global-trends-forced-displacement-2020

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2022). *Global Trends Report, 2022*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2022

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2023). *Global Trends report 2023*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.unhcr.org/media/global-trends-report-2023

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2024a). *Global Trends report 2024*. Retrieved March 10, 2026 from https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2024

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2024b). *Integration Handbook. Older Refugees* https://www.unhcr.org/handbooks/ih/age-gender-diversity/older-refugees

Vaismoradi, M., Turunen, H., & Bondas, T. (2013). Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nursing & Health Sciences*, *15*(3), 398-405. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/nhs.12048

Volpato, G., Kourková, P., & Zelený, V. (2012). Healing war wounds and perfuming exile: the use of vegetal, animal, and mineral products for perfumes, cosmetics, and skin healing among Sahrawi refugees of Western Sahara. *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*, *8*(1), 49. https://doi.org/10.1186/1746-4269-8-49

World Health Organization. (2021). *Global report on ageism*. Retrieved April 10, 2023 from https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240016866

Young, M. Y., & Chan, K. J. (2015). The psychological experience of refugees: A gender and cultural analysis. In S. Safdar & N. Kosakowska-Berezecka (Eds.), *Psychology of gender through the lens of culture: Theories and applications* (pp. 17-36). Springer International Publishing.

Young, T. K. H., Pakenham, K. I., & Norwood, M. F. (2018). Thematic analysis of aid workers' stressors and coping strategies: work, psychological, lifestyle and social dimensions. *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, *3*(1), 19. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-018-0046-3

Zamfir, I. (2017). *Refugee policies in Africa: Open borders but limited integration. Briefing September 2017*. European Parliamentary Research Service.

Zarafshani, K., Sharafi, L., Azadi, H., & Van Passel, S. (2016). Vulnerability assessment models to drought: toward a conceptual framework. *Sustainability*, *8*(6), 588. https://doi.org/10.3390/su8060588

Algerian Vocational School Students in Jászberény, Hungary in the 1970s[1]

Attila Tokai[2]

Abstract:

The everyday experiences of Algerian students studying in Hungary in the 1970s and 1980s are a scarcely studied field. The focus of the publication is the question of what microprocesses have emerged during the presence of Algerian students in Jászberény, a Hungarian rural town during the Kádár regime. As the topic is peripheral contemporary news articles in the daily press and oral history interviews with former teachers and students are the only sources, complemented by the TESCO documents in the Hungarian National Archives. It is a fortunate coincidence that a folder with the inscription 'TESCO Algerians' with valuable documents related to the education of Algerian students has survived in the Jászberény vocational technical school. Hungary started opening to the Third World countries in the 1960s, as part of the new Eastern Bloc foreign policy led by the Soviet Union, which tried to find alliances and markets in the decolonised new countries. The recent study focuses on two important questions: What microprocesses did the presence of foreign students trigger in Jászberény, embedded in the state socialist society? What kind of global challenges did the vocational education had to face during that time in Hungary? In this study, I try to figure out the main intercultural differences between the students and the locals, by drawing a lively picture of the Kádár era Jászberény from a special microhistorical perspective. I assume that the students living separately in different Hungarian towns may have faced similar everyday problems regardless of the place. In the near future I would like to compare the microhistories of the Algerian student groups studying in different Hungarian rural towns in the 1970s and 1980s, which could form a basis for a detailed comparative historical analysis to research the lesser-known intercultural dimension of the Socialist Hungary.

Keywords:

Algeria; Hungary; Socialist Solidarity; Jászberény; Vocational Education.

[1] DOI: https://10.12700/jceeas.2026.6.1.441

[2] PhD-Candidate, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; ORCID: 0000-0001-8351-862X; tokai.attila.krea@gmail,com.

Introduction

Hungary became a member of the United Nations on December 20, 1955, but until 1963 the so-called 'Hungarian question' hindered any contact with countries outside the Socialist Bloc (Békés, 2019, p. 193). On September 25, 1962, Ferhat Abbas proclaimed the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, thus a government led by Ben Bella was installed, but under the Evian Agreement, the former colonial power France also had serious influence in the country (Lengyel, 1982, p. 82; J. Nagy, 1987, p. 48). Algeria has an area of 2.381.000 km², with a population of 13 million in 5-2 million), Constantine (300.000) and Annaba (200.000) (Kádár, 1973, 28).

The contact of the Eastern Bloc with the African and Asian countries freed from colonial rule was also motivated by the Soviet geopolitical interest during the Cold War. Important elements of this process were the state loans, sending of experts, and offering vocational training for students coming from the developing world. The Soviet Union offered the greatest assistance, but other countries, including Hungary, also tried to get their share of it. In 1965, Hungary concluded a trade agreement with Algeria (Bódy 2021, p.14). On November 1, 1964, Gyula Kállai's delegation consisting of government, and KISZ members visited the celebration organized for the 10th anniversary of the Algerian liberation war (Solymári – Tarrósy, 2025, p. 150). On June 19, 1965, Ben Bella was overthrown in a bloodless coup, Houari Boumediene became the new leader, but this did not affect interstate relations (Lawless, 1980, p. 28). In 1968, the last French military units left Algeria, the country inaugurated the first national oil pipeline, and nationalized 11 foreign-owned iron, zinc, copper, and lead mines (Árkus, 1984, p.133-134). The scientific and cultural cooperation, as well as the relationship between the ministries, have also developed dynamically (Nagy 2017, p. 87). Hungary viewed the North African country as a potential market for Hungarian technology export, which Algeria was able to finance from its hydrocarbon revenues (Bódy, 2022, p. 334). TESCO International Technical and Scientific Cooperation and Trading Office[3] was founded in 1962 with the aim of coordinating technological cooperation, scholarships and sending of experts (Tarrósy-Morenth, 2013, p. 80-81). Press and propaganda relations also expanded, in 1978 an agreement was signed between the two journalist associations and also the radio and television stations (MNL 1981).

[3] TESCO (International Technical and Scientific Cooperation and Trading Office) was a Hungarian-founded company belonging to the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Its main profile was the coordination of scientific and technological cooperation, especially building relationship with developing countries (sending experts, accepting scholarships). It survived the regime change and operated as TESCO Consulting Ltd. through privatization until 2017, when it was liquidated by the Commercial Court in bankruptcy proceedings. Its last CEO was László Pados. More about the company: http://www.tescoconsulting.hu

Receiving Algerian Scholarship Holders

In the 1970s, the majority of people travelling to Hungary from developing countries came for university, postgraduate or technical studies (Apor 2017, p. 26). The legal background was the Technical and Scientific Cooperation Agreement signed in 1966 (MNL TESCO Algeria,1979-1990). Within its framework firstly 47 people arrived in Békéscsaba and Pécs for technical studies in September 1970. Based on the new agreement signed in 1973 altogether 97 scholarship holders arrived on March 15, 1974. Unfortunatelly, seven of them had to return for various reasons, like illness or different family problems (MNL TESCO Algeria, 1967-1975).

Miklós Toldi Food Industry Vocational High School (*Nagykőrös*)	28 students
High-voltage Vocational High School (*Jászberény*)	17 students
Tóth Kálmán Water Management Vocational High School (*Baja*)	19 students
Museum preparatory course (*Pécs*)	8 students
Chemical Industry Vocational High School (*Debrecen)*	9 students
Shoe Industry Vocational High School (*Martfű*)	9 students
Total	90 students

Figure 1: Distribution of Algerian students arriving in 1974. Source: MNL TESCO Algeria, 1967-1975.

In 1974, a total of 164 technicians were studying in Hungary; but unforeseen financial problems arose in their catering (MNL TESCO Algeria, 1967-1975). For the 1976–77 academic year the Hungarians provided 50 places, thus 30 new students arrived in December 1976. For the 1977–78 academic year, in addition to the existing 113 study places, the state offered scholarships to more 20 persons in the key areas of food and construction industry, and ten other scholarships in postgraduate training. The 1978–79 work program stipulated the admission of 184 students for 1979, but only 62 places remained for the 1980/81 academic year. In 1979, a total of 230 Algerians studied in Hungary as skilled workers, technicians and postgraduate training. A year later their number rose to 243, but new scholarship holders did not arrive from the mid-1980s (MNL TESCO Algeria, 1979-1990).

Vocational Education in Jászberény

In the following, the lives of Algerian students studying in Jászberény[4] will be presented, highlighting how the years of János Kádár's soft dictatorship were realized in local context. István Rácz the principal of High-Power Vocational School [5] has concluded a contract with the TESCO Office coordinating the education of Algerian students. At the 1972/73 academic year, 14 students could continue their studies in Jászberény joining the third school year, concerning they have studied two years in Budapest in another vocational school. István Rácz maintained good relationship with the Ministry of Metallurgy and Mechanical Engineering, which organized the training of foreign students. The Ministry was not satisfied with the level of knowledge and skills of this Algerian class, when studying in Budapest, as they have only attended classes from 5 pm to 8 pm, and their language skills were inadequate. Therefore, the Ministry asked principal István Rácz to take them over and improve the level of their education. After moving to Jászberény, their theoretical and practical knowledge has been brought to the required level (Interview with József Helmich, 2025).

The Jászberény school[6] agreed to provide eight rooms for use: two classrooms (41.2 m² and 31 m²), a foyer (91.7 m²), three workshops and a restroom. Housing, teachers' fees, heating, lighting and other expenses all were financed by TESCO Company. Accommodation was initially in the school's dormitory, later in rented apartments in different parts of the city ('Algírok Mappa,' 23 October 1972). The scholarship's amount was quite enough for pocket money: 1,500 HUF/month in 1973, two years later it was increased to 1,800 HUF/month. In comparison it was the same amount as an engineer's salary at the very beginning of his career (Interview with Ferenc Bencsik, 2024). Some students were sent by their company to refresh their skills, meanwhile they continued to receive their home salary in a bank account in Algeria in addition to the Hungarian scholarship ('Algírok Mappa' 1970; Interview with Ali Remili, 2024).

The three-story dormitory built at a cost of 14.5 million HUF for accommodating 204 people was opened on November 16, 1973, with a 156 m² clubroom, a doctor's office and three sick rooms on the ground floor. The Youth Club of the Budapest Committee of the Patriotic People's Front (Hazafias Népfront) contributed 250 thousand HUF worth of work to the construction and also donated a 500-volume library (Szolnok Megyei Néplap, 1973). The Algerian students were housed on the dormitory's first floor, in a separate wing, in rooms numbered 107-113. They could spend their mornings inside the dormitory or in the city, as the house rules did not apply

[4] Jászberény is town of 30.000 inhabitants in Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County.

[5] The school has been operating as a Catholic vocational technical high-school since 2012. Today its name is Szent József Katolikus Elektronikai Technikum, Gimnázium és Kollégium. Its previous and widely-known name was Liska József Erősáramú Szakközépiskola, Gimnázium és Kollégium. Since 1969 the main profile is the education of high voltage technicians. Interview with Mrs. Árpádné Bakki retired vice-principal, 2025

[6] Hereby I express my gratitude to Ferenc Bencsik former principal of the school for providing me very useful unknown sources for the publication.

to them (Interview with Ferenc Bencsik, 2024). The students' first impressions were like these:

> "*When we arrived, we didn't know what to expect. The Hungarian lifestyle, culture and food were also unusual. The strangest thing was the cold weather, we didn't know the winter was so cold (minus 5-6 degrees), we only had jackets. There was snow, we played with it like children, because we have never seen it before. In the dormitory, they cooked with fat, often offered meals made of pork, what we don't eat. They even boiled chicken heads and feet in the soup, which was extremely unusual for us. It was also hard to get used to the fact that boys and girls are everywhere together, not separated like in Algeria. You can just go to a coffee shop where you can drink alcohol and meet local girls, not like in our homeland.*" (Interview with Ali Remili, 2024).

A group of Algerian students dressed in traditional costumes, have stood in the school corridor in ankle-length felt dresses and peaked caps seemed a bit exotic at first, but after three weeks, they have completely changed their clothes to European ones. It was a great pleasure for them to see snowfall for the first time in their lives; they thought it was "manna" falling from the sky. It was not possible for the teachers to do their job that day, because the Algerians were playing with the snow all the time. The first difficulty for them was learning the Hungarian language. The six-month training was conducted in French for 45 hours a week. On March 15, 1974, the school signed a contract with András Simon, a retired teacher to give eight lectures a week, his main task was to teach Hungarian literature to the students. If they did not understand something, he switched to French, but he was speaking in a quite boring way. Gyula Boros, around 30 years old and coming from Szolnok, gave 15 theoretical and 10 practical lectures a week. According to Remili Ali, a former student, the Hungarian language is extremely difficult, thus they had to study all day and night:

> "*We only studied the language for half a year, but in the meantime, we went everywhere and met girls in town. There are a high school and a Teacher Training College. The Algerian kids are not shy; they dared to talk to them anywhere. We started by saying hi, then we tried to communicate with our 'hands and feet.' Back then, there was still life in Jászberény, there were many people, many cafes. The locals knew that such young foreigners were studying here, and it helped a lot in learning the Hungarian language talked to people. Later on, the difference in language skills was also visible; those Algerians who didn't date didn't learn the language as much.*" In Jászberény, no one spoke French or English, therefore they had to learn Hungarian as fast as they could (Interview with Ali Remili, 2024).

TESCO's letter of August 11, 1975, was entitled 'Mandatory medical examination of Algerian scholarship holders,' because the Ministry of Health has made obligatory the laboratory tests for the student after returning from Algeria, which had to be

supplemented with a cholera stool examination. The results of the students' blood count, Wassermann, urine, bacteriological and parasitological findings were also sent to laboratories ('Algírok Mappa' 1975).

High-Voltage Professional Training

The profession was taught in three academic years (Szolnok Megyei Néplap, 1976). Classes started at 2 p.m. and lasted until 7 p.m. During the interviews, it became clear that the technical subjects of electronics were much easier for the students, they specially liked technical drawing. Learning mathematics, electrical engineering, physics and chemistry was also considered a positive experience for the Algerians. On the other hand, it was quite difficult for them to reconcile the theoretical texts and sketches they learned from technology (Interview with Ali Remili, 2024). Their former technology teacher remembers them this way:

> "*I taught the first Algerian group in the 1972-73 school year. They were healthy, adult men aged 25-35 years, and they made a splash in the city with their rugged appearance. The training was only on basic level, as they probably had a primary school or maybe vocational education. They had difficulties understanding the Hungarian explanations. Furthermore, the teachers did not get any guidance on what subject to teach them, thus we have mainly taught only basic electronics*" (Interview with István Gergen, 2025).

The appearance of 18-20 North Africans was a novelty in Jászberény. The first class seemed to be a solid group, they did not reach the usual level of knowledge, but they were mostly involved in sports. On the other hand, the heterogeneity of this group and the language barriers have also hindered the process of education, and some students did not interest in studying at all, they have regularly hung out at school, and István Rácz tried to punish them by withdrawing the scholarship for the days they missed. When the TESCO Office found it out, Sándor Derzsi commercial director and József Mózer department leader have written him a letter dated September 22, 1975, drawing the principal's attention to the international agreements. According to these, all scholarship holders are entitled to get financial support for every day spent in Hungary, and therefore he should not punish the absences with a deduction of scholarship rates, but he should resort to other disciplinary measures ('Algírok Mappa' 1975).
The next table shows the subjects the Algerian students had to learn:

Technical drawing	2 lessons
Technology (electrical industry)	3 lessons
Mathematics	5 lessons
Electrical machines	2 lessons
Electrical appliances	3 lessons

Electrical works	2 lessons
Automation	3 lessons
Business economics	1 lesson
Electrical measurements (machine)	3 lessons
Professional practice	12 lessons
Total	36 lessons

Figure 2: Number of weekly lessons for each subject in the 1973/74 academic year. Source: 'Algírok Mappa' 1973.

The students' professional knowledge has developed as a result of all teachers' enormous efforts and sacrifice. There were ten-minute breaks between the 45-minute lessons, and a 20-minute break after the third lecture. The list of teachers: *Árpád Bakki* (physics, electrical measurement), *Sándor Pecsenyánszky* (electrical engineering, electrical machines), *Mária Lóczi* (technical drawing), *István Gergen* (technology), *József Helmich* (technology, electrical measurement), *László Barta* (machine elements), *István Rácz* (mathematics), *Károly Harangozó* (electrical measurement).

The practical education took place on Thursdays in the school workshop. The list of teachers leading the training was: *István Krizsán* (winding), *Lehel Rigó* (machine cutting), *Károly Palotai* (winding), *László Sándor* (school workshop manager, electrical measurement), *József Kohári* (manual cutting, welding, soldering), *László Szabó* (electrical measurement). In addition to professional subjects, students practiced the correct Hungarian speech in a class called 'Language Training' led by *Piroska Nagy* for two hours a week. Vice-principal Mrs. *Árpádné Bakki* in her lecture called 'Hungarian Cultural History' has comprehensively presented the main historical figures of Hungarian intellectual life. She was very surprised to realise that there were some Algerian students who have already heard about the fact, that the famous composer, Béla Bartók has collected Arabic folk songs too, in addition to Hungarian ones. The vice-principal has mastered the students' pronunciation in a special voice training, as it was quite difficult for many of them to pronounce the strange Hungarian vowels (Interview with Mrs. Árpádné Bakki, 2025).

The second group arrived in March 1974 with a stopover in Zürich and Geneva on a Swiss Air flight. A French-speaking TESCO representative was waiting for them at Ferihegy Airport, after that the group was taken to Jászberény by bus. The group mostly consisted of adult workers of three state-owned Algerian companies (SONELGAZ, SONELEC, and SONIPEC). Learning the language lasted till the end of the school year, as they arrived later, only in the second semester. Their Hungarian language exam had to be taken in front of a committee of totally unknown teachers. It had a written and oral part, but overall, it was not difficult for most of the students. The two best ones, Abderrahmane Abellache and Ali Remili, received a free plane ticket to Algiers. Everyone has travelled home for the summertime; they returned only in September. Ali Mahmoud Cherifati, the head of the class, was also responsible for organizing cultural programs. Several students already had previous knowledge in the technical field, but

some of them had only attended high school without gaining any skills. In his group there was only one student who regularly hung out due to the many entertainment options in the city, thus he failed and graduated only a year later. According to the 1974 curriculum, the students had to learn Arabic and Hungarian folk songs, the use of Arabic folk instruments, Arabic and Hungarian beat music, therefore a special two-stringed folk instrument (gombri) was also requested from Algiers ('Algírok Mappa', 1974).

During the vacation everybody visited their sending companies, where they picked up their plane tickets for the next school year. Friends often asked the students how life was in Hungary, and what about local food. They did not have any complaints as they replied: 'We live well in Jászberény, the language is quite difficult, but the Hungarian girls are really beautiful.' At home they could also access their bank account. Meanwhile studying in Hungary their home salaries from their companies were also collected at their account, thus they could withdraw any money to Jászberény in foreign currency, which was mainly used for partying, travelling or buying used Western cars (Interview with Ali Remili, 2024).

Figure 3. Algerian students on a school trip to Budapest, Source: Nagy Piroska's photograph collection.

The foreigners studying in Hungary seemed to be an interesting topic for the local press too, thus in 1972, a reporter interviewed some of the students. Slimane Bendjaballah, a 22-year-old young man, the leader of the Algerians spoke surprisingly good Hungarian:

> "*As a student, my job is to study with honour, as a student leader, to interpret the requests, comments, and complaints of my peers. I don't have a difficult job because everyone helps me, we hardly have anything to ask for, we get everything we need. The teachers and the principal take our opinions into account, and they would certainly listen to our complaints.*"

Abdelkrim Guezlane started his studies in Algiers, then he continued studying in Budapest after a year and a half. The curly-haired young man speaks seriously:

> *'It was easier to study in Budapest than in Algiers, in Jászberény it is easier than in Budapest. I highly appreciate the good teaching methods here, mostly the 12-hour practical sessions per week in a modernly equipped school, as this Jászberény institute. Every day I feel that I know more than yesterday, and I understand what they are teaching me better and better.'*

Abdelmalik Rezig (Kamel) is already a family man. He got married in Budapest to a Hungarian girl; they have a 15-month-old baby boy. He is thinking of which subject is the most difficult for him. He answers to the reporter's question: "*Our curriculum was designed in such a way that we understood from the beginning what we were learning would be useful to us. When I finish these two years, I want to continue my studies at ELTE University*" (Szolnok Megyei Néplap, 1972).

Two very serious members of the second group also gave interview, motivating the entire class. Both were married; they have first lived in a shared apartment. After their wives arrived from Algeria, they moved separately. They did not go to parties with the others and always cooked for themselves individually (Interview with Ali Remili, 2024). Abdellah Sakhraoui told the reporter with strong accent that he was born in Algiers, and before coming here he had worked as a guest worker in France. He highlighted the modern education in Jászberény. Learning the language was a big challenge for him, because he considered the six-month intensive training to be insufficient, and he wanted to learn the literary language as well. Said Kebache was married too. His wife Zhor, and their two curly-haired daughters, Linda and Kerima, also lived in Jászberény at this time. The children attended the kindergarten of Pelyhespart. It was more difficult for Said to learn Hungarian as an adult, but he got lots of help at the school. He also had a dream of continuing his studies and to teach in Algeria in a similar modern vocational school (Szolnok Megyei Néplap, 1976).[7]

There were some Algerian students who were very interested in the local society, especially how different people lived in Hungary. Once three of them spontaneously visited the vice-principal, Mrs. Árpádné Bakki, and her husband as they were just interested in their private life (Interview with Mrs. Árpádné Bakki, 2025). In 1975 the Jászberény branch of the Algerian Students' Union was re-established, two students became members. TESCO also provided support for organizing cultural events for the Algerians.[8] Every year, teachers wrote descriptions of the students, which are considered rare written sources:

[7] His wife and two little daughters have arrived to Jászberény after the first schoolyear. Zhor has been as a housewife in the beginning, but later when she started boring, she got a job in the local Lehel Refigerator Factory, where she could also pick up some language skills. (Interview with Edit Senhaji, 2025).

[8] Cherifati Ali-Mahmoud became the local leader of the Algerian Student Union, and Derrar Ahmed his right hand (Interview with Ali Remili 2024.)

'He is capable, he is painfully precise in his preparation, but he is too meticulous. He is active in class, he doesn't care if he doesn't understand something, he strives very hard to achieve a good grade. He openly expresses his opinion and reacts sensitively to comments or actions that affect him. He gets angry easily and he is prone to making rash decisions. However, he calmly corrects his actions if he thinks they are wrong. His academic performance has decreased by a few tenths, and his diligence has slowed down compared to the previous year. He is very interested in the Hungarian environment around him, the lives of people, and their relationship with each other. He has gained a lot of experience during his stay in different countries; this has played a major role in the development of his critical attitude. He is able to influence the members of the group.'

'*He has good language skills, and he studies extremely diligently, conscientiously and persistently. Due to his quick thinking and slow language expression skills, he speaks with a slight stutter. In the first year, he was among the best students in group B, this drove him to study. In the second year, the two groups merged, thus he became to the middle, but he is trying very hard to be among the better ones, which is also evident in his second semester results. His human qualities can only be praised. He is respectful towards his teachers, very modest, perhaps a little withdrawn. He is a good social person, helpful, and his peers like him. He attended classes diligently, and he is interested in technical things as well as theory.*'

'*He has good abilities; his diligence has deteriorated compared to the previous year. As a result, his academic performance is weaker. He is sensitive, easily angered, and cannot always control himself. He works a lot for the community as a good organizer. He has excesses in judging events. He has a stomach ulcer, so he cooks for himself. His appearance is attractive; his appearance is well-groomed. He expresses his opinion in all circumstances, without considering the consequences. He monitors the problems of the community closely and he sees the internal and external forces that cause them. He affects a large part of the group; thus, he is suitable for organizing work that unites the community. He loves this job and does it with honour, although it has caused some setbacks in his academic performance'* ('Algírok' Mappa, 1978).

The third Algerian class of 27 student arrived in 1975. Due to their large number and different prior knowledge, they were separated to two groups, A and B. After finishing the first year, in September 1976 the groups were merged once they had reached a similar level of knowledge. Their attitude was extremely contradictory; they did not take studying so seriously either, because there were many young people among them who only came to have some fun or saw Hungary as a stopover on their journey to Western Europe (Interview with Ali Remili, 2024). Mokdad Laoues, who currently lives in Spain, recalls his studies in Jászberény this way:

"*At that time, we arrived in Hungary in January 1975, and that's when we started learning Hungarian. We studied the language for half a year, then we had a summer break. In September, we started studying electromechanics properly, all the studies were four years long. We graduated in 1979*" (Interview with Mokdad Laoues, 2024).

Leisure and Entertainment

The students moved around the city a lot, got to know the society of Jászberény, they were regular guests of the local restaurants and bars. Remili Ali, a former student, remembers the local entertainment opportunities:

"*After 7 pm, when we finished school, life has just begun, the four or five bars were open until midnight on weekdays too. After school we went to party. We went to Lehel Restaurant a lot, where there was live music every night. There was a disco once a week at Pannónia Bar. There was also a weekly disco at the Teacher Training College in its main hall, where the Algerian boys were popular. Our regular venue was the Kőhídi Bar, where a pianist played music. Life in the city was colourful, there were many cultural groups, we had fottball team too, that played the small-field city football championship, and we played a lot of music and performed folk dances too. On weekends, when the weather was nice, we went to the beach, or to a match, or we just organised a program with our girlfriends*" (Interview with Ali Remili, 2024).

The Jászberény caterers knew well who was allowed to lend money and who was not. In such cases, the manager would write down that the student would pay the bill when he received his scholarship. They always paid on time; they did not abuse the situation. The Algerians went to Pannónia Bar a lot, where they mainly drank cocktails, they also liked beer and the local brandy called 'pálinka' (Interview with József Helmich and Edit Senhaji, 2025). The students have also formed a small music group with the singers Abderrahmane Abellache and Ramdane Saada together with Ahmed Khedar, who played the guitar professionally. They mostly played Arabic music and performed at different school events. The students have also organized a folk-dance group and a small-field local football team, called 'Algerian Students,' which played matches in the Jászberény city championship on Saturdays (Interview with Ali Remili, 2024).

It was a sensitive topic in Jászberény that the Algerians were better at getting girls then the locals. This was also accompanied by the fact that some of them were also financially free. For example, at that time it was really hard to get normal jeans in Hungary, but they could buy it in France or Italy for themselves. So, Hungary was a complete 'free world' for most of the Algerian students at that time, if a young man had some money, in addition he was exotic too, the girls would go for him in many cases (Interview with Ali Remili).

Figure 4: The second Algerian group (1974-1978). Source: Nagy Piroska's photographic collection.

There were several clashes over girls who preferred Algerian boys, and even a middle-aged lady welcomed them warmly (Tokai, 2024, p. 99). The police often visited their headquarters, the Kőhídi Presszó, and usually intervened to protect them from the angry locals. Because of the conflicts with the locals there were different court trails, but in the worst case, these only ended in expulsion from the country (Interview with István Holló, Mrs. Károlyné Nagy and István Nemes, 2024). István Rácz was an influential man with a significant network of party contacts, and he was also meticulous in ensuring that interstate relations were not damaged, thus he maintained good relationship with the local police and always took care of any behaviour problems (Interview with Ali Remili, 2024).

It was a nice custom of the students to send postcards to their teachers from home during the summer break even after they had finished school. Ahmed Khedar wrote to József Helmich on March 23, 1977, that he had met Mohamed Mokhtari, who had given him the teacher's home address. He was sad that a teacher would no longer be teaching them in the next school year. As he puts it: "*I am very sorry. Everyone is sorry. It will be a bad school year for us, it started badly. We don't know what surprises the maths teacher will have in store for us.*" Then, he quickly turns to his summer experiences: "*Time is running here, and soon we have to go back to Jászberény. There are three girls here from the Jászberény Teacher Training College, they are having a good time. There will surely be more girls next summer.*"

Maiza El-Mamoun has sent postcards after graduating: "*The best time is over! We have to be realistic. I don't work, I'm still studying, I think I'm used to the life of a student.*" In another postcard, he writes about starting to teach:

> "*I'm fine, I teach biology in high school. Yes, it's very tiring, especially with 18-year-olds. It's hot here, there are a lot of people on the beach, you can't even move, there's such a big crowd. I met Jamel and his wife; they already have a daughter*" (József Helmich's postcard collection).

On December 8, 1974, Ahmed Derrar had a drunken argument with two locals of Jászberény, in Pannónia Bár as he went to a nearby table, picked up a glass and threw it at the victim. The police patrol acted, but the student repeatedly attacked the victim, altough he was no longer able to hit him again. Derrar was sentenced to a fine of 1,000 HUF for disorderly conduct, which he had to pay within 15 days. Police Major László Banka when mitigating circumstances considered that he had shown remorse. However, he warned the student if he commits a similar crime of vandalism in the future, he will be sentenced to imprisonment according to the law ('Algírok Mappa'1975).

The Exams

The first group took the exams on June 14, 1973, in the subjects of mechanical elements, mathematics, and technology, and the next day in electrical machines and general engineering. Eight of the 14 students have failed, thus a retake exam needed to be held for them on September 5 and 17. The reason why they could not pass the exam was the fact that they came totally unprepared for the first time, and the school didn't want all of them to be failed. During the second retake exam, two of the eight students, Douad Akli and Tessa Noureddin have failed again in maths. According to the school regulations, a newer retake exam cannot be held in such cases, therefore principal István Rácz wrote a letter to the TESCO Office asking if they would be granted another opportunity based on special consideration ('Algírok Mappa'1973).

The second group had to take a class exam on technology, electrical machines and electrical equipment subjects to a five-member committee on June 27, 1977. The chairman was Gyula Szücs, principal of the János Pálfy Industrial Vocational School in Szolnok, the co-chairman was István Kovács from the Ministry ('Algírok Mappa'1977). The committee members were István Rácz principal, Sándor Pecsenyánszky teacher of electrical machines, and Mrs. Andrásné Hlavacska teacher of technology and electrical equipment. István Rácz, after welcoming the members, highlighted that these students would take the written graduation exam in September. They can go home after the class exam, they have to come back only at the beginning of August, this one month will be the preparation time for the upcoming written exam. The oral part of the graduation exam will take place in October. He feels that the class has worked properly from the beginning, thus their schoolwork is much better than the previous and the following groups. These students have always prepared, and they could compete with any

Hungarian class. The order of the subjects was: 1. Technology, 2. Electrical machines, 3. Electrical equipment. A total of 17 students took part of the exam, 16 passed it, only one of them was allowed to take a retake exam and there were no repeaters.

The chairman emphasized that the students' behaviour was disciplined, they presented their knowledge courageously and their language skills were also appropriate, their drawing skills and the precise use of technical terms were also noticeable. Mustapha Kamel Cheriti's exam was outstanding, who completed his answers with excellent blackboard diagrams and sketches. Only Omar Bentalla did not reach the minimum level, therefore he failed. Sándor Pecsenyánszky added that all the students know the learning material relatively well, but their knowledge is too lexical without real practice, on the other hand István Rácz emphasized that they were very excited and wanted to pass the exam as soon as possible. The chairman announced the results and congratulated the examinees ('Algírok Mappa'1977). The second class took the written school leaving exam in September 1977, while the oral and the practical exams in mathematics, technology, electrical machines and equipment in October. The technician exam was taken in 1978, thus earning them the qualification of 'Electrical machine and equipment manufacturing technician' (Ali Remili's school leaving and technician certificate).

The third group took the exam in technology, electrical machines and electrical equipment subjects, on January 11, 1978. The principal said these students had arrived in January 1975, and after an intensive language preparation they received a shortened high-voltage training. They were an 'eager' group, they prepared for the exam with great diligence, 20 students came for the exam, all of them passed it successfully, there were no repeaters. According to co-chairman István Kovács, the electrical industry and technology subjects were a bit difficult for them, as they had to connect many new concepts and their sketches were poorly done. In the case of 'electrical machines and equipment,' they successfully coped with the preparation of winding drawings. The Hungarian technical language did not cause any problem; thus, most candidates could explain the vector diagrams too. With the use of the very special technical terms of electrical equipment subject they had some difficulties, but their blackboard sketches were acceptable. Sándor Pecsenyánszky highlighted that the weakest of the Algerians were the two repeaters, who skipped several parts of the learning material. In general, the students' expressive ability was much weaker than the previous group, as their language skills were poorer, their teachers were happy if they could understand their explanation during the lessons. The technical subjects have certainly less textual content, therefore the instructors could pay more attention to the technical drawing, thus it was easier for the Algerian students to understand ('Algírok Mappa' 1978).

Conclusion

This study presents the everyday life of three Algerian classes studying in Jászberény in the 1970s. According to the experiences summarized during the research, despite the Socialist 'ideological community of destiny,' local traditions were also alive, and, in

several cases, these led to different intercultural conflicts. The presence of the Algerian students gave Jászberény a kind of 'intercultural dimension,' but the meeting of two distant cultures has caused socio-cultural conflicts and numerous local prejudices. In the context of communism 'western way of life' was only available to a few, which aroused envy in the eyes of the locals, and in some cases discriminatory stereotypes are still present among the population. It was also a significant challenge for the vocational education in Jászberény to teach a technical profession for foreigners in Hungarian, but the exam results show that drawing and practical tasks independent of language were easier for the Algerians. In principle after graduation, they had to work seven years in Algeria, some of them later moved to another countries like France, Spain and Canada, only few remained in Hungary. Currently, two former students live in Jászberény, and a third one in Szolnok the county seat. Their children have already assimilated into the Hungarian society, the daughter of Mouloud Argaz has graduated from the same school, and Ali Remili's granddaughter is currently studying their computer science. For those living in Algeria, some level of Hungarian and a nostalgia for their student life in Jászberény have survived to this day. Therefore, it would be necessary to conduct much more oral history interviews with former students from the developing countries and to digitize their existing photographic material too.

Conflict of Interest

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

Notes on Contributor

Attila Tokai is a PhD candidate at Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest, Hungary) and an external student at Africa Research Institute at Óbuda University. He holds an M.A. in History from Eötvös Loránd University and a B.A. in Slavonic Studies with Ukrainian specialisation from Nyíregyháza University. His main field of interest is modern history, especially the history of Africa, Ukraine, the Balkan and the Baltic Region.

Algerian Sassy Students, who have Passed the Exams Successfully

Group 1 (1972-74): The first two years were completed in Budapest (1970-72), *Electrical and Equipment Technician Exam (1974)*: Abdelmalik Rezig, Abderrahmane Hammadi, Abderrazah Titah, Akli Duad, Omar Azzouz, Farid Debih, Goulam Reduane, Guezlane Ahdelkrim, Mustapha Arab, Oumoussa Cherif, Slimane Bendjaballah

Group 2 (1974-78): *Form teacher: István Rácz, Matriculation exam (1977), Electrical and equipment technician exam (1978):* Abbas Mouloud, Abellache Abderrahmane, Akrouf Ali, Argaz Mouloud, Boudjelaba Makhlouf, Bouzouina Belhadj, Brahmi Djamel-Eddine, Cherifati Ali-Mahmoud, Cheriti Mustapha Kamel, Derrar Ahmed, Kebache Said, Remili Ali, Saada Ramdane, Sakhraoui Abdellah, Taibi Zoubir

Group 3 (1975-79): *Form teacher: Sándorné Csiszár, Matriculation exam (1978), Electrical and equipment technician exam (1979):* Ait-Ouhamou Ameziane, Azouaou Abdelmadjid, Beddar Mohamed, Bentalla Omar, Berrekia Miloud, Boudra Hassene, Brahimi Mokhtar, Chaouadi Omar, Drici Said, Khedar Ahmed, Khenenou Abdelkrime, Khiter Aissa, Lakehal Embarek, Laoues Mokdad, Maiza El-Mamoun, Matmati Abdelkader, Mokhtari Mohamed, Rebbach Lamouri, Talaoubrid Mohamed, Zerrar Said

Figure 5: Tableau of the third Jászberény group (1975-79). Source: A Liska József Erősáramú Szakközépiskola, Gimnázium és Kollégium Jubileumi Évkönyve 50 (1959-2009). Liska József Erősáramú Szakközépiskola, Gimnázium és Kollégium, Jászberény. 208.

References

Algériai diákok között Jászberényben. (November 17, 1972). *Szolnok Megyei Néplap*, 7.

Algériai diákokkal Jászberényben: A tudásért keményen meg kell dolgozni. (January 30, 1976). 1.

Algírok Mappa (Algerian students' educational documents archival collection). (n.d.). In *Szent József Katolikus Elektronikai Technikum, Gimnázium és Kollégium (Jászberény).*

Apor, P. (2017). Szocialista migráció, posztkolonializmus és szolidaritás. *Magyarország és az Európán kívüli migráció. antro-pólus,*, *2*(2).

Árkus, I. (1984). *Forró kontinens forró évei.* Zrínyi Katonai Kiadó.

Árpádné, B. (2025). *Interview with Mrs. Árpádné Bakki retired vice-principal* [Interview].

Átadták az új szakközépiskolai kollégiumot Jászberényben. (November 13, 1973). *Szolnok Megyei Néplap*, 1.

Békés, C. (2019). *Enyhülés és emancipáció: Magyarország, a szovjet blokk és a nemzetközi politika, 1944-1991*. Osiris Kiadó – MTA Társadalomtudományi Kutatóközpont.

Bódy, Z. (2021). *Opening up to the „Third World" or Taking a Detour to the 'West'? The Hungarian Presence in Algeria from the 1960s to the 1980s. HistGlob Working Paper 4*. MTA-SZTE-ELTE History of Globalization Research Group.

Bódy, Z. (2022). Az algíri Olimpiai Stadion átadása: Magyarország a harmadik világ piacaiért vívott versenyben. In F. Laczó & B. Varga (Eds.), *Magyarország globális története 1869-2022* (pp. 333-337). Corvina Kiadó.

Gergen, I. (2025). *Interview with István Gergen, former teacher of the school between 1972-1974* [Interview].

Helmich, J. (2025). *Interview with József Helmich, former teacher of the Algerian students between 1973-1977* [Interview].

Holló, I. (2024). *Interview with István Holló Jászberény resident* [Interview].

József Helmich's postcard collection. (n.d.).

Kádár, I. (1973). Felsőfokú oktatás a fejlődésben lévő országokban. In *Műszaki és Természettudományi Egyesületek Szövetsége Fejlődésben lévő országok műszaki és tudományos kérdéseivel foglalkozó Bizottsága 7. számú kiadványa* (Vol. 7): Műszaki és Természettudományi Egyesületek Szövetsége.

Laoues, M. (2024). *Interview with Mokdad Laoues* [Interview].

Lawless, R. I. (1980). *Algeria*. Clio Press.

Lengyel, I. (1982). *Algéria hármas forradalma*. Kossuth Könyvkiadó.

A Liska József Erősáramú Szakközépiskola, Gimnázium és Kollégium Jubileumi Évkönyve 50 (1959-2009), Jászberény. (n.d.). Liska József Erősáramú Szakközépiskola, Gimnázium és Kollégium.

Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltár. (1981). MSZMP-KB Külügyi Osztálya (Foreign Policy Department) iratai, 1956-1989. M-KS 288. f. 32-a, 19. Algéria.

Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltár. Gazdasági Levéltár (Economical Archive). (n.d.-a). XXIX-G-21-a TESCO iratok, 1962-2016 – f. 67. Algeria, 1967-1975.

Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltár. Gazdasági Levéltár (Economical Archive). (n.d.-b). XXIX-G-21-a TESCO iratok, 1962-2016 – f. 67. Algeria, 1979-1990.

Nagy, G. (2017). *A független Algéria első évtizede és a magyar kapcsolat, 1962 – 1971 [PhD Dissertation]*. Szegedi Tudományegyetem Történelemtudományi Doktori Iskola. https://doi.org/10.14232/phd.3429

Nagy, J. L. (1987). *Mit kell tudni Algériáról?* Kossuth Könyvkiadó.

Nagy, K. (2024). *Interview with Mrs. Károlyné Nagy Jászberény resident* [Interview].

National Archives of Hungary / Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár. (n.d.). Archive documents of TESCO Company, retained by Department of Economic Organs (1585-2004) and 'Algeria' document material retained by Archive of Foreign Policy Department

of Central Comitee of Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) of Hungarian National Archives

Nemes, I. (2024). *Interview with István Nemes Jászberény resident* [Interview].

Remili, A. (2024). *Interview with Ali Remili* [Interview].

Remili, A. (n.d.). *Ali Remili's school leaving and technician certificate*.

Senhaji, E. (2025). *Interview with Edit Senhaji wife of a former Algerian student* [Interview].

Solymári, D., & Tarrósy, I. (2025). Hungarian Diplomacy towards Africa: Forging Bilateral Relations in the 1960s and 1970s. Modern Africa. *History and Society*, *13*(1), 135-160. https://doi.org/10.26806/modafr.v13i1.255

Tarrósy, I., & Morenth, P. (2013). Global Opening for Hungary: A New Beginning for Hungarian Africa Policy? *African Studies Quarterly*, *14*(1-2), 77-96.

Tokai, A. (2024). Algériai diákok magyar szakközépiskolákban. *Korall Társadalomtörténeti Folyóirat*, *25*(98), 80-103.

Book Review: Jonathan Carroll. Beyond Black Hawk Down: Intervention, Nation-Building, and Insurgency in Somalia, 1992–1995[1][2]

Gábor Sinkó[3]

Jonathan Carroll's *Beyond Black Hawk Down* represents a bold and thoroughly researched revaluation of the international intervention in Somalia from 1992 to 1995. By moving well beyond the limited temporal and analytical focus on the Battle of Mogadishu in October 1993, Carroll provides the first extensive scholarly military history of the entire intervention. He places it within the context of Somalia's political disintegration, the dynamics of international bureaucracy and the shifting post-Cold War principles of humanitarian intervention and nation-building. For those engaged in African studies, this book is especially significant due to its persistent effort to highlight Somali political figures and local dynamics, while still being rooted in the conventions of military history.

The central intervention in Somalia has historically held a contradictory status within both academic discourse and collective memory. It is regarded as one of the most commonly referenced instances of unsuccessful humanitarian intervention, yet it remains one of the least thoroughly analysed in its entirety. Most current evaluations of Somalia are conducted through the frameworks of international relations theory, peacekeeping principles or critiques of policy, frequently addressing events in a selective and teleological manner, with October 1993 acting as both the peak moment and the conclusive explanatory point. Carroll disputes this interpretive simplification. His primary argument is that the course of the intervention cannot be comprehended through detached incidents, doctrinal generalizations or a sense of retrospective inevitability. Rather, Somalia should be viewed as a drawn-out, uneven and internally varied process where violence occurred sporadically rather than continuously, consent was often contested yet frequently present and failure developed gradually due to bureaucratic misalignment and political miscalculations, rather than stemming from an intrinsic Somali resistance or unchangeable structural deficiencies.

The book is structured in a chronological manner, spanning eleven chapters and is framed by both an introduction and an epilogue. It is further enhanced by

[1] DOI: https://10.12700/jceeas.2026.6.1.481
[2] Jonathan Carroll, *Beyond Black Hawk Down: Intervention, Nation-Building, and Insurgency in Somalia, 1992–1995* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2025.), Modern War Studies series. ISBN 978-0-7006-3888-8. 463 pp.
[3] Researcher, Doctoral School for Safety and Security Sciences, Africa Research Institute, University of Óbuda; ORCID: ORCID: 0000-0002-6451-8701; sinko.gabor@phd.uni-obuda.hu.

comprehensive notes, maps, appendices and a significant bibliography. One of the most remarkable aspects of this volume is Carroll's mastery of archival resources. By utilizing archives from the United Nations, military records from the United States, materials from the Irish Defence Forces and conducting interviews with participants from various national contingents, he meticulously reconstructs the decision-making processes with remarkable detail. This extensive archival research enables him to challenge long-held beliefs, especially those related to consent, impartiality and the so-called „Mogadishu Line", which have influenced both academic and public perceptions of the intervention.

From the perspective of African studies, one of the most important contributions of the book is its ongoing critique of the inclination to depict Somalia as either a passive or uniformly antagonistic environment. Carroll contests the portrayals of Somali political figures as irrational disruptors or typical warlords, advocating instead for a more nuanced understanding of factional politics. His analysis of Mohamed Farah Aidid is particularly remarkable. Instead of reiterating the traditional image of Aidid as a solely power-driven adversary, Carroll places him within a fragmented political context influenced by clan alliances, fluctuating legitimacy claims and international involvement. In doing so, the author creates an analytical framework that allows for a revaluation of agency, accountability and causation in the intensification of violence during 1993.

Equally intriguing is Carroll's revaluation of consent. Existing scholarship frequently presumes that the lack of consent condemned the mission from the very beginning. The author challenges this notion by illustrating that significant portions of the Somali populace and political elite initially embraced international engagement, particularly during the UNITAF phase. The book meticulously records how consent was formed, negotiated and diminished over time, highlighting that it was not a fixed state but rather a dynamic process influenced by perceptions of fairness, effectiveness and political inclusion. This understanding is particularly pertinent for scholars in African studies who are interested in the relationship between external interventions and local political legitimacy.

Carroll showcases an exceptional talent for dissecting the internal dynamics of international actors. One of the book's most convincing arguments pertains to the fragmentation of authority within the United Nations and its relationship with the United States. Rather than perceiving the UN as a unified entity, Carroll uncovers the competing national priorities, bureaucratic rivalries and decisions driven by individual personalities that have influenced policy on the ground. This methodology usefully complicates narratives that attribute failures solely to abstract institutional weaknesses. The author posits that the disintegration of the intervention was less a result of doctrinal overreach and more a product of the cumulative effects of inconsistent mandates, poor coordination and escalating coercion that was detached from a political strategy.

The sections addressing the shift from UNITAF to UNOSOM II are notably compelling. Carroll illustrates how the relative achievements of UNITAF created unrealistic anticipations regarding the viability of swift nation-building under the auspices of the United Nations. The broadening of the mission's mandate took place

without an adequate adjustment of resources, authority or political influence. From the perspective of African studies, this examination highlights a persistent trend in external interventions on the continent: the belief that the provision of security can replace political resolution and that institutional frameworks can be enforced in environments characterized by historical disunity and disputed sovereignty.

The book's examination of the summer of 1993 constitutes a significant historiographical contribution. The author contests the prevailing narrative that depicts the onset of hostilities as an unavoidable result of Somali obstinacy or Aidid's aspirations. Rather, he attributes the escalation to a sequence of policy choices and operational errors, particularly by U.S. officials involved in UNOSOM II. The assertion that violence arose from misinterpretation, miscommunication and reactive decision-making, rather than a calculated Somali strategy, is both thought-provoking and well substantiated. Although some readers might perceive this revaluation as contentious, Carroll's thorough documentation and measured approach provide it with substantial credibility.

Despite its numerous strengths, *Beyond Black Hawk Down* does have its shortcomings. The text is predominantly rooted in military history and this disciplinary focus influences both its analytical priorities and the aspects it overlooks. Although the author makes notable attempts to include Somali perspectives, these narratives are primarily filtered through elite political figures and international records. The daily realities of civilians, the gendered aspects of intervention and violence as well as the socio-economic repercussions of extended displacement receive relatively scant attention. Consequently, scholars who are interested in social history or anthropological perspectives on Somalia may perceive the scope of the book as more limited than its title implies.

Furthermore, although Carroll successfully deconstructs numerous myths related to the intervention, his focus on contingency and bureaucratic shortcomings sometimes tends to minimize the significance of more profound structural elements. While he recognizes the colonial histories of Somalia, Cold War involvements and enduring political economy, these aspects are not examined thoroughly. For Africanists who are mindful of long-term processes, this could be seen as a lost chance to better incorporate the intervention within the wider historical context of the East African country.

Nonetheless, these criticisms ought to be interpreted as manifestations of disciplinary limits rather than as genuine deficiencies. The author does not assert that he is composing a social or cultural history of Somalia, nor does he position his work as an authoritative narrative of Somali society. Caroll's aim is to reconstruct the intervention as it occurred, contest simplistic interpretations and reintroduce complexity to a case that has frequently been oversimplified. In this regard, the book achieves its goals exceptionally well.

The epilogue serves as a particularly effective tool for placing Somalia within broader discussions regarding post-Cold War interventionism. The author avoids the easy temptation to extract simplistic lessons, instead emphasizing how the Somali experience was later misrepresented and utilized within policy discussions. The assertion that

Somalia transformed into a cautionary tale not due to the actual events that transpired, but rather because of the selective recollection of those events, stands as a compelling reminder of the politics surrounding memory in international relations.

In conclusion, *Beyond Black Hawk Down* represents a significant advancement in the examination of international intervention in Africa. It presents a thoroughly researched, analytically refined, and refreshingly non-deterministic narrative of one of the most pivotal events of the post-Cold War period. For those engaged in African studies, the book offers crucial perspectives on the dynamics between external influence and local governance, the precariousness of consent and the risks associated with oversimplifying intricate societies into mere policy case studies. Although its main focus is on military history, the ramifications of its findings reach far beyond that discipline. Carroll's scholarship will be essential for historians, political scientists and anyone interested in African affairs who aim to comprehend not only the failures experienced in Somalia but also the ways in which such interventions are often misinterpreted from the outset.

Book Review: Security Development Nexus in Africa: Progress Towards the Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals[1][2]

Scott N. Romaniuk[3]

Africa is a continent often portrayed in extremes—brimming with potential on one hand and struggling with crises on the other. Conflicts, political instability, climate pressures, and uneven development frequently dominate headlines, overshadowing the remarkable innovation, resilience, and progress occurring across the continent. Yet these challenges cannot be separated from Africa's colonial past and its enduring legacy. Many African nations remain strangled by structures imposed during colonial rule, reinforced by a continuity of old colonialism in new forms—through foreign intervention, political meddling, and economic exploitation disguised as aid and support. What is often framed as partnership or development assistance can reflect modern colonial pursuits that undermine sovereignty, extract resources, and perpetuate dependency, limiting the continent's ability to fully chart its own path forward.

In *Security-Development Nexus in Africa*, editors Siphumelele Duma and Rich Mashimbye invite readers to step beyond these superficial narratives and understand the intricate, inseparable relationship between security and development. The book presents a vision that is at once urgent and hopeful, challenging readers to see security and development not as distinct policy arenas but as deeply interconnected forces that shape the trajectory of nations and communities alike.

From the outset, the book confronts the familiar misconception that security and development can be treated in isolation. Security is not merely the domain of armies, law enforcement, or border control. Likewise, development is not just about building infrastructure, increasing GDP, or implementing programs. True security, as the editors emphasize, encompasses human well-being, access to essential services, political inclusion, and protection from both environmental and social risks. Development, in turn, only thrives in contexts where people feel safe, institutions function effectively, and communities can plan without fear of disruption. By foregrounding this interdependence, the book sets the stage for a rich exploration of Africa's challenges, opportunities, and the ways in which integrated approaches can foster sustainable progress.

The structure of the book mirrors this balance between theory and practice, offering

[1] DOI: https://10.12700/jceeas.2026.6.1.473

[2] Siphumelele Duma and Rich Mashimbye (eds.), *Security-Development Nexus in Africa: Progress Towards the Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals* (Johannesburg: UJ Press, 2025, ISBN-13: 9781997468226). DOI: https://doi.org/10.64449/9781997468233

[3] Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Contemporary Asia Studies, Corvinus Institute for Advanced Studies (CIAS); Department of International Relations, Institute of Global Studies, Corvinus University of Budapest; and Senior Researcher, Africa Research Institute, Óbuda University, Hungary; ORCID: 0000-0001-5081-2515; scott.romaniuk@uni-corvinus.hu.

a clear yet sophisticated progression for the reader. It begins by laying the conceptual foundations of the security-development nexus, situating the discussion within continental and global frameworks, including the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These early chapters are essential, providing readers with both the terminology and analytical frameworks needed to appreciate the nuanced arguments that follow. As the book moves into empirical case studies, the discussion becomes vividly concrete. It examines political instability, governance failures, human mobility, and emerging security threats through real-world examples drawn from across the continent. This structure allows the reader to transition naturally from abstract theory to the tangible consequences and opportunities faced by policymakers, communities, and institutions on the ground.

One of the book's most compelling contributions is its redefinition of security. Traditional conceptions often focus narrowly on military capabilities or law enforcement, but this volume expands the lens to include human-centered concerns. Access to healthcare, education, employment, and protection from environmental shocks is presented as integral to security. By broadening the concept in this way, the editors and contributors encourage readers to rethink familiar assumptions: insecurity is not merely the result of external threats, but often emerges from systemic failures in governance, social support, and economic opportunity. In this light, interventions aimed at development, from infrastructure projects to educational initiatives, become inseparable from efforts to enhance security.

Governance emerges as another central theme throughout the book. Political instability, corruption, and weak institutions are shown to erode both security and development, creating cycles of vulnerability that can be difficult to break. Conversely, transparent, inclusive, and accountable governance lays the groundwork for sustained progress, enabling investment, social cohesion, and long-term stability. By highlighting governance as a foundational element of both security and development, the book underscores the interconnectedness of political, economic, and social dimensions in shaping the future of African nations.

Migration and human mobility are examined with equal nuance. The editors challenge the tendency to frame migration solely as a security problem, instead presenting it as a complex social and economic phenomenon intertwined with development. Displacement due to conflict, environmental pressures, or economic necessity is explored alongside voluntary migration for opportunity or education, revealing the multiple drivers of movement and their diverse impacts on communities, economies, and governance. This perspective encourages a more humane and evidence-based understanding of migration, emphasizing that addressing human needs can simultaneously advance security and development objectives.

While much of the book addresses longstanding challenges such as conflict and political fragility, it also engages with contemporary and emerging threats, including cybersecurity, climate-induced disasters, and the implications of technological change. By examining these evolving risks, the book demonstrates that the security-development

nexus is not static; it must be continuously re-evaluated and adapted in response to new pressures. This forward-looking approach is particularly relevant in a rapidly changing global environment, where technological disruptions and climate events increasingly affect both human security and socio-economic development.

One of the remarkable strengths of *Security-Development Nexus in Africa* is the way it integrates rigorous research and evidence into a highly readable narrative. Contributors draw on government reports, field studies, policy papers, and empirical research to substantiate their analyses, but they do so without overwhelming the reader with jargon or excessive citations. Data and case studies are seamlessly woven into the discussion, illustrating complex ideas with clarity and authority. This careful integration of sources enhances the book's credibility while maintaining accessibility, making it valuable not only to academics but also to policymakers, development practitioners, and professionals working in a variety of fields.

The relevance of this book in today's world cannot be overstated. Across Africa, communities are grappling with overlapping challenges, from political instability and economic inequities to climate pressures and migration crises. Traditional approaches that treat security and development separately often fail to address the underlying drivers of these problems. By presenting a framework in which these forces are understood as mutually reinforcing, the book equips readers to think holistically and strategically about contemporary challenges. Its insights are immediately applicable for designing policies, shaping programs, and guiding investment in ways that enhance both security and human development.

This volume also opens important avenues for further research. By articulating a framework that links security and development, it encourages scholars to investigate how this nexus operates in different local and regional contexts, and how sector-specific interventions in areas like health, education, or infrastructure can influence security outcomes. It also invites exploration of emerging technologies, digital governance, and climate adaptation strategies as part of integrated security-development planning. In this way, the book not only synthesizes existing knowledge but also acts as a springboard for new inquiry and innovation.

The appeal of *Security-Development Nexus in Africa* extends beyond academia. Students, researchers, and professors across political science, international relations, development studies, African studies, and security studies will find its insights invaluable for both teaching and research. Professionals in government ministries, international organizations (IOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and think tanks can draw practical lessons for policy design and program implementation. Even private sector stakeholders with investments in African markets can benefit from a deeper understanding of how security and development intersect to shape the social, political, and economic environment. Its combination of theory, evidence, and practical guidance ensures that the book resonates across disciplines, professions, and industries.

The marketing appeal of the book is significant. By addressing a topic that is both urgent and globally relevant, it positions itself as an essential resource for anyone

interested in Africa's future. Its focus on Agenda 2063 and the SDGs provides an aspirational angle, making the book not only informative but visionary. It can be promoted effectively in academic circles, professional development programs, policy forums, and global development conferences. The human-centered storytelling, integrated research, and practical recommendations make it compelling to a wide readership, from scholars and students to policymakers and development practitioners.

Security-Development Nexus in Africa succeeds in bridge the gap between theory and practice. It challenges conventional thinking, offering a vision of Africa where security and development are integrated and mutually reinforcing. The book is deeply analytical yet accessible, grounded in research yet attentive to the lived experiences of communities across the continent. It encourages readers to see security not merely as the absence of conflict, nor development as a series of isolated programs, but as interconnected forces shaping human potential, social stability, and economic prosperity.

This volume is much more than an academic text; it is a roadmap for understanding the challenges and opportunities that define Africa today. It combines conceptual rigor, empirical depth, and practical insight in a way that is simultaneously informative and inspiring. Students, researchers, professionals, and policymakers alike will find themselves challenged to rethink assumptions and look at the whole picture when addressing the continent's pressing issues. For anyone seeking to engage meaningfully with Africa's complex realities or to contribute to solutions that enhance both human security and sustainable development, *Security-Development Nexus in Africa* offers indispensable guidance. It is a testament to the idea that progress is possible when security and development are understood as two sides of the same coin and when policies, programs, and research are oriented toward integrated, human-centered outcomes.

I enthusiastically recommend this book to anyone seeking a deeper, more nuanced understanding of Africa's developmental challenges. It is particularly valuable for readers who want to move beyond surface-level narratives and engage with thoughtful, evidence-informed perspectives. Whether readers are students, researchers, policymakers, or simply individuals interested in Africa's future, this volume offers meaningful insights that resonate long after the final page.

Book Review: Forgotten Globalization – The Swahili Coast and China[1]

Chapuruka M. Kusimba, Tiequan Zhu, Purity Wakabari Kiura (eds.): China and East Africa: Ancient Ties, Contemporary Flows[2]

Mariann Tánczos[3]

It is an age-old saying that history is written by the winners. In its unique way this volume challenges deeply rooted misconceptions about African embeddedness to global trade, even if this concerns ancient times. However multiple reviews exist on this volume[4], they approach it perhaps not coincidentally, from the angle of archaeology, since the greater part of the book is dominated by chapters introducing current archaeological work. The book is indeed a result of a conference where scholars presented their research on China and East Africa relations both ancient and contemporary. The volume is thus divided to two parts, adequately titled as Part I. Ancient Ties and Part II. Contemporary Flows, mirroring the subtitle of the book. The first part includes 10 chapters, while the second only five plus one, the last being a critical appraisal of the volume. According to the preface, the volume investigates globalisation in the context of the East, through trade relations. While it mentions the importance of the Silk Road in ancient times, it forgets to mention its contemporary equivalent, the Belt and Road Initiative. While the editors admit that the volume focuses on the mutually beneficial aspects of trade, they also question if the contemporary quasi neo-colonisation of Africa is really beneficial to the continent. They also question how the continent could fight against the second scramble for Africa and exploitation with it.

The 1st Chapter addresses the earliest possible trade connections between East Africa

[1] DOI: https://10.12700/jceeas.2026.6.1.453

[2] Chapurukha M. Kusimba, Tiequan Zhu & Purity Wakabari Kiura (Eds.): *China and East Africa: Ancient Ties and Contemporary Flows*, Lexington Books, Lanham, 2019, 277 pp., Hardback $ 105.30, Paperback $ 35.99, e-book $ 28.79 ISBN 978-1-4985-7614-7

[3] Assistant Professor, Department of International Security Studies, Faculty of Military Science and Officer Training, Ludovika – University of Public Service, Budapest, Hungary; ORCID: 0000-0001-7134-3666; tanczos.mariann@uni-nke.hu.

[4] Zhao, B. (2021). China and East Africa; ancient ties, contemporary flows: edited by Chapurukha M. Kusimba, Tiequan Zhu and Purity Wakabari Kiura. Lanham/Boulder/New York/London, Lexington Books, 2020, 277 pp., $100/£77 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-4985-7614-7. Also available as an eBook ($95/£73), ISBN 978-1-4985-7615-4. Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa, 56(4), 539–540. https://doi.org/10.1080/0067270X.2021.1973766; Mjema, E. (2022). Chapurukha M. Kusimba, Tiequan Zhu, Purity Wakabari Kiura (Eds.): China and East Africa: Ancient Ties and Contemporary Flows. Afr Archaeol Rev 39, 135–137. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10437-021-09466-2; Mohrs, S. A. (2025). Chapurukha M. Kusimba, Tiequan Zhu, and Purity Wakabari Kiura, eds. China and East Africa: Ancient Ties, Contemporary Flows. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020. 277 pp. $117.00. Hardback. ISBN: 978-1-4985-7614-7. African Studies Review, 68(2), 419–420. https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2024.199

and China, Early Stone Age tool technology. De Weyer states that the different characteristics of the lithic assemblages in some sites in China led to different techniques adapted in the lithic industries regarding the two regions. The chapter concludes that there are both recurrences and otherness in the evidence found on the sited deriving from technical universals and cultural specificities.[5]

In the 2nd Chapter Ndiema explores prehistoric trade and economic links between East Africa and East Asia. The chapter mainly refers to archaeological data regarding trade links between East African coastal and inland areas. The chapter concludes that a down-the-line exchange took place, which needs to be investigated further.

Kusimba argues in the 3rd Chapter that Africa was not isolated from other continents as indicated previously. The author follows the track of ancient Chinese ceramics, which can be found in archaeological sites to define the nature and intensity of trade, to determine site chronologies and to understand technology transfer and cultural practices. Kusimba also argues that Islam had an important role to connect China and coastal East Africa.

Monge et al. discuss the identity of early Swahili peoples of the contemporary Kenyan coast in Chapter 4. The authors examine 118 skeletal remains from the Mtwapa and Manda samples to address the topic. They conclude that Swahili people were of mixed ancestry, which is also indicated in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 5 Kiriama writes about archaic globalization, and trade relations between China and East Africa within the context. The author follows yet again the traces of Chinese ceramic in East Africa. Kiriama concludes indirect trade started around early 200 CE between the two regions, transforming to direct ties by 800 CE. The author identifies multiple peak periods in the trade of Chinese porcelain, the most significant under the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), which is suspected be the result of state ownership in trade. The author concludes that East African Swahili city-states were part of the global trading system.

Namunaba introduces in Chapter 6 East Africa's connectedness through the case study of Siyu. As the result of analysing excavated materials from 4 trenches, the author concludes that Siyu was connected not just to the East African coast but was also part of the trading networks of the Arabian Peninsula and the Indian Ocean. However interconnected, the proportion of trade pottery is small within the excavated material which suggests that it was controlled by only a small proportion of the population. The author states that Siyu is an example on how trade can shape culture and taste.

Ichumbaki explores links between Tanzania's coast and China in Chapter 7. This section again adopts a case study design, exploring the history of Kunduchi. The settlement was one of the most important sites along the Tanzanian coastline. As archaeological material shows the settlement was inhabited from the pre-Islamic (6th – 7th centuries CE) times and was connected too to the trade networks of the Indian Ocean. Kunduchi was isolated form this extended trading network between the 16th and

[5] Kusimba et al. (2019). p. 15.

18th centuries, indicated by the lack of trading goods among the excavated material.

Chapter 8 analyses early globalization links between China and East Africa through the analysis of Chinese porcelain. Zhu and Kusimba argue that European presence in the region from the late 15th century was the reason behind rivalry for controlling Indian Ocean trade. This presence meant a crippling competition, and later on it led to the European colonization of the region. The authors employed a case study research design, this time examining 32 Chinese porcelains found in Mtwapa Kenya. The authors conclude that the city elite could certainly afford trade luxury goods and porcelain. Mtwapa was also beneficiary of early globalization and Chinese porcelain from multiple kilns.

Chapter 9 explores the sources of East African Chinese Longquan and imitation Celadon based on the analysis if trace elements in ancient ceramics. Wang et al. selected 5 representative ceramic shards for their analysis from the most commonly used celadon in Manda. The authors conclude that multiple sources of Longquan celadon were consumed in Manda, with Zhejiang and Guangdong Dapu kilns being the strong candidates.

Oteyo and Kusimba explore the consumption of glass beads in ancient Swahili East Africa in Chapter 10. The research focuses on 227 excavated glass beads at Manda. The authors state that bead production in Manda was a continuous craft, as beads were desirable as personal body adornment. Along these lines, beads were not only crafted locally but were among the trade goods as well originating from West Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean and South Asia.

The first section of Part II, Chapter 11 provides a bridge to connect the two parts of the volume. However, the pledge, Li does not fulfil the task of presenting the six hundred years of harmony.[6] Instead of rigorous scientific research, the author presents a rather biased picture of the Chinese engagement, ancient and contemporary with East Africa. The author forgot to address the Beijing's role in the non-Aligned Movement. Li claims that there is continuity in the giving more for less policy since Zeng He's travel to East Africa.[7]

Chapter 12 draws a more sober picture of China's involvement with East Africa. The author employs Kenyan examples. Kabiru also points out the bias of the previous chapter. The author concludes that China indeed increased its influence on the African continent and became one of its biggest trading partners and donor. But they also caution that Chinese engagement is viewed with increasing suspicion. The chapter lists unconditional loans versus debt trap, infrastructure projects, like the Tanzam railway, versus the lack of employment of locals. The author also highlights educational efforts by China and cooperation on it between China and Africa.

Chapter 13 explores second-hand clothing trade between China and East Africa. Ma argues that East Africa provides a significant market to the trade of used clothing, but a

[6] Ibid. p. 167.
[7] Ibid. p. 174

certain quality must be provided to be accepted on the local market.

In Chapter 14 Bita discusses the importance of preservation and possibilities related to underwater cultural heritage. These options include the opening of museums, creating underwater cultural trails and educating ordinary people. Bita also lists major underwater heritage sites along the Swahili coast, and claims that they have potential role as tourist attractions.

In chapter 15 Changfa argues the importance of better cultural heritage management. In their section the author approaches sustainable economic development and cultural heritage protection and preservation as mutually reinforcing issues. In this light the author criticizes the vague Chinese national approach towards protection of cultural relics and sites and strongly disapproves their profit-oriented utilization as well as private ownership.

Chapter 16 is a critical appraisal of the book. Holl praises the volume as it has the opportunity to correct the distortions in world history.

While the chapters are well written, clear and informative, the volume delivers what is expected from the title. The timeframe of the book is over stretched, and the gap between the two parts of the book is too wide. The chapters and their topicalities follow each other organically, sometimes even building on and reflecting to each other.

References

Kusimba, C. M., Zhu, T., & Kiura, P. W. (Eds.). (2019). *China and East Africa: Ancient Ties and Contemporary Flows*. Lexington Books.

Mjema, E. (2022). Chapurukha M. Kusimba, Tiequan Zhu, Purity Wakabari Kiura (Eds.): China and East Africa: Ancient Ties and Contemporary Flows. *African Archaeological Review*, *39*(1), 135-137. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10437-021-09466-2

Mohrs, S. A. (2025). Chapurukha M. Kusimba, Tiequan Zhu, and Purity Wakabari Kiura, eds. China and East Africa: Ancient Ties, Contemporary Flows. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020. 277 pp. $117.00. Hardback. ISBN: 978-1-4985-7614-7. *African Studies Review*, *68*(2), 419-420. https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2024.199

Zhao, B. (2021). China and East Africa; ancient ties, contemporary flows. In C. M. Kusimba, T. Zhu, & P. W. Kiura (Eds.), (pp. 277). Lexington Books.

Zhao, B. (2021). China and East Africa; ancient ties, contemporary flows. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, *56*(4), 539-540. https://doi.org/10.1080/0067270X.2021.1973766

Book Review: The New Silk Road Grand Strategy and the Maghreb – China and North Africa[1][2]

Marcell Pintér[3]

Written by Mordechai Chaziza and published by Routledge in 2023 as part of the Routledge Studies of Middle Eastern Politics series, *The New Silk Road Grand Strategy and the Maghreb – China and North Africa* focus on the grand strategy of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Africa's Maghreb region. The book provides a comprehensive analysis of China's expansion into the Northwest African region.

The book starts out with an introduction detailing the history of the Maghreb – a string of maritime economies serving as a strategic gateway to the rest of Africa –, and Beijing's policy in the region. Chaziza also explains the 5-tier hierarchy of partnerships within the Chinese diplomatic framework. Unlike Western countries who are bound by mutual defence and other, rather rigid treaties, China uses a more flexible and non-aligned, yet still well-defined approach to partnerships in order to better take advantage of opportunities, especially in a region that Beijing views as abundant therein.

The book asserts that, despite recent more favourable changes in perception towards Beijing, China cannot match the West's dominance in the region due to the long-running historical ties they have with France, the region's former colonial overlord, and the European Union as a whole. Nevertheless, the author argues that the Maghreb – comprising Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia – has, over the last decades, become a critical frontier for Beijing's "Grand Strategy".

While lacking an explicit, formally declared grand strategy, under Chinese President Xi Jinping, China has transitioned from a more passive international actor to one that actively seeks to engage with and reshape the global order. Xi's ambition is the "rejuvenation" of China, meaning to restore its historic superpower status, and thus to achieve the "Chinese Dream"; and to this end, the author identifies China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as the employed Chinese grand strategy, supposedly to come to fruition by 2049.

According to Chaziza, the BRI strategy seeks to mobilise and integrate all – military, diplomatic, economic, financial, intellectual, cultural, and political – resources and instruments of its national power in order to ensure China's rise as a global superpower. As officially outlined in 2015, China seeks the enhancement of trade and investments, connectivity, financial integration, policy coordination, and people-to-people bond. In

[1] DOI: https://10.12700/jceeas.2026.6.1.468

[2] Mordechai Chaziza, *The New Silk Road Grand Strategy and the Maghreb – China and North Africa*, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2023, 166 pp. paperback $57.99 ISBN 9781032215389.

[3] Junior Researcher at Doctoral School for Safety and Security Sciences, Africa Research Institute, Óbuda University; ORCID: 0000-0002-8949-0821; pinter.marcell@gmail.com.

addition to this, a key concept in the book is China's desire to become a "two oceans" power. By developing infrastructure across Eurasia and the Maghreb, China tries to secure access to both the Pacific and the Indian Oceans – and, by extension, the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean –, bypassing potential chokepoints.

The book categorises Chinese policies into five "connectivities" that define the BRI that apply depending on the level of partnership:

- Policy Coordination – high-level summits like FOCAC and CASCF to ensure that Maghreb leaders align their national development plans (e.g., Morocco's "Industrial Acceleration Plan") with the BRI;
- Facilities Connectivity – the tangible requirements of the BRI. This involves the construction of ports, industrial parks, and power plants;
- Unimpeded Trade – China has successfully positioned itself as a primary trade partner, though with a significant trade imbalance, with Maghreb countries importing far more than they export to China;
- Financial Integration – the use of the Chinese RMB in trade and the involvement of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to slowly challenge the hegemony of the USD and the EUR in regional finances;
- and People-to-People Bonds: This includes Confucius Institutes, academic exchanges, and tourism. Chaziza argues these are designed to create a China-friendly elite and good public perception of China.

Chaziza goes on to present the situation in each Maghreb country, showcasing how the BRI and Beijing's influence manifest differently in each Maghreb country, staring with Algeria. Algeria, having vast energy reserves, is the cornerstone of China's Maghreb policy and Beijing's closest political ally in the region and enjoys a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" status with China. The author explains the historical background of the two countries' relationship, dating back to the Algerian Republic's Provisional Government in 1958, which the PRC also recognised. Despite the early start, it was not until the early 2000s that relations started to develop much further between the two countries.

China is the largest exporter to Algeria, and in terms of security cooperation, Algiers is also the top purchaser of Chinese military weapons and equipment in the region. Despite the close partnership, a key feature of the Sino-Algerian partnership is that infrastructure projects are self-financed, as Algeria does not seek package deals of loans, aid, and services in exchange for Chinese projects and resources. Algiers also tends to limit China's influence in the construction sector, which is dominated by its traditional Western partners, however, they very much seek to take advantage of the partnership economically through projects. These projects include the Great Mosque of Algiers – the third largest in the world –, the El Hamdania Port, intended to be a major Mediterranean transshipment hub, and Huawei's contract for an eLTE broadband system for Algiers' Houari Boumediene Airport.

The book's next focus and China's second largest regional partner is Morocco, the second African country to recognise the PRC and the first Maghreb country to join the

BRI. Rabat enjoys the second highest tier of Strategic Partnership with Beijing. While Algeria is more politically invested in China, Morocco is the foremost economic partner in the region. As Chaziza points out, along with its free trade agreement with the EU, Morocco's position next to the Strait of Gibraltar as a bridge between Europe, Africa, and the Americas, serves to explain Beijing's main geopolitical and economic interests in the country.

Apart from steadily growing trade, China also plays an important role in Morocco's industrialisation efforts, as one of the largest Chinese investment projects in the Maghreb, the Tangier Tech City project aims to become China's base in the region, planning to host 200 Chinese companies operating in the automobile, aeronautic, and textile sectors.

The next case study is Tunisia. Despite a negligible and underdeveloped relationship due to a general lack of resources or opportunities for large-scale projects, Chaziza writes, the country's relationship with China is growing, particularly in the tech sector. The author notes that while Tunisia lacks the vast energy reserves of Algeria, its skilled workforce and proximity to Europe make it an ideal partner for the Digital Silk Road. As such, Huawei and ZTE have already become dominant players in Tunisia's telecommunications infrastructure. Another opportunity for China is the port of Bizerte, which could serve as a distribution point for Chinese goods in the Mediterranean region and a would provide more access to Europe – for this, however, China is in competition with the country's old colonial overlord, France and its oldest ally, the US.

The fourth item on the list is Mauritania. The relations between Beijing and Nouakchott are underdeveloped, more so than with Tunisia. According to Chaziza, China's investments in Mauritania flatlined after 2010, and these investments were largely for infrastructure and transportation. However, he simultaneously writes about these projects as still ongoing – more clarification would have been beneficial from the author. Still, Chaziza argues, Mauritania could be important for its fisheries and mineral wealth (especially iron ore and gold).

The last country examined is the still fractured and war-torn Libya. As the author points out, China employs a "wait and see" approach towards Libya and trusts mainly in its post-conflict potential. Before the 2011 revolution, China had 75 companies and 36,000 workers in Libya. When the civil war broke out, Beijing had to evacuate its citizens, effectively marking the end of all investment from China up to this day. As the author explains, Beijing is currently positioning itself for the reconstruction phase, maintaining neutrality in the civil war to ensure that China remains the preferred partner for rebuilding infrastructure and oil facilities, regardless of which side wins in the end.

Chaziza then moves on to compare the three major players in the region: the EU, the US, and China, with the EU being China's biggest competitor in the region. Europe has long been prioritising North Africa. Despite this, Chaziza argues that Europe's fragmented policy and its tendency to lecture Maghreb countries on human rights and democracy have pushed them towards Beijing. As opposed to the Western method of tying investment to political reforms, China's non-political approach to investments is

highly attractive to these countries. The author also points out that a large negative factor in EU-Maghreb relations is its solely bilateral nature, lacking an effective regional organisation.

For the United States, the Maghreb, despite not having been of importance for many decades, now is seen as increasingly more important through the lens of counterterrorism and containing Russian – and, newly, Chinese – influence. However, Chaziza points out that the US has been slow to recognise the strategic depth of China's economic encroachment. The Maghreb is now a key theatre in the "New Cold War" between these two, where economic projects carry heavy strategic weight. However, since the Maghreb countries deem it preferable to have alternatives to simply switching from one regional hegemon to another, China taking over the region is not likely anytime soon, argues Chaziza, and rather pushes the region towards multipolarity.

Finally, the author points out significant obstacles for China regarding BRI:

- The Maghreb is prone to social unrest and regional conflicts, demonstrating the lack of stability. Chaziza notes that China's non-interference policy will be really put to test when its investments and citizens are threatened by local instability, like it was the case with Libya.
- While not as pronounced as in some Sub-Saharan African countries, the risk of unsustainable debt remains a potential problem for smaller economies.
- Cultural differences between the Chinese workers and the Maghrebi locals also pose a problem. Differences in language, general labour practices and ethics as well as social norms tend to lead to friction and hostilities, as seen in local protests against Chinese workers.
- The COVID-19 pandemic also negatively affected the BRI. Chaziza explains how China pivoted to "Mask Diplomacy" and the "Health Silk Road" to try to maintain its influence, however, the economic slowdown forced Beijing a rethink many large-scale infrastructures loans.

Chaziza concludes that the BRI has altered the geopolitical landscape of the Maghreb region by introducing China as a competitor to the EU and the US. As such, China is no longer just a trade partner, but a strategic actor with a long-term vision, in which the BRI plays an integral role. The question is how China will react to regional instability, as it will inevitably require Beijing to rethink its traditional non-interventionist approach, Chaziza argues. The Maghreb countries are trying to use China as leverage to diversify their foreign dependencies away from the West. For the EU and the US, the Maghreb is no longer exclusive to the Western sphere of influence. To compete, the West must offer a more compelling economic and strategic alternative than the current narrative presented by Beijing.

Completing the book's comprehensive approach, in addition to a wide palette of sources used, the author also provides the differing opinions and viewpoints of international as well as Chinese scholars on the theoretical frameworks of the subject matter. While the book does contain some minor typographic errors and occasional Chinese mistranslations, both are probably attributable to simple editorial oversights.

The book is easy to understand and draws a complete picture of the Sino-Maghreb policy and relations, making it very valuable to students, scholars and anyone interested in China's expansion into the region.

Guidelines for Authors submitting Articles or Research Notes

to *Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies* (JCEEAS)

Preparing Your Paper

Structure

Your paper should be compiled in the following order: title page; abstract; keywords; main text introduction, materials and methods, results, discussion; acknowledgments; declaration of interest statement; references; appendices (as appropriate); table(s) with caption(s) (on individual pages); figures; figure captions (as a list).

Word Limits

Please include a word count for your paper.

A typical paper for this journal should be no more than 10,000 words.

Format-Free Submission

Authors may submit their paper in any scholarly format or layout. Manuscripts may be supplied as single or multiple files. These can be Word, rich text format (rtf), open document format (odt), or PDF files. Figures and tables can be placed within the text or submitted as separate documents. Figures should be of sufficient resolution to enable refereeing.

There are no strict formatting requirements, but all manuscripts must contain the essential elements needed to evaluate a manuscript: abstract, author affiliation, figures, tables, funder information, and references. Further details may be requested upon acceptance.

References can be in any style or format, so long as a consistent scholarly citation format is applied. Author name(s), journal or book title, article or chapter title, year of publication, volume and issue (where appropriate) and page numbers are essential. All bibliographic entries must contain a corresponding in-text citation. The addition of DOI (Digital Object Identifier) numbers is recommended but not essential.

Spelling can be US or UK English so long as usage is consistent.

Note that, regardless of the file format of the original submission, an editable version of the article must be supplied at the revision stage.

Checklist: What to Include

Author details. All authors of a manuscript should include their full name and affiliation on the cover page of the manuscript. Where available, please also include ORCiDs and social media handles (Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn). One author will need to be identified as the corresponding author, with their email address normally displayed in the article PDF (depending on the journal) and the online article. Authors' affiliations are the affiliations where the research was conducted. If any of the named co-authors moves affiliation during

the peer-review process, the new affiliation can be given as a footnote. Please note that no changes to affiliation can be made after your paper is accepted.

Should contain an unstructured abstract of 200 words.

Between 3 and 5 keywords. Read making your article more discoverable, including information on choosing a title and search engine optimization.

Funding details. Please supply all details required by your funding and grant-awarding bodies as follows:

For single agency grants

This work was supported by the [Funding Agency] under Grant [number xxxx].

For multiple agency grants

This work was supported by the [Funding Agency #1] under Grant [number xxxx]; [Funding Agency #2] under Grant [number xxxx]; and [Funding Agency #3] under Grant [number xxxx].

Disclosure statement. This is to acknowledge any financial interest or benefit that has arisen from the direct applications of your research. Further guidance on what is a conflict of interest and how to disclose it.

Biographical note. Please supply a short biographical note for each author. This could be adapted from your departmental website or academic networking profile and should be relatively brief (e.g., no more than 200 words).

Data availability statement. If there is a data set associated with the paper, please provide information about where the data supporting the results or analyses presented in the paper can be found. Where applicable, this should include the hyperlink, DOI or other persistent identifier associated with the data set(s). Templates are also available to support authors.

Data deposition. If you choose to share or make the data underlying the study open, please deposit your data in a recognized data repository prior to or at the time of submission. You will be asked to provide the DOI, pre-reserved DOI, or other persistent identifier for the data set.

Supplemental online material. Supplemental material can be a video, dataset, fileset, sound file or anything which supports (and is pertinent to) your paper. We publish supplemental material online via Figshare. Find out more about supplemental material and how to submit it with your article.

Figures. Figures should be high quality (1200 dpi for line art, 600 dpi for grayscale and 300 dpi for color, at the correct size). Figures should be supplied in one of our preferred file formats: EPS, PDF, PS, JPEG, TIFF, or Microsoft Word (DOC or DOCX) files are acceptable for figures that have been drawn in Word. For information relating to other file types, please consult our Submission of electronic artwork document.

Tables. Tables should present new information rather than duplicating what is in the text. Readers should be able to interpret the table without reference to the text. Please supply editable files.

Equations. If you are submitting your manuscript as a Word document, please ensure that equations are editable. More information about mathematical symbols and equations.

Units. Please use SI units (non-italicized).

Using Third-Party Material in your Paper

You must obtain the necessary permission to reuse third-party material in your article. The use of short extracts of text and some other types of material is usually permitted, on a limited basis, for the purposes of criticism and review without securing formal permission. If you wish to include any material in your paper for which you do not hold copyright, and which is not covered by this informal agreement, you will need to obtain written permission from the copyright owner prior to submission. More information on requesting permission to reproduce work(s) under copyright.

Submitting Your Paper

By submitting your paper to Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies you are agreeing to originality checks during the peer-review and production processes.

The text should be sent to the editor-in-chief at <besenyo.janos@uni-obuda.hu>, with copy to the co-editor <karman.marianna@uni-obuda.hu>, together with an assurance that the MS has not been submitted to another journal and will not be submitted while under review with JCEEAS. The MS should be unpublished - and this includes online publications.

Texts should be research-based, original and not published elsewhere before (with some exceptions being made for non-English publication elsewhere).

The copyright of the text stays with the author(s); so does responsibility for content.

Publication Charges

There are no submission fees, publication fees or page charges for this journal.

Template: Apa style

Surname, X. X. (Year). Title. Journal, volume(issue), beginning page-last page. DOI

Surname, X. X., & Surname, X. X. (Year). Title. Journal, volume(issue), beginning page-last page. DOI

Example

Carlsson M. (2020). Self-reported competence in female and male nursing students in the light of theories of hegemonic masculinity and femininity. *Journal of advanced nursing, 76*(1), 191–198. https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.14220

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

In text

Parenthetical form

(Carlsson, 2020)
(Smith & Claytor, 2018)

When the author is mentioned in the text

According to Carlsson (2014) …
Smith and Claytor (2018) describe ...

Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies

Online version
https://jceeas.bdi.uni-obuda.hu/

Contact
Publisher: Óbuda University, Hungary - 1034 Budapest, Bécsi út 96/B
Editorial Office: Africa Research Institute, Doctoral School on Safety and Security Sciences, Óbuda University,
Hungary – 1081 Budapest, Népszínház u. 8. III. 316.
+36205585579; besenyo.janos@uni-obuda.hu.
ISSN 2786-1902

Africa Research Institute