



TANA PAPERS 2024

A Collection of Policy Briefs

**AFRICA IN AN EVOLVING
GLOBAL ORDER**



IPSS

Institute for Peace
& Security Studies
Addis Ababa University

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FRANK,
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DIALOGUE.

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FOREWORD

The Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) of the Addis Ababa University (AAU) serves as the Secretariat of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa (Tana Forum) that has been organized since 2012. In line with our mandate and commitment, we are delighted to present a set of Tana policy papers under the theme “Africa in an Evolving Global Order”. We hope this collection of policy briefs ignites imagination, sparks insights and stimulates animated discussions on Africa’s position in a multipolar world. Such discussions, we believe, will provide policy recommendations to address a number of peace and security challenges on the continent. We are confident that this publication will contribute to knowledge generation on the theme and serve as a useful reference for researchers, policymakers and other relevant stakeholders on the continent and beyond. Finally, I would like to personally take this



opportunity to thank the authors of these policy briefs for their insightful contributions. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to our partners and friends for enabling IPSS to continue to serve as the Secretariat of the Tana Forum with more vitality and vigour. Last but not the least, I am indebted to the IPSS research and editorial team for making the publication of this collection possible.

Fana Gebresenbet (PhD)

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PREFACE

The Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa is a flagship event that brings together heads of state and government, prominent individuals, policymakers and other experts to engage in informal and deep reflections in order to find solutions to the continent's multiple peace and security challenges. Consequently, the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), which serves as the Secretariat of the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa (Tana Forum), developed Tana policy papers with the objective to proffer concrete solutions and policy recommendations on how best Africa's leadership should navigate the dynamics and complex realities of the multipolar world. Policy briefs in this edition of the Tana papers examines various thematic areas with development, peace, and security at its nexus. It assesses Africa's autonomy, ownership and capabilities in addressing the myriad of peace and security challenges, while navigating an increasingly complex, inter-connected and multidimensional global peace and security landscape. Contributors are eminent academics, researchers and experts from nine African Countries. This is a worthwhile achievement in our continuous efforts to promote African ownership in peace and security initiatives through the mantra 'African Solutions to African Problems'.



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INTRODUCTION

The African continent, whether as individual states or regional entities, has undergone significant changes and transitions throughout its history. These transitions include moving from colonialism to independence and self-determination, military to civilian rule and vice-versa, one-party states to multi-party democracies, fragmented economies to common regional and continental markets, analogue to digital technology and reliance on fossil fuels to exploring renewable energy to name a few. The continent continues to navigate these transitions, which have varying implications for peace, security and development. Moreover, the changing patterns of foreign intervention on the continent, drawing in various actors with their interests and imperatives, raise crucial questions about the impact of geopolitics and geostrategic imperatives on the peace and security agenda. These developments call for a deeper examination and review of the progress, pitfalls, and prospects of Pax Africana amid far-reaching changes across the regional and international security contexts. Situating Africa in an emerging multipolar order therefore, requires rethinking the role of actors and initiatives at national, regional and continental levels and that of international partners in soliciting solutions.

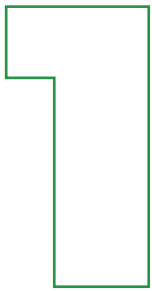
This set of policy briefs explore multifaceted thematic areas with development, peace, and security at its nexus. It offers solutions on how best Africa's leadership should navigate the dynamic and complex realities of the multipolar world. Contributors look at European solidarity in Africa and its Influences on the AfCFTA. They equally reflect on Africa's growing geostrategic value as demonstrated by the 'Africa-plus-One' Summits that have involved Africa's leadership and those of separate global actors (EU-Africa, US-Africa, Russia-Africa, China-Africa etc.). They further argue the need for tailored national Artificial Intelligence (AI) strategies, continental collaboration, ethical considerations, and robust data infrastructure to harness AI technologies in disaster preparedness and management in Africa. While a multipolar global order presents Africa with an opportunity to assert its agency in global politics, contributors emphasized the need for African-centred ideas and values to be channelled through African institutions.

These policy briefs equally consider major peace and security issues in Africa. Firstly, they assess political transitions in Africa by exploring the characteristics of recent transitional agreements in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, South Sudan, and Sudan. Secondly, they provide an in-depth analysis of the role, credibility and legitimacy of ECOWAS in restoring democracy and stability in a troubled West Africa as well as governance challenges in Central Africa and the role of the AU and ECCAS in advancing good governance in the subregion. Thirdly, they critically examine challenges and opportunities associated with the engagement of Gulf States in the Horn of Africa. Fourthly, they address Africa's cyber security challenges by highlighting the need for cooperation and active participation of African multi-stakeholders in shaping cyber security-related policies. Finally, they offer best practices and lessons learned from Nigeria and Kenya on community-centred approaches to preventing violent extremism in Africa, that emphasise 'Pax Africana' as a people-centred process.

Hence, for Africa to affirm herself as a pole of power in an emerging multipolar world, African states must build the levers of their hegemonic power by rediscovering the ideology of Pan-Africanism within reformed regional and sub-regional institutions. The AU should also facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing among member states, for effective AI adoption in disaster risk reduction, climate resilience efforts and in resolving climate induced environmental conflicts. Moreover, in order to address cyber security challenges through regional multistakeholder cooperation, the AU should develop a framework which both defines the key areas of cooperation and identifies the key stakeholders. Militarized solutions to violent extremism also need to be complemented by community-based frameworks, policies and solutions. Finally, while engaging in summitry diplomacy, Africa must seek to establish a niche of influence and develop its multidimensional capabilities in order to efficiently navigate the challenges and opportunities multipolarity presents.

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Navigating Between Leviathans¹: Reflections on Africa as a Power Pole in an Emerging Multipolar World

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About the Author

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¹ The expression "Navigating between Leviathians" was borrowed from Professor Guy Rossatanga Rignault, Secretary General of the Government of Gabon, in an inaugural lecture delivered on November 3, 2022 at Groupe EM Gabon Université.

Executive Summary

The unipolar international order, which was built in the aftermath of the Second World War and consolidated after the end of the Cold War, revolved around the hegemony of the Western bloc led by the United States. This supremacy of power is now being challenged by new powers thus, leading to the multipolarization of the international order being formed by a different power. Therefore, how can Africa affirm herself as a global power pole in the face of competition among new leviathans of today's international scene? And how can African states, acting as a continental block under the African Union, take advantage of this reconfiguration of the world order to establish themselves as a single power? The objective of this study is to demonstrate that the African continent is not yet ready to change her status on the international scene despite possessing the human, natural and technological resources that will help her assert herself as a global power pole in the multipolar world. This study recommends that African heads of state should draw inspiration from Pan-Africanism to strengthen the African Union's action on the international system so that Africa will become the standard-bearer for an emerging power in a changing world.

Key Points

The international scene is an arena made up of Leviathans (Powers). African states must be aware of the changes and upheavals underway and above all, the Leviathans' new appetites for the African continent.

The conception of power in international relations is no longer exclusively military. It takes into account new criteria such as human and natural resources, territory, demography, economy, culture, technology and smart power. The African continent has these potentials and needs to utilize them to face new global challenges.

Under the African Union, African states must build the levers of their hegemonic power by rediscovering the ideology of Pan-Africanism within their reformed regional and sub-regional institutions. The control must also be built around a common goal or action guided by three precepts: lucid, realistic and pragmatic.

Africa's emergence as a global power depends on its ability to overcome a series of challenges such as economic transformation, technological and industrialization challenges, free movement of goods and people, peaceful resolution of conflicts and the fight against poverty.

Introduction

According to Badie (2016), the present international system appears to be in a state of disorder. The combined effects of globalization, emergence of new powers, contestation of multilateralism and Western hegemony, violation of international law and state sovereignty reveal the limits of the international order established in the aftermath of the Second World War (Gratius, 2008). The international scene is traditionally described as an arena for competition between states where the strongest maximize their power and domination. This approach corresponds to the description of the international scene as a "state of nature" (Hobbes, 1651). It is a conception of international relations defended by realist authors such as Hans Morgenthau (1948), Kenneth Waltz (1959 & 1979), Raymond Aron (1962) and recently, John Mearsheimer (2003). It is around this realist paradigm that the international field has been progressively structured and consolidated since the end of the Second World War and the Cold War. The victory of the Allied forces over the Axis forces in 1945 paved the way for a world order, built around the Western bloc that was led by the United States. The disintegration of the USSR in 1990, followed by the collapse of the Berlin Wall confirmed the triumph of liberal ideology promoted by the Western bloc and consolidated the international order and international institutions. An example is the United Nations on the Western values of liberalism, free-market economy and democracy. Francis Fukuyama (1989) described the collapse of the Soviet Union, its empire and its ideology as the "end of history". Krauthammer (1990) asserted that the bipolarity of the international scene, that was maintained during the Cold War gave way to unipolarity. The unipolarity of the international order has been built and stabilized around the hegemony of the Western bloc specifically the United States, who is leading the world in military and economic power. The subordination of all trade to the U.S. dollar is a powerful indication of this. Backed by its military might, the United States has positioned herself as the "policeman of the world".

Today, this Western hegemony is highly contested. According to Lawrence Korb

(2011), the decline of the United States is the consequence, on one hand, of the multiple wars waged by American leaders alone or under the cover of NATO (Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya); and on the other, the economic and financial crisis of 2008, which had adverse effects on the American economy. However, Western hegemony is being challenged by the emergence of new powers such as China (Courmon, 2021), Turkey (Çandar, 2009), India (Kukreja, 2020), the Gulf States (Soubrier, 2020), Southeast Asia (Chong, 2018) and Russia as a re-emerging power (Dobrinin, 2023). These states, individually or as a group (BRICS or ASEAN) have progressively emerged as powerful actors in the international system. They all share the aspirations of a new world vision, a better-structured economy and a more sophisticated military arsenal that is able to rival that of the United States and her allies. Aware of this new reality in international order, French President Emmanuel Macron, made the following statement to ambassadors in 2019:

The international order is being shaken up in an unprecedented way, an upheaval that is undoubtedly taking place with historic magnitude. We are witnessing the end of Western hegemony over the world (...), with the emergence of new powers whose impact we have no doubt long underestimated¹.

The emergence of these new states and groups of states as rival powers fosters the reconfiguration of the world order around new "Leviathans" and contributes radically to the establishment of a multipolar world (Badié, 2016).

African possesses human, natural and technological resources that will enable her assert herself as a competitive power in this emerging multipolar world. The objective of this paper is to demonstrate that the African continent is ready for changes on the international scene. To this end, African states, through the African Union, should maximize their assets and potentials to overcome the challenges bedeviling their growth.

¹ <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2019/08/27/discours-du-president-de-la-republique-a-la-conference-des-ambassadeurs-1>

Discussion

Africa has always been responsive to changes on the international scene. Since their independence around the 1960s, African states have become full-fledged players in international relations (Batchom, 2016). The end of the Cold War led to the coaxing of most of these states into a liberal ideology (Ondoa, 2001). In fact, this ideology was imposed through structural adjustment programs (SAP), implemented by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, in response to the financial and economic crisis that hit these states during the 1980s. The tool of this adjustment was "conditionality". Piquemal (1996: 306) defines conditionality as "a set of requirements imposed by international donors and accepted by the requesting state in exchange for an advantage or a financial benefit". Politically, this conditionality obliged African states to adopt western democracy and a multiparty political system as their system of governance, process of winning and method of exercising and devolving power. Economically, conditionality underpinned the promotion of a market economy driven by the private sector and the withdrawal of the state from the economic sphere (an imposition of market fundamentalism).

On the international scene, African states have often been identified through the African Union (AU), which was the main continental organization established in 2002 from the ashes of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) that was created in 1963. They are part of the global multilateral system, established to include all areas of cooperation (economic, social, educational, health, food, cultural, etc.). Beyond their membership of international organizations, each African state also acts on the international arena to protect her interests through the mechanism of bilateral cooperation.

African states have a long history of neutrality and non-alignment (Maurel, 2010) in the rivalry between competing powers in the international arena. During the Cold War, for example, African states, under the OAU refused to align themselves behind either of the two great powers – the United States of America (USA)

and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). This "reserve" eventually convinced some authors that Africa was, from an economic point of view, a marginalized continent in the world system (Nanfosso and Tchouassi 2010; Diouf, 1944).

The non-aligned movement gradually gave way to direct intervention by certain states that were initially neutral on the international stage. The recent position of African states in the face of the recent changes on the international scene is quite significant. For example, the vote on the United Nations Resolution of March 02, 2022, condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine and calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Russian military forces revealed the position of African states that contrasts the long-held position of non-alignment. The position of the African Union as a continental institution is neutral regarding the conflict. Although the resolution was adopted by 141 States, it should be noted that 16 African States abstained and 8 did not take part in the vote. This has been interpreted as a refusal by some African states, traditionally associated with Western positions, to condemn Russia's action in Ukraine. In the same vein, the UN General Assembly held in September 2023 provided African states such as Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea and Togo, the opportunity to clearly express their position with regard to certain powers for example, France. They reaffirmed the need to fight Western imperialism and reform the UN by granting the African continent permanent seats on the UN Security Council.

Beyond this precedent, it should be noted that the African continent is now the object of all attention in an emerging multipolar world (Kamto, 2010). In fact, Africa has become a continent coveted by all the powers (Mbokolo, 1985). During his 2017 visit to Burkina Faso, French President Emmanuel Macron, clearly stated that "it is in Africa that the future of the world is largely at stake". Guided by this reality, the African continent has become the place of attraction and convergence for all the powers. A few illustrations demonstrate this. There has been increase in summits, example being Russia-Africa (2023), United States-Africa (2022), Africa-France (2021), Turkey-Africa (2021) and China-Africa (2021), which are

indicative of new strategies by these nations towards infiltrating Africa. The attraction of these nations reflects the need for African people and those in diaspora to exist on the international scene, and to assert themselves in a globalized and interconnected world. The coups in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger seem to have been driven by the pan-African rhetoric of coup plotters in whom African youths in search of freedom are progressively becoming more reliant on in hopes of restoring Africa's dignity on the international arena. Moreover, the democratization of communication via the Internet and the emergence of social media networks have facilitated and amplified the discourse of a number of African intellectuals and activists, who believe in an Africa that is aware of her potentials and desires freedom from the shackles of imperialism (Soyinka, 2010).

Although the categorization may be debatable, it appears that the various blocs of state that act on the international scene can be organized as follows: the Western comprising the United States (55 states) and all the states of the European Union (27 states); the North-western Asian pole (United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait etc.); the Asian pole (Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Philippines, Laos, Cambodia etc.) and the heterogeneous BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) and their new allies (Iran, Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). Given the competitions between leviathans on the international arena in this context, should African states resign themselves to alignment behind a particular bloc or leviathan? Should they choose between the old Western-centric world and the new-still-blurred world? How can Africa assert and position herself as a powerful pole in the emerging multipolar international order?

These are the questions at the heart of this paper, whose relevance is no longer in doubt considering the events at the international stage and most importantly the desire expressed by African states in the AU's Agenda 2063. This agenda is aimed towards the advent of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa that will present a dynamic force on the global scene led by her own citizens. The

notion of power should be understood as a state or group of states' ability to compel, influence and direct the flow of international relations (Aron, 1962). While the determination of a state's power has long been defined in relation to its military arsenal, territorial base, population, geography and natural resources (Devin, 2013), the concept has evolved and power now takes into account the economy, industry, finance, culture, education, mastery of new information technologies and artificial intelligence (Drezner, 2021). Joseph Nye (1990) distinguished between "hard power" and "soft power". The concept of "smart power", which emerged in the field of international relations with the Obama administration is based on the combination of skillful implementation of "hard" with "soft" power (Barbé, 2012).

From an ideological point of view, this study takes Pan-Africanism as the driving ideology behind the transformation and assertion of the African continent as a global power pole on the international arena. The study aims to go beyond the classical conception of Pan-Africanism as a movement of solidarity and unity among blacks (Boukari-Yabara, 2014; Clarke, 1988). The aim is to capture Pan-Africanism in its modern conceptualization, which consists of thinking of the African continent from the perspective of core African values and as a continent that sees herself as a powerful global pole on the international arena. (Kounou, 2014; Kebe, 2010). Methodologically, the study will follow the theory of realism in international relations, which describes the international scene as an arena of domination and competition between states with the aim of maximizing power, particularly within the context of the emerging multi-polarized world (Mearsheimer, 2003).

This study tests the hypothesis that Africa's emergence as a global power pole depends on the transformation of its assets on one hand, and its ability to address its challenges on the other.

Assets

According to Kamto (2010, 13) Africa possesses significant assets that make it a potentially powerful pole on the international scene. All it takes is to become conscious of these assets

and utilize them. We will focus on five (5) major assets.

The first is institutional. Africa already has a continental organization with rules, procedures and Regional Economics Communities (RECs) known as African Union that federates and brings together all African states. This institution is capable of carrying the flame of an Africa speaking with one voice in the international society (Tönnies, 1977). Instead of discrediting the organization for the shortcomings inherent in its functioning or the positions it takes, it should be strengthened through the effective implementation of its institutional reforms (Kagame, 2017). This would free the AU from financial dependence on other foreign international organizations. The organization also needs to be supported in the implementation of its restructuring projects such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which aims at promoting intra-African trade and accelerating the continent's economic integration. Intra-African trade currently accounts for just 15% of the continent's total trade compared with 58% in Asia and 67% in Europe. The implementation of AfCFTA will create a continental market of 1.3 billion people with a combined GDP of \$3.4 trillion, making it the world's largest free trade zone since the creation of the World Trade Organization (Okwatch, 2023). In this way, Africa will become a veritable hub of economic and commercial exchange.

The second advantage is military. Since 2004, the African continent has had an African Standby Force (ASF) as part of the African Peace and Security Architecture within the framework of the African Union. The ASF is a joint-force mechanism made up of soldiers, civilians and police on standby in their home countries, ready to intervene in the event of serious conflicts and war circumstances that could result in genocide and crimes against humanity in a member state. It is coordinated by the five regional economic communities. The East African Standby Force is not aligned with the East African Community (EAC) or IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), (Rwengabo, 2021). Sadly, it has still not come into force due to financial and political problems relating to its implementation. Nevertheless, it remains an

important tool for defending and positioning Africa as an international power. It is therefore essential to adapt it to tackle the new security threats (terrorism, violent extremism, maritime piracy) that threaten the continent (Dessu et yahaness, 2022).

The third asset is demographic. Charbit and Gaimard (2015) have demonstrated in their analysis that demography is a powerful asset when you know how to make the most of it. Vimart and Fassassi (2011) assert that Africa has the fastest-growing population of any continent (2.6% annual growth from the year 1975 to the year 2009, compared with 1.7% for Asia, for example), and the gap with other developing regions is profound. Out of 8 billion inhabitants, Africa has around 2 billion (UNFPA, 2023). Akindès (2022) asserts that with a sharp reduction in infant mortality and a high fertility rate, by 2050 Africa will be home to almost 2.5 billion people, that is more than a quarter of the world's population. This demographic potential represents a major market for industrial and manufacturing products. Moreover, the International Labour Organization noted in 2020 that "Africa's working population is young and growing fast" (Akindès, 2022, p. 95). In 2020 for example, young people aged 15 to 24 represented less than a quarter (23.6%) of the world's working-age population with more than a third (34.2%) being in Africa. Rather than being an obstacle, the youths of Africa are assets that Africa should count on to transform the continent in the age of innovation and appropriation of artificial intelligence technologies.

The fourth asset is Africa's economic and natural resources. Natural resources include land, water, mineral resources, energy (oil, natural gas), precious stones and forests. Dembele (2015) states that Africa has the world's largest rivers and streams. It has vast tracts of arable land and less than 10% of it is used. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2015), the continent has 54% of the world's platinum reserves, 78% of diamond reserves, 40% of chromium and 28% of manganese. Several countries also have significant reserves of hydrocarbons (30% of reserves, oil and gas), coal or minerals. The United Nations Conference on Trade and

Development (2023) indicates that Africa has abundant reserves of the metals needed to manufacture electric cars (48.1% cobalt; 47.6% manganese; 21.6% graphite; 5.9% copper; 5.6% nickel; 1% lithium). As climate change threatens humanity, the Congo Basin's forests and vast expanse of water represent important carbon sinks for ecological renewal.

The fifth asset is the African diaspora. Made up of Africans living outside the continent, the diaspora represents an opportunity for Africa. On one hand, it is made up of many trained Africans eager to return to the continent to make their skills and know-how available, particularly in the fields of technological innovation and knowledge transfer. On the other hand, they also have a large pool of economic and financial capital ready to be invested in Africa's development and growth projects. Beyond the diaspora, the African continent has soft power assets such as culture, tourism, sport and ecology, capable of enabling her to establish herself as a global power. The African continent's positioning as a global power in a changing international arena depends on its ability to meet a range of challenges.

Challenges

The first challenge relates to the ability of African Union to develop an African vision of the world and to unite all African people around this vision. The second challenge is specific to the establishment of transformative and legitimate leadership at the level of African institutions (continental and sub-regional), and at the level of individual states. Legitimacy requires democratically-elected presidents as heads of state. The challenge of democracy has to be tackled by warding off unconstitutional change of government particularly constitutional revisionism and coups d'état. Leaders must be elected through free, competitive and transparent elections. The other challenge relates to governance and specifically the governance of natural resources (IDEA, 2017). The lack of transparency and accountability in the management of natural resources is deplorable. Revenues from the exploitation of these resources are not equitably redistributed. As a result, poverty is on the rise in the continent

and there is a brain drain in search of better conditions for survival.

Beyond the equitable distribution of natural resources, African states must rise to the challenges of their transformation by taking advantage of the innovative potential of her youthful population that is familiar with the new technologies of the fourth industrial revolution, such as artificial intelligence. The continent must take up the challenge of combating poverty and new threats to peace through a collective security approach if Africa is to assert herself on the international arena. African states must work to resolve the conflicts that undermine the growth of the continent by seeking African solutions to African problems. Africa cannot see herself as a global power if it does not take into account the need to dismantle borders and encourage the free movement of goods and people. It must realize the urgent need to develop its tourism potentials and rediscover the bedrock of African cultural values. While the challenges may seem daring, it is important for African states to respond to the global stakes of the arms race, space control and nuclear appropriation, since power in the international arena depends on possession of the means of coercion and force.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Africa needs to realistically face today's increasingly multipolar world and secure her own niche as a powerful global power. In concrete terms, Africa needs to know how to navigate in the midst of all the Leviathans and never forget that "the global world is a brutal, ultra-competitive world in which everyone continues to fight for their survival, their security, their vital interests, on all fronts: energy supplies, freedom of movement, security of their citizens, influence in the world" (Vedrine, 2002).

As demonstrated, the Africa continent has many assets that she can utilize in order to assert herself on the international scene as a global pole in an emerging multipolar world. However, it faces a number of challenges. It is obvious that each African state cannot easily assert herself

as a world power. This is why the process must be carried out collectively around the African Union. The recent admission in September 2023 of this continental institution to the G20 is an important signal. If the African Union is to play this role, firstly, the process of institutional reform of the Union must be completed to free it from any financial dependence on other foreign powers. Secondly, the African Union must rediscover and promote pan-Africanist ideology. It is not possible to think of Africa as a power pole in a changing world without laying the ideological basis for its vision of Africa and the world. The African Union must work hard to ensure the smooth operation of the African Continental Free Trade Area that involves all stakeholders especially the people of Africa in order to accelerate the economic integration of the African continent.

Thirdly when acting, the Africa Union must base her actions on three precepts: lucidity, realism and pragmatism. To be lucid is to accept that the world is as it is and to see ourselves as we are with our strengths and weaknesses, and a clear view of our own interests. Lucidity is all about the ability to see and understand things clearly and accurately. To be a realist is to possess the political ability to act by adapting to circumstances based on a faithful and frank expression of reality. Realism is in this respect, an absolute necessity in this area as in all aspects of international relations. To be pragmatic is to adopt the behavior of a person who acts according to circumstances and knows how to exploit opportunities. Even though this term is often negatively connoted, pragmatism should be understood here as a line of political conduct in which tactics are determined according to circumstances. Observation of international society clearly shows that not only do we not eat principles but those who brandish them the most are also those who violate them when their interests are at stake. Consequently, intelligent pragmatism can only be to the advantage of the African continent in an emerging multipolar world.

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Charting Africa's Path in a Multipolar World: Strategic Leadership Approaches and Future Opportunities

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Executive Summary

Africa faces a critical geopolitical moment as the world becomes multipolar. This paper examines the continent's place in this dynamic context and how its leadership might navigate multipolar challenges and possibilities. Major power centres like the United States of America, China, Russia, and the European Union influence global governance, trade, and security in a multipolar world. To leverage its mid-world location, human capital, and abundant natural resource endowments, Africa needs to urgently engage with and deeply comprehend the current global turbulence, enabling the continent to establish a niche of influence, develop its multidimensional capabilities, and navigate the challenges and opportunities of multipolarity. Despite political divisions, regional organisations like the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) can help Africa promote cooperation and solve problems of a continental and global nature.

What must Africa do to navigate the opportunities and difficulties multipolarity presents? The paper presents successful and cautionary tales of African nations navigating a multipolar world through case studies to address this second-tier question. These case studies investigate techniques and their results, revealing geopolitical success factors. The paper concludes with leadership suggestions. African nations can increase their global impact by focusing on unity and collaboration. Promoting intra-African commerce and regional integration to boost resilience and self-sufficiency and unite global negotiations is essential. Building stronger political institutions and intensely promoting democracy can make the environment more stable and predictable, encouraging foreign investment and public trust. Creating a skilled workforce for modern challenges requires foresighted education and capacity building. African voices can be heard in global politics by campaigning for equal participation in international forums.

Key Points

Africa is increasingly recognised as a significant player in the multipolar world, with its abundant resources, young demographics, and expanding markets positioning the continent to influence future global economic and political dynamics.

Effective leadership is crucial for harnessing Africa's potential, emphasising the need for visionary leaders who prioritise collaboration, regional integration, and sustainable practices to foster unity and progress across African nations.

To unlock opportunities, African leaders must focus on enhancing human capital development, technology, industrial investments, inventions and innovations, and private sector development, thus ensuring that the continent's workforce is equipped with the competencies necessary to compete globally and drive economic growth.

A collective approach among African nations, based on typical continental and regional political pursuits and supported by strong public-private partnerships, is essential to address shared challenges, create equitable policies, and increase Africa's representation and influence in international decision-making processes.

Introduction

In the contemporary global landscape, the emergence of a multipolar world signifies a significant shift from a unipolar order dominated primarily by Western powers. This multipolarity, characterised by the rise of emerging economies and regional powers, presents a complex web of interactions that redefine geopolitical dynamics. Countries such as China, India, and Brazil have increasingly asserted their influence, challenging the traditional hegemony and fostering a more diversified international system. Amidst this evolving context, Africa's role in global politics is becoming increasingly salient. The continent is home to abundant natural resources and boasts a youthful demographic and a growing market, positioning it as a critical player in international affairs.

As global power structures evolve, Africa's strategic leadership approaches become imperative for navigating the challenges and opportunities within a multipolar world. African nations face unique challenges like political instability, economic disparities, and developmental hurdles. However, they also possess the potential for significant contributions to global governance, economic cooperation, and sustainable development. By leveraging their strategic qualities and fostering multilateral collaborations, African leaders can harness the benefits of this multipolarity to uplift the continent while engaging with other global players.

This paper explores the strategic leadership approaches and roles that can guide Africa in positioning itself effectively within this multipolar world. It seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding Africa's agency in shaping a more equitable and inclusive world order by delineating the intersection between Africa's strategic leadership and global multipolarity.

dominated by a single superpower or a bipolar system characterised by two major powers. In a multipolar world, power is distributed among various nations- or groups of nations, each possessing varying military, economic, political, and cultural influence. This structure fosters a balance of power dynamic where no single entity can unilaterally dictate terms or exert dominance over others.

Understanding Multipolarity

Multipolarity refers to an international system in which multiple states hold significant power and influence, rather than a unipolar system



Figure 1: Characteristics of a Multipolar World. Source: Author

Challenges and Opportunities for Global Governance:

A multipolar world presents both challenges and opportunities for global governance. As states represent broader views and interests, achieving consensus on pressing global issues—such as climate change, public health, and security—can become increasingly complex. However, the multiplicity of voices also fosters innovation in problem-solving and emphasises the importance of multilateralism, urging states to pursue collaborative solutions amidst diversity.

In the contemporary international landscape, the roles of Russia, China, the United States, and the European Union (EU) are pivotal in shaping the dynamics of multipolarity. These polar entities operate with distinct geopolitical interests, economic capacities, and strategic approaches, influencing global governance, regional stability, and international relations. Their interactions embody the complexities of multipolarity as they navigate cooperation and competition. This is illustrated below:

► Russia: Reviving Influence

Russia's foreign policy reflects a strategic objective to re-establish itself as a key global player following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Under President Vladimir Putin, Russia has pursued an assertive foreign policy characterised by military interventions, regional leadership in former Soviet states, and a strong presence in global affairs (Mankoff, 2012). The hybrid aggression against Georgia in 2008 and annexation of Crimea in 2014, for instance, and more recently, the invasion of Ukraine, demonstrates Russia's willingness to leverage military power to secure its interests and protect its sphere of influence. Russia's energy resources remain a cornerstone of its international strategy, as the nation is one of the world's largest oil and natural gas producers, granting it significant leverage over energy-dependent states (Siddi, 2020). Additionally, Russia has formed strategic partnerships with non-Western powers, such as China, and participated in organisations like BRICS (as a founding member) to strengthen alliances outside traditional Western-centric frameworks. This policy alignment underscores an essential element of multipolarity: the emergence of diverse coalitions wherein states seek to counterbalance Western dominance.

► China: The Rising Power

China represents the most significant challenge to the United States' unipolarity, positioning itself as a central actor in the new multipolar world order. The country's rapid economic growth and modernisation efforts have allowed it to exert increasing influence on global governance, trade, and security. Through initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has invested heavily in infrastructure projects across Asia, Africa, and Europe, illustrating its ambition to reshape global economic networks and exert soft power. In military terms, China has modernised its forces and asserted its claims in the South China Sea, showcasing its willingness to project power regionally. Furthermore, China's engagement with the Global South and its emphasis on state sovereignty resonate with many developing nations, challenging Western ideals of democracy and human rights (Becker, 2020). This dynamic reveals how China leverages multipolarity to promote alternative visions of governance, positioning itself as a champion of non-interference and developmental cooperation.

► The United States: Adapting to Multipolarity

As the original architect of the post-World War II international order, the United States faces the dual challenge of managing its relationships with rising powers while adapting to the realities of multipolarity. The US has traditionally relied on bilateral alliances, particularly in Europe and Asia, to exert influence and maintain a leading role in global affairs (Kissinger, 2014). However, the emergence of competing powers has necessitated re-evaluating its strategies. According to the US State Department (2021), the country has sought to counter China's rise through initiatives like the Indo-Pacific Strategy, which emphasises partnerships with regional players such as India, Japan, and Australia to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific. The challenge for the United States lies in effectively balancing its commitment to traditional alliances with the need to engage newer powers and address global challenges collaboratively.

► The EU: Balancing Collective Strength

The EU plays a unique role in the multipolar world, representing a collective economic and political entity that promotes stability, governance, and cooperation. The EU's approach is based on diplomatic engagement, multilateralism, and global governance, evidenced by its initiatives addressing climate change, trade, and security (Borrell, 2022). However, the EU faces challenges in presenting a united front amidst diverse member state interests and rising external pressures. The EU's relationship with China and Russia exemplifies the difficulties of balancing competition and multipolar cooperation. While the EU seeks to engage China as a strategic partner on economic issues, it also recognises the need to address concerns related to human rights abuses and market access (EU, 2019). Similarly, the EU has condemned Russia's actions in Ukraine and imposed sanctions.

► BRICS: Forging collective strengths across geographical confines

BRICS, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, represents a significant and contemporary coalition aiming to enhance collective strength across global geographical boundaries. Emerging as a counterhegemonic bloc, BRICS challenges the dominance of traditional Western institutions like the Bretton Woods system, largely influenced by US policies. Through economic cooperation, political dialogue, and strategic partnerships, BRICS seeks to provide an alternative framework for international governance that prioritises the diverse interests of its member states and the Global South. This collective approach promotes multipolarity in world affairs, fostering development that is more inclusive and reflective of a broader range of cultural and socioeconomic perspectives. By strengthening ties among emerging economies, BRICS not only aspires to shape a more equitable global order but also aims to enhance its influence on issues such as trade, investment, and climate change. Ultimately, BRICS embodies a vision of collaborative progress that transcends historical power imbalances rooted in established international structures.

Table 1: Roles of Russia, China, the USA, the EU and BRICS in a Multipolar World

Implications of Multipolarity for Global Governance

In the contemporary international landscape, the emergence of multipolarity has far-reaching implications for global governance. Traditionally, global governance has been characterised by unilateral or bilateral relationships, predominantly guided by hegemonic powers, particularly the United States. However, as countries like China, India, and the EU increasingly assert their influence, the dynamics of global governance are undergoing significant transformation. This section discusses the implications of multipolarity for global governance across various dimensions:

► Increased Complexity in Decision Making:

Multipolarity introduces a complex array of actors into global governance frameworks, necessitating more intricate negotiation

processes. As different countries have diverse interests and priorities, reaching a consensus becomes increasingly challenging. Keohane and Victor (2011) assert that this fragmentation can lead to protracted negotiations and a slow response to global issues, as seen in climate change discussions. For instance, the Paris Agreement showcased the difficulties in aligning diverse national interests under a unified global framework. Presently, the process of making UN Security Council resolutions on the conflicts in Ukraine and Israel-Gaza is another example. These face significant challenges primarily due to the complicity of key member states like Russia, the USA, and the UK. In Ukraine's case, Russia often uses its veto power to block resolutions that could criticise its actions or support Ukraine's sovereignty, effectively stalling diplomatic efforts. Similarly, in the Israel-Gaza conflict, the USA and UK, which have historically supported Israel, often act as obstacles to resolutions deemed

unfavourable to Israeli interests. Their influence can dilute or prevent actionable measures to address humanitarian issues or advocate for ceasefires, often leading to accusations of bias and inaction within the Council.

These geopolitical dynamics create a stalemate where the Security Council struggles to craft meaningful resolutions. The conflicting priorities of these major powers undermine the UN's role as an effective mediator, highlighting the complexities of international diplomacy shaped by national interests and historical allegiances.

➤ Shift in Normative Frameworks:

The traditional Western-centric governance model is being challenged by alternative normative frameworks proposed by rising powers. For instance, China's emphasis on state sovereignty and non-interference contrasts sharply with Western liberal values promoting human rights, democracy, and an unhindered private sector leeway. This divergence complicates the establishment of universal norms and standards, which are essential for effective global governance. Ikenberry (2011) argues that as multiple actors seek to impose their values, a pluralistic approach to governance may emerge, leading to a patchwork of norms that may not align with international legal standards.

➤ Regionalism and the Rise of New Institutions:

In response to the multipolar landscape, there is an observable shift towards strengthening regionalism. Fukuyama (2018) reinforces this notion by stating that numerous regional organisations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the AU, have gained prominence, reflecting a desire among states to collaborate more effectively within specific geographical contexts. These regional entities often address local challenges that global institutions do not adequately manage. The creation of these networks can lead to a dilution of global governance mechanisms, as regional organisations may prioritise member states' interests over global imperatives.

➤ Power Redistribution and Conflict Management:

Multipolarity has potential implications for conflict management and power distribution. As rising powers exert more influence, there is a risk of increased geopolitical tensions, particularly in contested regions such as the South China Sea. However, Mearsheimer (2018) argues that this redistribution of power can also foster more collaborative approaches to conflict resolution, as it necessitates the engagement of multiple stakeholders in peacekeeping and diplomatic efforts. The collaborative frameworks established by organisations like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) indicate a shift towards cooperative governance models.

➤ Technological and Economic Dynamics:

The advent of multipolarity is closely linked to technological advancements and economic interdependence. The rise of digital platforms and the sharing economy exemplify how new technologies can alter traditional governance structures. For example, as Nye (2021) noted, global issues such as cybersecurity and data privacy require collective action from multiple actors, which is complicated by competing national interests. This scenario demands innovative governance approaches that transcend national borders and involve various stakeholders, including private companies and civil society organisations.

Africa's Potential in the Multipolar Landscape

Africa has a wealth of natural resources, making it an increasingly vital player in the global economy. The continent holds approximately 30% of the world's mineral reserves, including substantial deposits of gold, diamonds, and rare earth minerals (World Bank, 2020). This abundance positions Africa as a critical supplier for the growing demand for these resources, especially as global industries seek to diversify supply chains and reduce dependence on single sources. Countries like South Africa, Nigeria, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are emerging as key players in critical

minerals essential for technology and green energy transitions, like lithium and cobalt.

Moreover, Africa represents a significant market potential with a population exceeding 1.3 billion. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), launched in 2021, aims to create a single market for goods and services across the continent, enhancing intra-African trade by 52% (AU, 2021). This trade agreement signals a strategic move towards economic self-reliance and positions Africa as an attractive destination for foreign investment. The World Investment Report estimates that foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to Africa reached \$40 billion in 2022, illustrating the continent's growing appeal in the eyes of global investors (UNCTAD, 2022). As countries like Kenya and Ethiopia show strong economic growth rates, Africa's investment potential continues to rise, promising opportunities for sustainable development.

Africa's potential in a multipolar world is vast, offering unique contributions across various domains, including leadership, institutional design, process management, and resource availability.

Leadership: African states, with their diverse experiences in governance and resilience, can provide innovative leadership models that prioritise inclusivity and sustainability. Emerging democracies and grassroots movements showcase the continent's commitment to self-determination and promoting peace, serving as powerful examples of global governance.

Institutional Design: Africa can influence international institutions by advocating for a more participatory approach that reflects the voices and needs of developing nations. Institutions like the AU demonstrate regional cooperation, offering a blueprint for collaborative frameworks that enhance decision-making processes and address local priorities while fostering accountability. Regional organisations such as the East African Community and the ECOWAS are crucial in cultivating political stability and fostering unified regional policies. They have been at the forefront of conflict prevention and resolution, showcasing a commitment to regional political stability.

Process Management: Africa's experiences in

conflict resolution and peacebuilding equip it with valuable insights into process management for negotiations and diplomacy. The continent's rich tapestry of cultural practices and conflict resolution methods can inform strategies that promote dialogue, reconciliation, and conflict prevention on a global scale.

Contribution to Human and Natural Resources: As aforementioned, Africa holds a wealth of natural resources, including minerals, forests, and biodiversity, essential for sustainable development. These assets position Africa as critical in addressing global challenges like climate change. Furthermore, Africa's youthful population presents an opportunity for innovation and economic growth, contributing to a dynamic labour force that can drive progress in various sectors. With over 60% of its population under 25, the continent boasts an enormous youthful workforce ready to drive economic growth (UNICEF, 2021). If harnessed effectively through education and skill development, this demographic dividend can propel Africa into a more prominent position in the global economy. However, this young population also demands focused attention on job creation, healthcare, and education—issues that require collaborative strategies and policies. Connectivity is another crucial factor influencing Africa's current position. The AU (2019) has recognised the importance of infrastructure development and digital connectivity, laying out initiatives to improve transportation networks and internet access across the continent. Enhanced connectivity is vital for economic growth and fostering social integration, innovation, and collaboration to address pressing global challenges.

Challenges Facing African Leadership

African leadership faces numerous challenges impacting the continent's development and stability. This section will explore four major areas: economic instability and dependency on foreign aid; political fragmentation and governance issues; climate change and environmental sustainability; and security threats, including terrorism and regional conflicts.

Economic Instability and Dependency on Foreign Aid

Economic instability in Africa is a pressing concern that undermines leadership and governance. According to the World Bank (2020), many African nations grapple with fluctuating commodity prices, high unemployment rates, and inflation, contributing to widespread poverty. The reliance on foreign aid exacerbates this instability, as donor countries often attach conditions that can compromise sovereignty and local decision-making. This dependency influences policy-making and fosters a culture of complacency among leaders, who may become less accountable to their citizens. For instance, countries such as Malawi and Zimbabwe have experienced significant challenges due to their reliance on external funding, leading to hampered economic growth and development (UNECA, 2017).

Political Fragmentation and Governance Issues

Political fragmentation poses another significant challenge for African leadership. Many African nations are characterised by diverse ethnic groups and political parties, which can lead to fragmentation and instability. This multiplicity complicates governance, often resulting in ineffective coalitions and an inability to form cohesive national agendas. Moreover, a lack of strong institutions can result in corruption, mismanagement, and a failure to uphold the rule of law. Countries like Nigeria and Kenya illustrate how political competition can lead to violence and unrest, undermining the social contract between leaders and citizens.

Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability

The challenge of climate change is another crucial area facing African leadership. Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly vulnerable, with climate change exacerbating existing issues such as droughts, food insecurity, and displacement. Leaders must grapple with the dual task of addressing environmental sustainability while promoting economic development. Unfortunately, inadequate infrastructure, limited financial resources, and a lack of technological access hinder efforts to combat climate-related challenges (UNDP, 2019). As

demonstrated in countries like Ethiopia, where changing weather patterns directly impact agricultural productivity, effective leadership is vital for implementing innovative solutions and ensuring long-term sustainability (World Bank, 2021).

Security Threats: Terrorism and Regional Conflicts

Finally, security threats such as terrorism and regional conflicts pose significant challenges for African leadership. The rise of extremist groups, such as Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al-Shabaab in Somalia, has created an environment of fear and instability. These threats compromise national security, hinder economic development, and disrupt social cohesion. Leaders must develop comprehensive strategies addressing the root causes of insecurity, including poverty, unemployment, and political disenfranchisement. Regional cooperation is essential, as conflicts often cross borders, necessitating collaborative efforts to ensure peace and security.

Strategies for Effective Leadership in a Multipolar World

The emergence of a multipolar world demands new strategies for effective leadership, particularly for developing nations striving to navigate the complexities of global politics and economics. Key strategies include building strategic partnerships with emerging powers, promoting intra-African trade and economic integration, strengthening political institutions while promoting democracy, and leveraging technology and innovation for development.

Building Strategic Partnerships with Emerging Powers

In a multipolar world, countries must cultivate strategic partnerships with emerging powers such as India, Brazil, and the nations within the BRICS consortium. These partnerships can lead to shared economic growth and mutual political support. Fostering such alliances can enhance diplomatic ties and create platforms for shared goals, reducing dependency on traditional

Western powers. Engaging with emerging powers allows for diversifying economic relationships and access to new markets, which can be crucial for sustaining development in the global South.

Promoting Intra-African Trade and Economic Integration

Enhancing intra-African trade is central to achieving economic resilience and self-sufficiency among African nations. The AfCFTA, which aims to create a single market for goods and services across the continent, is a significant step towards economic integration. Implementing trade policies that promote local industries can also help mitigate the economic dependency on external markets and foster sustainable development.

Strengthening Political Institutions and Promoting Democracy

A robust political framework is vital for effective leadership in a multipolar world. Strong political institutions uphold the rule of law, ensure justice, and promote transparency and accountability. Reinforcing democratic institutions empowers citizens and builds public trust, which is key to political stability and effective governance. Strengthening political institutions can also maximise civic engagement and improve the quality of governance, ultimately leading to better development outcomes. Leadership should prioritise reforms that enhance electoral integrity and protect human rights, building a more inclusive political landscape.

Leveraging Technology and Innovation whilst Developing Intra-African Productive and Industrial Capacity:

Technology and innovation represent powerful tools for enhancing development in a multipolar world. According to a study by the World Bank (2022), digital technology can drive economic growth, improve education, and increase healthcare access. Initiatives that promote digital literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) can empower marginalised communities, enabling broader participation in the economy. Furthermore, agriculture, renewable energy, and manufacturing innovation can provide

sustainable solutions to socioeconomic challenges. Leaders must prioritise investments in research and development to harness the full potential of technology to drive significant change.

To become a regional powerhouse, Africa must focus on enhancing its productive and industrial capacity beyond mere trade and integration. This includes fostering local industries, investing in technology and infrastructure, and creating an enabling environment for business development. Establishing manufacturing hubs, promoting value addition to raw materials, and encouraging innovation in agriculture and technology will create jobs and stimulate economic growth. Policies that support regional supply chains will enhance resilience and reduce dependency on external markets. Moreover, strengthening links between small and medium-sized enterprises can drive diversification, innovation, and job creation across various sectors. These efforts will foster sustainable development, enhance economic resilience, and contribute to the continent's emergence as a significant force in global affairs.

Human Capital Development and Advancing African Ideational Structures:

Investing in skills training is paramount for building a workforce capable of driving economic growth and innovation. Initiatives should prioritise science, technology, engineering (STEM) and mathematics education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship programs to equip young Africans with the necessary skills for the evolving job market. Collaboration with private sector stakeholders and international partners can facilitate knowledge transfer, fostering a culture of innovation. Emphasising lifelong learning and adaptability will ensure that Africa's human capital remains competitive in an increasingly interconnected world.

On the other hand, embracing indigenous philosophies, such as Pan-Africanism and Ubuntu, can provide a foundation for collaborative governance and community engagement. Promoting these ideational structures can enhance social cohesion, ethical leadership, and a shared sense of

purpose across the continent. By integrating traditional values with modern governance frameworks, African nations can cultivate a uniquely African model of development that prioritises community well-being, inclusivity, and sustainability. This cultural lens can also enhance Africa's soft power on the global stage, showcasing the continent's values and perspectives in international dialogues.

Case Studies

Rwanda: Strategic Diplomacy and Economic Integration

Rwanda has emerged as a notable example of a country successfully navigating the complexities of a multipolar world. Under the leadership of President Paul Kagame, Rwanda has focused on strategic diplomatic engagements and innovative economic policies. The country has adopted a clear foreign policy that promotes partnerships with various global powers, including China, the United States, and European nations, thereby diversifying its international relations.

The AU's Agenda 2063 aligns with Rwanda's self-reliance and regional cooperation vision. By championing the AfCFTA, Rwanda positions itself at the centre of economic integration in Africa, leveraging its geographical and infrastructural advantages to attract foreign investment. According to the country's leader, Paul Kagame (2020), the country's investment in technology and innovation has transformed its economy, presenting a model for other African nations.

South Africa: Balancing Global Relations

South Africa has successfully navigated multipolarity through its role as a BRICS member. By engaging with emerging economies like Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, the country has strengthened its global diplomatic foothold and diversified its trade partnerships. This strategic alliance has enabled South Africa to play a vital role in advocating reforming global governance structures favouring developing nations.

Moreover, South Africa's active participation in regional organisations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) reflects its commitment to sub-regional stability and cooperation. Cloete (2021) asserts that South Africa illustrates a pragmatic approach to retaining agency in a multipolar world by balancing relationships with Western powers and emerging economies.

Lessons Learned from Countries Struggling to Maintain Agency

Zimbabwe: Economic Instability and Isolation

Zimbabwe's experience is a cautionary tale of a nation struggling to maintain agency amid a shifting global order. Economic mismanagement, coupled with political repression under the regime of Robert Mugabe, led to international isolation and significant economic decline. The country has failed to capitalise on its natural resource wealth due to ineffective governance and loss of investor confidence.

The sanctions imposed by Western nations exacerbated Zimbabwe's struggles, pushing it towards reliance on China as its primary economic partner. This dependence has often limited Zimbabwe's negotiation power in international relations, illustrating the negative consequences of failing to navigate multipolarity effectively. Lessons learned from Zimbabwe's challenges emphasise the importance of good governance, transparency, and strategic foreign policies that promote diverse international partnerships.

Eritrea: Isolationism and Regional Tensions

Eritrea provides another example of how a lack of strategic engagement can result in lost opportunities and increased isolation. Berhe (2021) asserts that under President Isaias Afwerki, the country's government has maintained a policy of stringent nationalism and self-reliance, which has alienated potential allies and hindered economic development.

Eritrea's reluctance to engage with regional cooperative frameworks has left it on the sidelines of the African integration movement, limiting its access to trade, investment

opportunities, and support from regional organisations. The border conflict with Ethiopia and subsequent tensions has further complicated Eritrea's ability to navigate its relations within the multipolar world. The lessons learned from Eritrea highlight the importance of flexibility in foreign policy and the need for active participation in regional dialogues to enhance agency.

Conclusion

Africa stands at a significant crossroads in the emergence of a multipolar world, presenting a plethora of opportunities and challenges that require astute leadership and strategic foresight. The continent's rich resources, youthful population, and growing markets position it as a critical player in global dynamics. As Africa navigates this landscape, it is essential to recognise that the quality of leadership will be a decisive factor in shaping its future. Effective leadership prioritising regional collaboration, investing in education, and championing sustainable practices will be paramount to unlocking Africa's vast potential.

Leadership must foster an inclusive environment that emphasises unity among African nations, amplifying the continent's voice on the global stage. African leaders can cultivate a cohesive strategy that reflects the continent's diverse perspectives and aspirations by advocating for equitable representation in international forums and eschewing practices that divide. Furthermore, integrating sustainable development principles within national policies will ensure that progress does not come at the expense of future generations.

In this transformative era, there is a call to action for African leaders and policymakers to rise to the occasion. Embracing innovative governance models, enhancing public-private partnerships, and prioritising education and technology will steer Africa towards a resilient future. By harnessing collective strengths and investing in human capital, Africa can participate and shape the multipolar world to its advantage.

Ultimately, the future of Africa in a multipolar environment hinges on the commitment of its leaders to act decisively and collaboratively. The

time for action is now—African leaders must embody the vision of a united, prosperous, and influential continent on the global stage, ensuring that Africa's path forward is marked by resilience, equity, and sustainability.

Recommendations for Africa's Strategic Leadership Approaches

Africa needs to adopt strategic leadership approaches that emphasise unity, collaboration, human capital development, and equitable representation in global forums. The following recommendations are critical to achieving these goals.

For AU and RECs:

Promoting Unity and Collaboration Across Nations

Unity and collaboration among African nations are vital for addressing common challenges and leveraging opportunities in a multipolar world. Policymakers should strengthen regional organisations like the AU and the Regional Economic Communities to foster collective problem-solving and resource-sharing. Unity can be cultivated through regular summits and workshops, which enhance diplomatic ties and encourage knowledge exchange and joint strategic initiatives. These actors should continue to prioritise the implementation of the AfCFTA to foster economic unity whilst collaborating on standard regulations to facilitate trade and investment across member state borders.

For AU Member States

Investment in Education and Capacity Building

Investing in skills development and capacity building is crucial for empowering the future generation of African leaders and professionals. Governments should allocate their budgets to education, technology, and vocational training programs that align with labour market needs. Collaborative partnerships with international educational institutions can facilitate knowledge transfer and foster innovation. Furthermore,

initiatives focusing on STEM education will equip African youth with the skills necessary for competing in the global economy.

Advocacy for Equitable Representation in Global Forums

African leaders must advocate for equitable representation in global forums like the United Nations, G20, and World Trade Organization. This representation is crucial for ensuring that Africa's voice is heard in global decision-making. Leaders should collaborate to formulate a common agenda that reflects Africa's diverse perspectives and needs. Engaging in coalitions with other emerging economies can further amplify Africa's position and influence on these platforms.

Fostering Public-Private Partnerships

Encouraging public-private partnerships can drive economic growth and accelerate development initiatives. Governments should create an enabling environment for private sector investment by reducing regulatory barriers and providing incentives. Collaboration with local businesses can enhance capacity building and ensure investment focuses on areas vital for sustainable development, such as infrastructure, renewable energy, and technology. This approach secures funding and creates job opportunities for the local populace.

Emphasising Sustainable Development Goals

African leaders should commit to aligning their strategic plans with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Doing so ensures a holistic approach to economic, social, and environmental challenges, fostering a balanced growth paradigm (United Nations, 2015). This alignment could enhance collaboration with international partners and attract funding and resources necessary for achieving the targets set under the SDGs.

For the Private Sector:

Invest in Innovation and the Community

The private sector should promote an entrepreneurial and innovative culture to compete in the global economy. They

should foster cross-sector and cross-border collaboration to maximise resource and knowledge sharing. Support should be provided for research that addresses African concerns, informs policy decisions, and participates in worldwide academic alliances to increase research credibility and effect. Finally, the private sector should help to empower local people to participate in decision-making processes related to resource management and policy.

Through these recommendations, African leadership can forge a path that empowers nations through unity, prioritises education for future generations, advocates for equitable representation on global platforms, and harnesses public-private collaborations for sustainable growth.

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Africa - Plus-One Diplomatic Summits: Securing the Continents' Interests

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Executive Summary

Africa's strategic importance in the world is growing as demonstrated by the Africa-plus-One Summits, bolstered by the inauguration or reinforcement of new diplomatic missions on the continent. This marked interest and attention is informed by the continent's growing geostrategic value and the move by external actors to bolster influence, pursue resources and markets, and their desire to limit other actors from doing the same. In all likelihood, this summitry diplomacy will continue to shape the continent's engagements in the evolving global order. As such, Africa must be more imaginative and proactive in selecting courses of action to leverage advantages. She has to define ways in which she as a collective entity can exert more dominance by strategically prioritizing, coordinating and infusing tools to steer beneficial outcomes.

Key Points

In engaging in the Summitry diplomacy, Africa must seek to influence and not just respond, but have ambition and aspirations backed by strategic calculations in selecting optimal courses of actions. Africa must also put to use tools that improve utilities for the collective and individual countries.

Africa needs to strengthen her agency by always building consensus and using her collective voice/numbers and natural resources as strategic capital to exert influence and benefits.

The continent also needs to deliberately work on improving her socio-economic and political conditions in order to create legitimacy in her external engagements. This is because it is not possible to be weak internally and have strong leverage against organized external actors.

The continent needs to consider establishing a foreign relations institutional framework or agency within the AU that is responsible for developing clear-eyed assessments of her external interests and priorities and then define tools that steer beneficial outcomes.

Introduction

The practice of summitry¹ has long been an integral part of international diplomacy. However, the recent trend of global leaders organizing high-profile diplomatic meetings with their African counterparts in what is now known as the Africa-plus-One (used interchangeably with One-Plus-Africa) Summits has raised debates about their utility and whether or not they work for the continent (ISS, 2023). Often couched in terms of deepening ties as well as advancing signature initiatives, the summitry phenomenon has on one hand, involved a separate leadership of global actors such as France, Japan, China, the United States (U.S), the United Kingdom (UK), Russia, India, Turkey, Italy, the European Union (EU), South Korea and Arab League, among others, and on the other, the collective of Africa's leadership. There are those who view the proliferation of these summits as creating opportunities for Africa to exercise influence in choosing partners (Soulé, 2021), while others see them as nothing but scrambling for the continent's resources that will only lead to unfulfilled expectations. (BBC News, 2020).

This brief examines the increase in African summitry and ways in which it is shaping Africa's diplomatic engagements. Also, it looks at ways in which Africa can recalibrate these engagements to exert more dominance and advance her interests. It does so by canvassing sites and tools that Africa can utilize to leverage outcomes to her advantage. It is however, important to note that this brief does not provide a detailed assessment of each of the Africa-plus-One Summits and their outcomes and state of implementations. Touching on that will require more space and time, which is beyond the scope of this brief. This brief assumes a functional perspective that looks at their overall strategic aims and the extent to which these meetings align with Africa's interests. This brief is based on secondary datasets and personal insights on the subject.

African Summitry in Context

The Africa-plus-One Summits have largely involved states but there have been occasions where international organizations such as the United Nations have followed the trend of discussing Africa in special summits (African Union, 2022). Among the early summits involving African states was the Conference of Heads of State of France and French speaking (Francophone) Africa (Sommet France-Afrique) held in 1973. Subsequent Sommet France-Afrique Summits included the rest of African states. In 1993, Japan also established the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) 1993, while China followed suit with the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000. India and Turkey respectively formalized their relations with Africa in 2008 through the framework of the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) and the Turkey-Africa Summit. Two years later, the Africa-Arab summit was held in Sirte, Libya after a long interval following the first meeting between the two parties in Cairo, Egypt in March 1977 (Corda, 2021). While the European Union has had regular summits with Africa since 2000, a number of individual European states have also set up their own individual initiatives including Italy (Italy-Africa Ministerial Conference in Rome- 2016, 2018 and 2021), Hungary (Budapest -Africa Forum, 2013, 2015 & 2018) and Germany, which made G20 Compact with Africa a central pillar of its G20 presidency in 2017 (Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), 2022). Broadly, there has been a proliferation of the Africa-plus-One Summits with new players such as Russia (Russia-Africa Summit) and the United States (US-Africa Summit) joining the fray. The centrality of this new form of engagement is buttressed by the inauguration or reinforcement of new diplomatic missions on the continent (Brookings, 2022). Figure 1 below shows the details of the Africa-plus-One Summits (although not probably exhaustive) that have taken place from 1973 to October 2023.

1 For the purpose of this briefing, summitry is the act or practice of holding a summit meeting. Summits are high-level meetings for official purposes between political leaders and in some instances, senior officials. It is an activity that constitutes diplomacy at the highest level. See David Dunn, 'What is summitry?' in Dunn, D., (1996), *Diplomacy at the highest level: The evolution of international summitry*, St Martin's Press. 3–22.

Table 1: Africa-Plus-One Summits

Summitry	Year of Creation & Meeting Frequency	Highest No. of Participating African States	Key Announcements at Most Recent Event
France-Africa Summit	1973; Annual until 1990, now biennial	29 Heads of State (May 2021)	A key request to international community to re-allocate at least US\$ 100 billion of Special Drawing Rights to African countries
Africa-Arab Summit	1977; Triennial since 2010	43 Heads of State from both Arab and African countries	US\$ 1 billion in low-interest loans over a period of five years (2013)
Japan's Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD)	1993; Every five years	42 African leaders plus AU representatives (2019)	Private investment worth US\$ 20 billion over the past three years (2019)
India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS)	2008, 2011, 2015	41 Heads of State and Govt. (2015)	US\$ 10 billion concessional credit over next five years; US\$ 600 million grant assistance including US\$ 100 million India-Africa Development Fund and Health Fund; 50,000 scholarships over the next five years
Africa-Turkey Cooperation	2008, 2014, 2021	16 Heads of State (December 2021)	Pledged 15 million Covid-19 doses to Africa; Pledged to increase bilateral trade from US\$ 20 to US\$ 50 billion
U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit	2014, 2022	50 Heads of State and Govt. (2014) 49 African states sent representatives only 45 were either Heads of States or Government (2022)	US\$ 7 billion financing to promote American exports and investments to Africa; US\$ 14 billion private sector investment in clean energy, aviation, banking, construction; US\$ 12 billion Power Africa initiative (2014) The Biden-Harris Administration pledged to invest at least \$55 billion in Africa over the next three years and also promised other initiatives broadly classified into global governance and diplomatic engagement, people-to-people ties, and technology and innovation, among others (2022)
German-African Business Summit	2015; Biennial	-	Establishment of a German-Ghanian Business Council; Cooperation between Afrika-Verein (German-African Business Association)
UK-Africa Investment Summit	2020	15 Heads of State and government representatives	Pledged US\$ 1.9 billion worth of projects; signed infrastructure deals with Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, and AfDB
Brazil-Africa Forum	2020; Annual	Brazil and African leadership representatives	Brazil and Africa cooperation on trade and economy; 2020 focus on pandemic opportunities

Russia-Africa Summit	2019, 2023	39 African Heads of State (2019) 49 African states sent representatives although only 17 heads of state or government (2023)	Focus on trade and investment; AU Commission signed an MoU of cooperation with Eurasian Economic Commission (2019) Moscow pledged to wipe out debts worth \$23 billion and announced military cooperation agreements with over 40 African countries. Moscow also offered to send 25 000 to 50 000 tonnes of cost-free grain to Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Mali, Somalia, Central African Republic (CAR) and Eritrea (2023)
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Adapted from Anam, P. and Ryder, H.W. 2021

As these Africa-plus-One Summits pick up pace, the question that keeps coming up is whether or not they are good for the continent. On the positive side, these summits allow African leaders to interact with their counterparts, exchange views and work together to cooperate on issues of mutual interest. They also sometimes provide African leaders with an opportunity to speak out against the skewed designs of various institutions of global governance (Soulé, 2020). Also, these Africa-plus-One Summits carry symbolic and political undertones. The diplomatic engagements and public press on media involved provide avenues for some of the leaders to raise their political profile and enhance their visibility (Mutambo, 2023 & Soulé, 2020). In addition, these summits can also have concrete domestic outcomes for leaders canvassing bilateral agreements (Dunn, 1996).

On the flipside are those who view the summits as tools used by global powers to sway African leaders to their respective sides or a new version of the Cold War (Abubakar, 2023). Others even view the Summits and the way they are organised as condescending to African leaders. Kenya's President William Ruto speaking at the Pan-African Parliament Summit in South Africa in May 2023 noted;

We want to be effective not just taking pictures, having dinner and then we go home. Good people, we have food in our countries... When others want to engage with us, they don't want to deal with a tray card, what kind of outcome do you expect where 50 heads of state are sitting, with limited time to speak, what kind of engagement will one get?

The most unfortunate thing is that some of the people who normally invite us for these meetings do tell us that there will be consequences should we fail to turn up. They have been inviting us to meetings that have no meaningful outcomes because of blackmail. It is not right," (Chugunov, 2023).

Speaking a month earlier at the Mo Ibrahim Foundation Governance Conversation in Nairobi, President Ruto had observed;

We have these meetings, Africa-US, Africa-Europe, Africa-Turkiye, now we are waiting for Africa-Russia and Africa-Japan. We have decided that it is not intelligent for 54 of us to go and sit before one gentleman from another place [...] Sometimes we are mistreated, we are loaded into buses like school children and it is not right (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2023).

The way the Africa-plus-One Summits are organized is that they are initiated by the non-African actors and the continent has little or no say in deciding either the agenda or the venue (Abubakar, 2023). As a result, most of them end up perpetuating imbalanced power dynamics. Africa¹ ends up looking like a party that is being acted upon and not an actor with her own power and influence. This has not helped in eradicating the continent's lingering colonial legacy that has engendered a spectrum of

¹ It can be problematic to speak of Africa or an African agency given the inherent challenges of defining Africa as a unified entity. This brief though, speaks of Africa and African agency in the 'broadest of sweeps to refer to the breadth of African collective engagements (particularly through continental institutions) in the international arena.

great power-small power relationship (Mabera, 2019), the continent's structural cleavages of underdevelopment and weak institutions (Okumu, 2009), lack of a clear or coordinated strategy on her priorities when engaging with diverse partners (Gwatiwa, 2023), inability to convert ideational resources into diplomatic influence (Sidiropoulos, 2017), inadequate technical and structural capacity and selfish/narrow partisan interests at the African Union (AU) (with member states often reluctant to cede sovereignty to the continental body to own and robustly champion collective positions (Adeniyi, Opara, Adeyemo et al, 2016). As Brown rightly argues, 'future work on African agency [is to] be able to engage seriously with the continent's role in international politics in a way that presents Africa as an actor and not just an observer; and a historical agent and not just history's recipient (Brown, 2012)). As long as international interest in Africa continues, summit meetings are likely to be more frequent and important. The more such meetings occur, the more it calls on Africa to proactively seek to influence them rather than just responding to them.

Broadly, these summits end up framing various aspects of cooperation between the parties with official summit declarations looking like lists of generous promises on issues ranging from trade and diplomacy to cooperation on security (Soulé, 2021). However, joint implementation plans often lack specific milestones with breakthroughs, hence, they remain difficult to track. While there are those who think that Africa should avoid these One-Plus-Africa Summits, the question should not be about avoiding them on the basis that they are not working for Africa but more about how to make them work for Africa.

Towards A Stronger African Agency

Africa has the ability and the capacity to make things happen (Brown, 2012 & Cargill, 2003) through both rhetorics and actions. There are a range of spaces and tools (hard and soft) that Africa can collectively generate and deploy in the pursuit of favorable Summitry outcomes. The starting point is a nuanced understanding

of what Africa is and what it stands for in the context of the 'Africa-plus-One' Summitry. Africa occupies a vital geopolitical space with sought-after natural resources and a vast land mass that has the potential to contribute to global food security. Africa holds 30% of the world's mineral reserves, many of which are critical to renewable and low-carbon technologies including solar, electric vehicles, battery storage, green hydrogen and geothermal (MO Ibrahim Foundation, 2023). Africa accounts for three-quarters of the world's platinum supply half of its diamonds and chromium, one-fifth of gold and uranium supplies and it is increasingly home to oil and gas production with over thirty countries now in this category (Lopes, 2013). With increasing international competition for Africa's resources, her geopolitical relevance is also set to amplify. As external actors work passionately to establish allies and also access the continent's natural resources and relatively untapped markets, Africa needs to look for ways to exert more dominance by capitalizing on her resources, growing significance and making her strategic capital linked to continental interests.

Africa also needs to harness her rapidly growing and working age population by delineating a plan that projects it as a functioning asset and resource in partnerships. Africa's 1.4 billion people (Worldometer, (n.d),) represents almost 20% of the world's population. With the forces of globalization creating social and economic strains on the affluent countries, the combination of aging populations, aging workforce, and incipient population decline make Africa a burgeoning market and favorable place for investments. However, the continent also needs to invest in capacity enhancement to ensure that her labor force is robust and capable of meeting the increasingly competitive demands of today's globalized markets. Currently, almost half of African countries have not been meeting the recommended education financing targets set by the United Nations, which are 4% or more of GDP and 15% or more of national budgets (Obonyo, 2022). The continent, through its continental and regional institutional architecture needs to be deliberate in mobilizing resources to promote capacity enhancement interventions that are adapted to problem-solving, and prepare Africa's youth for future jobs.

Related to the above is the need to create legitimacy at home. It is not possible to be weak internally and have strong leverage against organized external actors. Africa's weak state, capacities and the dearth of home-grown interventions to improve socio-economic dividends contribute to her inferior position in the international system. There is therefore, the need to realise the connection between credibility at home and leverage on external engagements (Chipaike & Knowledge, 2018).

Africa also needs to have ambition and aspirations for engaging in the Africa-plus-One Summits, backed by strategic calculations in selecting courses of action that improve utilities for the collective and individual countries. This means refocusing these Summits towards Africa's priority needs. Going forward, Africa should have an increasing interest in putting herself in positions to manage relationships and build influence. This requires that African states must use a mix of strategies including identifying autonomous paths of action/laying out her own compelling vision for the summits and delineating instruments to realize her desired future. Africa also needs to dissuade member states from pursuing bilateral partnerships during these summits especially where there is scope to establish continental frameworks through consensus. The continent's efforts in this direction are often dogged by strong nationalistic interests. Yet, a key feature of the African Union (AU) lies in its 2063 vision (African Union, 2015) which speaks of building:

an integrated, prosperous, equitable, well-governed and peaceful Africa that represents a creative and dynamic force in the international arena," and "to promote Africa's position in international politics, gain support to realize her objectives, increase Africa's international standing, decolonize international relations and aim to position African states as an equal partner within the geopolitics of their region and in the world.

The continent has to invest in cooperating and strategically using her numbers. The continental body has established a mechanism of crafting common positions to serve as rallying points to push Africa's development agenda and strategic

priorities. Moreover, there is the need for some of the more influential states in the continent to work in concert to consolidate continental priorities and to marshal other African states for common causes. Africa also needs to develop tracking mechanisms to monitor progress on commitments made at summits.

Finally, Africa needs to strengthen its institutional framework to focus on delineating clear strategic direction in the Africa-Plus-One Summits and in her other external engagements. This means calibrating an institutional framework or agency to be responsible for developing clear-eyed assessments of the continent's external interests and priorities, and developing instruments to ensure that external engagements and collaborations are based on African benefits or mutual interests.

Conclusion

Africa's strategic importance in the world is growing as demonstrated by the spectre of global actors and their increased interest and involvement in the continent. This marked attention in Africa's geostrategic value is informed by the move to bolster influence, drive for resources and markets, and also the desire to limit others from doing the same. In all likelihood, this trend defined by the Africa-plus-One Summits will continue to inform the evolving global order as different actors seek to strengthen relations with the continent.

In engaging in this Summitry diplomacy, Africa must be more imaginative and proactive. She has to make strategic calculations in selecting causes and deploying a range of tools to leverage favorable outcomes. She needs to invest in cooperating and acting strategically and collectively. She has to proactively seek to influence the debates and decisions of the Africa-plus-One Summit by developing a strategy to define, act, own, control and lead on issues that affect her. This calls for acting collectively, seeking cooperation and collaboration on her terms and being consistently clear on her objectives and priorities. The continent, for instance, has to make her natural resources a strategic capital that is linked to her interests and benefits in order to exert influence and achieve cooperation and collaboration.

The continent also has to be deliberate in her capacity enhancement to promote problem solving competence and prepare her youth for future jobs. Importantly, she needs to create legitimacy at home because it is useful in leveraging outcomes in her external engagements. Africa's cumulative actions infused with her resources as a strategic capital should build and put her in a position to influence and benefit from the summits. Fashioning such an engagement is not easy. It calls for an institutional framework with capacity to make strategic calculations in selecting causes and tools to leverage interests and influence. Such framework is necessary to incorporate an institutional component that supports the development of clear-eyed assessments of the continent's external interests and priorities, and defines tools to promote them

framework or agency within the AU that will be responsible for developing clear-eyed assessments of her external interests and priorities, and then define the tools that steer beneficial outcomes.

6. This recommends further study on the progress made in implementing commitments made at the previous summits.

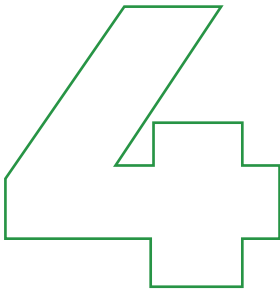
Policy Recommendations

1. In engaging in the Summitry diplomacy, Africa must seek to influence and not just respond but have ambition and aspirations backed by strategic calculations in selecting courses of action and deploying tools that improve utilities for the collective and individual countries.
2. Africa needs to strengthen her agency by always building consensus and using her collective voice/numbers and natural endowments as strategic capital to exert influence and extract benefits.
3. The continent also needs to deliberately work on improving her socio-economic and political conditions in order to create legitimacy in her external engagements. It is not possible to be weak internally and have strong leverage against organized external actors.
4. Africa needs to be purposeful in working to enhance capacity (knowledge, skills and attitudes) of her youth population. Doing this enables them to be problem-solvers and prepares them for the current and future jobs market.
5. The continent needs to consider establishing a foreign relations institutional

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Navigating Political Transitions in Africa: Understanding the Complex Interplay Between the Role of Military in Transitional Agreements and Democratic Governance

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Executive Summary

There has been an increase in the use of transitional agreements across Africa as a result of forceful removal of democratic governments through military coups. The quandary of such emergence from civilian-to-military or military to civilian governance often overwhelm the citizens who are thrust under the leadership of such new regime. Whenever a democratic elected leader is ousted, the new military regime enjoys popularity and the support of the citizens. This solidarity is as a result of the disillusionment, failed expectations, high-handedness, poverty and insecurity suffered under the ousted government. Usually, after the juntas have assumed the leadership position, transitional agreements are put in place to serve as a roadmap to democratic governance, and to assist in nation rebuilding, fostering social cohesion and economic development. However, once the agreement has been reached, the juntas abandon the transitional agreement and look for ways to adjust the constitution and partake in the election organized by the transitional authorities. As a result of their desire to hold on to power, these agreements are often violated and the transitional periods are extended beyond the agreed time. Hence, violating the transition charter that explicitly rules out the involvement of the military leaders.

This policy brief explores the features of recent transitional agreements in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, South Sudan and Sudan. It explores the extent to which these transitional agreements have been effective in achieving specific provisions in the agreements. It examines the responses of the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities/ Regional Mechanisms (RECs/ RMs) to coups and the formation of transitional agreements and how, in many of the cases, the military have used transitional agreements to situate themselves at the centre of political dynamics in states. This policy brief finds that some transitional authorities are yet to be effective, with some marred by delays, extensions, and alterations. Despite continuous criticisms of the effectiveness of the AU, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the broader African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the analysis of this policy brief shows that the AU and RECs played a substantial role in attempting to steer these transitions despite states' internal challenges.

Key Points

Military-to-civilian transitional agreements and power-sharing agreements in Mali (After the first coup), Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Chad primarily represent a category of states where the military ruler or council wields full executive authority with the expectation that the military will cede power to civilians at the end of a designated timeline. This also includes negotiations between the regime and ECOWAS which primarily focused on the transition duration;

The AU has supported ECOWAS and IGAD's efforts with ECOWAS preferring a transition of 18 to 24 months. Yet, the military regimes overseeing transitional agreements have tended to act unilaterally in extending or attempting to extend transition timelines with the intention of remaining in power for 36 to 60 months as the cases of Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Sudan have demonstrated

Furthermore, the result from the analysis of this policy brief also shows that there is a lack of political will by the junta leaders to engage and meet stipulations within the agreement let alone keep to the deadlines agreed upon.

The agreements often include (a) national dialogues, (b) the drafting of new constitutions, and (c) the organization of elections. The structural dominance of militaries within transitions exacerbates the risks of transitional governments, thereby leading to specific actors extending their tenures or otherwise delaying or sabotaging implementation;

However, the critical test facing these regional actors for example, the AU and ECOWAS is one of coordinating the diverse actors' interests, monitoring steps as per the agreement and ensuring mechanisms designed to implement the agreements are followed through. Finally, this policy brief provides recommendations for how the regional actors such as the AU and RECS/RMs can ensure that the interests of all stakeholders are represented in national dialogues and transitional legislatures.

The power-sharing agreements in Sudan, South Sudan, and to a lesser extent Mali (from the August 2020 coup to the May 2021 coup) have been formed to primarily prevent further conflict, humanitarian crisis, hostilities and/or to constrain the military's power over the transition;

However, all six countries' agreements stipulate transitions within 18 to roughly 39 months. Most of the agreements have created formal transitional governance bodies including transitional legislatures, whose membership, typically selected by regimes are drawn from universities, civil society, political parties and sometimes militaries. Several of such legislatures as seen in Burkina Faso are headed by civilians, however, in the case of Mali, it is headed by a member of the military regime.

Introduction

During the late 1990s, some African countries made giant strides towards achieving democracy, good governance and human rights for their citizens. In West Africa, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have taken significant steps to democratize, form civilian-led governments and intervene in crises¹. However, despite these achievements, some states experienced setbacks in implementing democratic governance and human rights that the African Union (AU) and heads of state agreed upon in July 2010 as part of the African Governance Architecture (AGA).

These setbacks, in some cases, have led to failed and fraudulent declarations, considerable human rights violations, constitutional amendments, and increase in the use of transitional agreements. While there has been a rise in the use of transitional agreements, these agreements often fail to consider or account for the activities of the previous regimes and why civilians support the removal of democratic governments through coups. The agreements do not provide civilian-led transitional governments with context-specific adaptive and stabilization strategies but rather circumvent the existing structures set up by past regimes. This raises three questions. First, how successful are transitional power-sharing agreements led by transitional governments with weak structures? Second, are the transitional agreements masked as civilian-led or joint civilian-military transitions effective? Finally, are transitional agreements working?

Drawing from the experiences of Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, South Sudan and Sudan, this policy brief examines the features and the success of these transitional agreements in achieving stability in transitional arrangement. In analysing and assessing transitional agreements, this policy brief seeks to understand whether the shortcomings can be attributed to implementation challenges or predictable weaknesses stemming from a growing trend of transitional agreements. This policy brief is structured as follows: section one examines the emergence of new transitional agreements in Africa and the political context that led to the emergence of these agreements

in their respective cases. Section two examines responses by the AU and RECs/RMs and then moves to analyse the AU and REC support to implementing transitions. Section three assesses the negotiations and participants' contributions to the transitional agreements in ascertaining whether these agreements reflect the stipulations of the agreements, and the final section provides some concluding thought and policy recommendations.

Transitional Agreements in Africa

In 2010, the AU committed to establishing the AGA as a Pan-African platform to promote good governance, democracy and respect for human rights. The AGA was devised to promote the implementation of objectives outlined in the legal and policy pronouncements in the AU's shared values. Nevertheless, there has been a noticeable decline in democracy, governance and human rights values of some AU member states, which has led to the emergence of constitutional changes, coups and unconstitutional changes of governments. All these have led to the use of transitional agreements across some states.

While there have been some efforts to support these agreements, the procedure supporting these transitional agreements have been stagnant, and have failed to deal with the root causes of grievances and delay towards democratic consolidation. Instead, what has emerged are forms of military government that entrench authoritarian leaders who use the transitional agreements as a 'disguise strategy to control power through authoritarianism. While transitional agreements seek to set the foundations for sustainability and stability, emerging trends show that there are disparities in the agreements. These disparities include their designs, roadmaps throughout the transitions, implementation procedures and roles played by external actors². Alongside this challenge, different political crises and their process of support attract different responses from international actors (for example, the different types of mediation and negotiation efforts and roadmaps for implementing transitional agreements), which are not always

in sync with the desire of the people in whom the transitional agreements are intended to serve. In fact, what has emerged over the last decade are varying configurations of domestic actors such as the armed forces, civil society groups and other stakeholders increasingly involved in the negotiations and implementation of these agreements, but over time, lacking in capacity to deliver on these agreements. This gives rise to long-term legitimacy issues which impact the social contract between states and its civilian.

'Transitional agreement(s) in this policy brief refers to either an accord brokered by an outside party or a unilaterally promulgated document or charter that internal and external organizations/ actors accept as a legitimate roadmap to democratic outcomes. In essence, transitional agreements are arrangements made with and by states or non-state actors in countries where there has been political instability. Some actors who are instrumental to securing the agreement seek to set up structures that will return the state to normalcy by addressing the root causes of political instability. By means of stipulations, transitional agreements seek to provide political stability, good governance and constitutional rule among other democratic indicators. Typically, transitional agreements are associated with post-conflict reconstruction efforts³ such as multiparty democracy,⁴ or following post-conflict elections.⁵ However, transitional agreements in the current context have become essential for post-coups scenarios.

Political Context

This section focuses on the events before and during the implementation of transitional agreements of the selected cases summarized in Table 1 below. The analysis demonstrates that the political systems before their respective crises exhibited underlying challenges that might have contributed to military take-overs and ongoing political crises⁶.

Burkina Faso

In 2014, a popular revolution overthrew President Blaise Compaoré (in power from 1987-2014) amid efforts by parliamentarians

to remove presidential term limits. A caretaker government was set up under interim president Michel Kafando (in office from 2014-2015). The caretaker government organised elections in December 2015, resulting in a victory for Roch Kaboré, who was re-elected in 2020. However, over time, the security situation of the country rapidly deteriorated due to the spread of jihadist activities that started in the north in 2016 and the east in 2018. The insecurity triggered discontent among soldiers and civilians who felt they were not adequately equipped or prepared to face an insurgency. The casualties recorded by the military deepened the discontent among the forces against political elites, which subsequently led to a military coup. The armed forces cited public dissatisfaction with Kaboré's inability to address the increasing insecurity in the country as the primary reason for the January 2022 coup, in which he was overthrown by soldiers led by Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Damiba. Damiba negotiated a two-year transition timeline, which will conclude in July 2024 with ECOWAS. In September 2022, Captain Ibrahim Traoré overthrew Damiba and pledged to respect the existing transition timeline, citing the Islamist insurgency as a reason for the coup.

Chad

In April 2021, Chad's president Idriss Déby Itno (in power from 1990-2021) died from sustained injuries while visiting the frontlines of conflict between the Chadian armed forces and the rebel fighters, Front for Change and Concord. Chad's Constitution of 2018 (Article 81) stipulates that in the case of a vacancy in the presidency, power passes temporarily to the president of the National Assembly and then elections should take place between 45 and 90 days after the vacancy occurs. However, a Transitional Military Council (CMT) led by Déby's son, Mahamat Déby, took power. The CMT promulgated a charter that envisioned an 18-month transition. When that period expired in October 2022, the transitional legislature extended the transition by another two years. The body installed Mahamat Déby as president and declared him eligible to run in elections. Nevertheless, the motivation for the armed forces' installation of Idriss Déby's son as the leader was not related to instability (reference needed).

Guinea

From 2010-2020, Guinea enjoyed a period of relative stability and incipient democracy under Alpha Condé, the first Guinean head of state to come to power through credible election since 1958. However, the abrogation of term limits in the constitution and economic hardships exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic influenced public anger against Alpha Condé's increasing undemocratic rule. Condé pushed for an extra-constitutional third term in 2020 and oversaw the passage of a questionable referendum to change the Constitution, followed by a highly disputed election that saw him win with 59.5% of the vote. Condé's attempt to abolish term limits and seek a third term resulted in his overthrow by the armed forces led by Colonel Mamady Doumbouya on 5th September 2021. In March 2022, Doumbouya announced a 39-month transition, then appeared to agree to shorten this to 24 months. In September 2022, out of frustration with the military regime, ECOWAS escalated sanctions on the junta and suspended some developmental projects. However, attempt at further negotiations with ECOWAS was inconclusive⁷.

Mali

After a separatist rebellion in northern Mali in January 2012, disgruntled soldiers mutinied and overthrew President Amadou Toumani Touré (in office from 2002-2012) in a coup. The coup plotters soon ceded power to a transitional government (2012-2013). France led a military intervention in northern Mali – where jihadists had sidelined separatists in 2013. The period 2013-2020, under President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, saw the re-emergence of jihadism in the north and the centre of Mali. On 18 August 2020, a coup in Mali against Keïta took place within an ongoing insurgency, and protests engineered by a coalition of civil society groups, religious leaders and some opposition parties led to the overthrow of the president. Economic mismanagement amid the COVID-19 pandemic and political repression were used by religious leaders like Imam Mahmoud Dicko, who was against western armed force intervention⁸. The coup was led by Colonel Assimi Goïta who negotiated a transition framework with ECOWAS in September 2020

and installed a transitional civilian president and prime minister. In May 2021, the military objected to the interim civilian authorities' proposed reshuffle of cabinet.

Under Goïta, a 'coup within a coup' emerged and Goïta was declared head of state. After a breakdown of negotiations between the military authorities and ECOWAS, the latter imposed sweeping sanctions on Mali from January-July 2022. In June 2022, the Malian authorities proposed 24-month transition timelines, which ECOWAS accepted, prompting the lifting of sanctions.

South Sudan

Following South Sudan's overwhelming vote for independence from Sudan in a 2011 referendum, tension flared between President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Vice President Riek Machar, who came from different wings of the ruling Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). After Kiir accused Machar of attempting a coup in December 2013, civil war broke out with the SPLM split into two key factions. Fighting proceeded along partly ethnic lines, reflecting the instrumentalization of ethnic identity by Kiir (from the Dinka) and Machar (from the Nuer). The two parties signed various agreements aimed at repairing the breach within the SPLM and generating a government of national unity. The civil war in South Sudan was fought in two phases till 2020. IGAD has been a critical mediator in leading the negotiations that resulted in the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity (RTGoNU) that is now entering its fourth year of work. Nevertheless, as of August 2023, progress was slowed on implementing the agreement with issues on elections unclear and regions like the Upper Nile experiencing a surge in violence due to stipulations within the agreement not being met.

Sudan

In April 2019, a popular uprising against al-Bashir (in power from 1989-2019) triggered a military coup. The new Transitional Military Council then negotiated a transitional agreement with the Forces of Freedom and Change, a collective of civilian organisations. A transitional constitutional charter, implemented

in August 2019 created a hybrid of military-civilian structure called the Sovereignty Council. The transition period was slated to run for 39 months. The Sovereignty Council was chaired by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan with Mohamed Hamdan 'Hemedti' Dagalo of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) as vice chair. A civilian prime minister, Abdalla Hamdok, became head of government. In October 2021, amid civil-military tensions, al-Burhan led a military coup that dissolved the Sovereignty Council and arrested numerous civilian members of the government including Hamdok, who was put under house arrest. Domestic and international pressure led to a deal between al-Burhan and Hamdok and the restoration of Hamdok's government. However, with widespread protests and pressure from the military, the deal led to Hamdok's resignation in January 2022, leaving the military in control. In April 2023, after several talks, the parties came to an agreement, however, the security forces once again took control, putting Sudan in a civil war and humanitarian crisis that spread to other parts of the country.

Table 1: *The context of the political crises.*

Country	Political crisis	Crisis start date(s)	Pre-crisis political context	Previous coups*	Freedom status**	Pre-crisis political system
Burkina Faso	Military coups	24 January 2022 30 Sep. 2022	Islamist insurgency Widespread terrorism Anti-government protests Rising insecurity and socio-economic challenges	Seven successful One failed	Partly free	Weak democracy
Chad	Unlawful power transfer	21 April 2022	Widespread terrorism Islamist insurgency	One successful Five failed	Not free	Authoritarian
Guinea	Military coup	5 Sep. 2021	The political and economic crisis Anti-government protests	Two successful Three failed	Partly free	Authoritarian
Mali	Military coups	18 August 2020 21 May 2021	Insurgency The political and economic crisis Anti-government protests	Three successful Three failed	Partly free	Weak democracy
South Sudan	Civil war	15 Dec. 2013 7 July 2016	Intra-party differences	N/A	Not free	Authoritarian
Sudan	Military coups	11 April 2019 25 October 2021 15 April 2023	The political and economic crisis Anti-government protests Fighting between security personnel	Four successful Nine failed	Not free	Authoritarian

Source: *Data from Powell & Thyne (2011). **Data from Freedom House.

Regional Responses

The AU and relevant RECs were amongst the first responders to the above crises but their responses varied. In cases involving ECOWAS member states, ECOWAS responded through condemnation and suspension of the affected countries' participation in the organisation's activities (*See Table 2 below*). ECOWAS applied sanctions against the perpetrators and demanded a return to civilian and constitutional rule in line with the AU and ECOWAS policy against unconstitutional changes of government.

In Chad (not a member of ECOWAS), the initial response was condemnation and calls for an inclusive transition not backed by any sanctions⁹. The relevant REC and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) do not have leverage and democratic mechanisms like the AU and ECOWAS. Therefore, ECCAS relied on the AU but more specifically the AGA framework. In the case of South Sudan, the AU's initial response was to support IGAD's mediation efforts. In both Chad and South Sudan, unique initial responses from the AU and relevant RECs were implemented. However, the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) did not suspend Chad but expressed concerns over the illegal power change and called for inclusive dialogue to restore constitutional order¹⁰. Moreover, the PSC sent a fact-finding mission co-led by the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department (PAPS) Commissioner right after Idriss Déby's death. While the ECCAS has also facilitated dialogue to pave way for a transition, it has not been as robust as the efforts or actions put by ECOWAS, although there was discrepancy in approaches¹¹. For South Sudan, IGAD was among the first regional actors to respond by dispatching a ministerial delegation to the country. IGAD led mediation efforts throughout the civil war and was supported by other international organisations including the AU¹².

The coups in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Sudan, and Chad were immediately followed by swift condemnation from the AU. Its anti-coup framework has been guided by the AU's actions enshrined in the 2000 Lomé Declaration for an OAU response to unconstitutional government

changes and the 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance 2007. These frameworks define unconstitutional government changes and outline several reactions the AU and its member states are expected to take when illegal power changes occur. Reactions include condemnation, suspension and targeted sanctions against the perpetrators (*see Table 2 for summarized reactions*).

Table 2: Preliminary responses by the AU and RECs.

Country	AU response	AU special envoy	Relevant REC	REC response	REC mediator
Burkina Faso	Condemnation Suspension	None	ECOWAS	Condemnation Suspension Sanctions	Former Niger president Mahamadou Issoufou
Chad	Condemnation Suspension	Ambassador Basile Ikouebe	ECCAS	Silence	Democratic Republic of the Congo President Félix Tshisekedi
Guinea	Condemnation Suspension	None	ECOWAS	Condemnation Suspension Sanctions	Former ECOWAS executive secretary Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas. Former Benin president Thomas Yayi Boni' Followed by Acting head of ECOWAS, Guinea-Bissau President Umaro Sissoco Embalo, as well as the president of the bloc's commission, Gambian diplomat Omar Alieu Touray.
Mali	Condemnation Suspension	HE Ambassador Maman Sambo Sidikou	ECOWAS	Condemnation Suspension Sanctions	Former Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan
South Sudan	Condemnation	Ambassador Joram Mukama Biswaro	IGAD	Condemnation	Ambassador Dr Ismail Wais
Sudan	Condemnation Suspension	Ambassador Professor Mohamed Al-Hacen Lebatt	IGAD	Condemnation	Ambassador Dr Ismail Wais

Source: Compilation of data from the African Union and Regional Economic Communities Communiqués.

In West Africa, ECOWAS has been at the forefront of responding to coups in Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Mali. The PSC and ECOWAS swiftly condemned the August 2020 and May 2021 coups in Mali and suspended the country from participating in both organisations. ECOWAS imposed sanctions against the coup leaders and an economic blockade on the country. ECOWAS also deployed a former head of state as mediators to engage with the coup-plotters on an acceptable transition framework. The PSC and ECOWAS led the international responses against the September 2021 coup in Guinea and the two coups in Burkina Faso in 2022. Both countries were suspended immediately from the two organisations while

ECOWAS imposed sanctions on the coup-plotters, demanding a return to constitutional order¹³.

In Sudan, the AU's initial response in April 2019 was condemnation and an ultimatum to restore constitutional order. When these threats failed, the PSC suspended Sudan's participation in AU proceedings in June 2019 until a transitional arrangement was set up. Sudan's Political Agreement resulted in establishing a civilian-led transitional government and power sharing in August 2019, which resulted in lifting the suspension in September 2019. Condemnation and suspension also followed Sudan's October 2021 coup with the AU stating that suspension

would be lifted only when the transitional government was effectively restored. However, since then, the country has fallen deep into crisis and further engagement from the AU, IGAD and the United Nations (UN) to resolve the crisis and restore normality has been limited.

The current transitional agreements have helped clarify countries' political trajectories in the aftermath of coups and civil wars. However, these agreements may have contributed to forestalling greater levels of conflict and turmoil as witnessed in Sudan, South Sudan and Mali. Politically, the agreements have been exposed to manipulation, political maneuvering, external influence and in some cases, blatant sabotage by the parties that were meant to implement them¹⁴. This was demonstrated most vividly by the 2021 'coup within a coup' in Mali and the coup in Sudan which has led to an all-out war.

AU and REC Support to Implementing Transitions

In some cases, the AU has instituted its monitoring missions while working with the UN and other entities. The AU, ECOWAS, IGAD, ECCAS and their respective member states have been the vital African actors involved in seeking solutions to the political crises in the six countries through condemnation, sanctions and mediation. In line with the APSA that encompasses the various AU mechanisms to resolve and prevent political crises, and AGA objectives and principles that urge more effective coordination, there is an observable degree of coordination between the AU and RECs.

The AU has complemented the efforts of the relevant RECs in monitoring and supporting the implementation of transitional agreements. This complementarity is in line with the AGA framework, which seeks to enhance the extent of coordination and cooperation between the AU and RECs. In fact, PSC's announcement of the AU's responses has referenced the AGA's influence in this regard. For example, in conjunction with ECOWAS and the UN, the PSC has set up transition support groups for Burkina Faso¹⁵, Guinea¹⁶ and Mali¹⁷. These groups aim to ensure that parties to the transitional

agreements particularly the military regime, adhere to the terms of these agreements, especially transition timelines, and establish an environment conducive for an effective transition. In most cases, AU suspensions tend to be lifted once the regime proposes an acceptable transition timeline. This decision follows that of the relevant REC that is taking the lead in responding to threats to democracy in its member states. In the case of Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali, ECOWAS' efforts have been impactful and have informed PSC decisions. ECOWAS heads of state have appointed special envoys for each of these countries to act as mediators. Through these special envoys, ECOWAS has been able to impose sanctions as a means of urging the military juntas in these three countries to accelerate effective transition.

In the Horn of Africa, the AU's role has complemented that of IGAD although it cannot be compared to the efforts expended in West Africa. In Sudan for example, the special envoy and PSC played an active role in mediating between the military and civilian groups following the 2019 coup that resulted in the signing of a transitional agreement. However, the AU has been criticized for its role having waned following the implementation phase. It has been noted that there is the need for more concrete steps to establish joint transition support mechanisms¹⁸. Nevertheless, this changed following the 2021 coup, with the AU, IGAD and UN mission in Sudan establishing a trilateral support group to ensure the military adheres to the 2019 agreement.¹⁹ In South Sudan, IGAD has been at the forefront of monitoring the implementation of the 2018 agreement²⁰ mainly through its membership in the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC), which also includes the AU, UN mission, and other international actors as members. The RJMEC has been tasked with monitoring and reporting to IGAD heads of state and government on the extent to which South Sudan is adhering to their transitional agreement²¹. Along with the RJMEC, the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism that IGAD supports has focused on monitoring adherence to the security and humanitarian aspects of the 2018 agreement

and reporting to IGAD on violations of this agreement²².

In the case of Chad, the AU has also been monitoring the implementation of the transitional agreement through its Chad office, while the head of the AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL) report to the PSC. In collaboration with ECCAS, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States, the UN and the AU established transitional support mechanisms to enhance further coordination in ensuring Chad remains committed to its transition process²³. Along with these efforts, ECCAS has maintained diplomatic pressure to urge adherence to the transitional agreement. On 20 October 2022, it appointed its chairperson, Democratic Republic of the Congo President Félix Tshisekedi as facilitator of the transition process²⁴. However, progress has been waning and the transition in Chad has not progressed in the right direction.

In all six countries, RECs (outside of ECCAS and its efforts with Chad) have led attempts to ensure that parties to the transitional agreement adhere to transitional timelines and institute the necessary reforms to facilitate the return to constitutional rule. However, ECOWAS-led efforts have tended to be more forceful than IGAD and that of the ECCAS, which aligns with formal democracy-promotion measures in its democracy protocol, backed by members such as Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal²⁵. Nonetheless, the variation in implementation of transitional agreements by RECs could undermine AU's efforts towards convergence of its member states around good governance, democracy and the rule of law.

Negotiations and Participants

In these six cases, negotiations have been protracted and at times fraught with political violence with incumbent military governments dominating talks. Differences can be observed in the roles played by the AU, RECs, and other international actors in negotiating transitional agreements in the lead-up to the conclusion of transitional agreements, which offer an initial reason why these agreements are not yet effective.

The military regime dominated negotiations on transition terms in all coup cases. In Burkina Faso, following its January 2022 coup, the military junta set up a 15-person commission comprising of 14 men and one woman from different disciplines. For example, journalists, academics and civil society groups but excluded political parties²⁶. This commission's transition charter, which concluded on 1 March 2022, was rejected by ECOWAS for proposing a 36-month transition period²⁷. It was only through mediation between ECOWAS and the military government that a 24-month transition period was agreed on in July 2022²⁸. However, the September 2022 coup has necessitated a re-evaluation of the transition parameters which Burkina Faso had agreed on with ECOWAS. Following this second coup, the military junta convened a two-day conference bringing together 300 delegates, including various civil society groups to deliberate on new transition terms²⁹. The conference endorsed a revised transitional agreement confirming the head of the military regime as interim president. This agreement sticks to the terms to which the previous regime agreed with ECOWAS³⁰.

Guinea followed the same path towards a transition framework as Burkina Faso. On 28 September 2021, a few weeks after the coup, Guinea's military junta announced a transition charter it had developed with no input from civil society groups including the National Front for the Defence of the Constitution³¹. This charter did not state the exact transition period, an omission that led the AU and ECOWAS to demand a more detailed transition timeline³². Therefore, like Burkina Faso, ECOWAS' mediation efforts ultimately resulted in Guinea adopting a 24-month transition timeline in October 2022 that started in January 2023³³.

In Mali, the military regime has also been at the center of negotiations on the country's transition even though it has attempted to be more inclusive compared to the above coup cases. Immediately following the August 2020 coup, the armed forces sought the input of various oppositions and civil society groups in Mali. Initially the junta proposed a three-year transition. However, ECOWAS' pressure and mediation led the junta to outline an 18-month transition period headed by a civilian president

and deputized by the leader of the military regime, Colonel Assimi Goïta³⁴. The armed forces' intervention in May 2021 undermined this agreed transition as Goïta was sworn in as interim president after the second coup³⁵. Despite demands from the AU and ECOWAS for the junta to stick to the 18-month transition period, the junta reneged on this time frame and proposed a five-year transition period instead³⁶. Following ECOWAS-led mediation efforts, the junta agreed to a new 24-month transition timeline in June 2022³⁷.

Sudan's case also shows the obduracy of the armed forces, particularly when facing a robust civil society. Following al-Bashir's removal, AU and IGAD pressure along with mass protests organized by the umbrella civil society group, the Forces of Freedom and Change, were instrumental in initiating transition negotiations that lasted for about four months³⁸. However, women were sidelined in these negotiations despite their active role in the protests to remove al-Bashir. Only two women participated in the negotiations on Sudan's transition terms³⁹. These terms, which set the transition time-frame at 39 months and retained the leader of the coup as interim president set the stage for the October 2021 coup against the civilian prime minister's government. Further mass protests have continued⁴⁰ and the AU and IGAD have maintained pressure on the military to ensure an inclusive transition to civilian rule⁴¹.

Both transitional agreements in Chad and South Sudan replicated the situation above where the armed forces and incumbent authorities dominated and other stakeholders were sidelined. In South Sudan's case in both the 2015 and 2018 agreements, various other groups were involved in negotiations including former detainees, political parties, civil society organizations, women's groups and faith-based groups. However, this seemingly inclusive process was undermined by several instances where only the main protagonists, Kiir and Machar, and the IGAD mediators were involved in negotiations⁴². The 2018 agreement stipulates a 36-month transition period dominated by Kiir and Machar. In August 2022, following the slow pace of establishing a power-sharing government of national unity, the transition period was extended by 24 months

by the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity⁴³.

For Chad, the Mahamat Déby-led transitional military council proposed an 18-month transition period in a charter it announced immediately after April 2021. This charter had no input from civil society or other groups including the rebels fighting the Chadian government, which resulted in its rejection⁴⁴. Later attempts at a more inclusive national dialogue on the terms of the transition in March 2022 resulted in the conclusion of a peace agreement between the transitional government and 40 rebel groups in August 2022⁴⁵. There has also been progress in holding an inclusive national dialogue as stipulated by the AU⁴⁶. However, critical civil society and opposition groups have boycotted these talks and the initial 18-month transition period has lapsed. A revised transition charter was announced in October 2022 following the conclusion of the national dialogue that confirmed Mahamat Déby as interim leader and set a new transition period of 24 months⁴⁷.

Provisions within Transitional Agreements

For all transitional agreements of the three ECOWAS states – Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali, the transitional duration of 24 months has been set. However, in Burkina Faso and Mali, two coups have occurred that did not adhere to the initial duration. For the two IGAD member states, South Sudan and Sudan, longer transition durations have been included in their respective agreements: 36 months for South Sudan, which has now been extended by 24 months, and 39 months for Sudan⁴⁸. However, following the second coup in Sudan in 2021 and subsequent crisis in April 2023, it is unknown if this will be respected. For Chad, an initial 18-month duration has been increased to 24 months as of January 2023.

For all transitional agreements, the structure of the transitional government, specifically the leadership that would steer the countries through the transition has been crucial. In most coup cases, the transitional agreements established interim governments comprising a president, prime minister, or vice president. In

Sudan, the transition constitution calls for the establishment of a Sovereignty Council to be headed by an individual, chosen by the armed forces and comprising five members from the military, five civilians, and one civilian member, jointly appointed⁴⁹.

The constitution further acknowledges that the prime minister, a civilian, was to be selected from the Forces of Freedom and Change. In Mali, the transition charter of October 2020 left open the possibility that the interim president and vice president could either be civilian or military. However, the vice president is expected to oversee defense, and the selection process of nominees of the president and vice president must be approved by the members of the military government. Guinea and Burkina Faso's transitional agreements establish the position of an interim president to be occupied by a member of the armed forces, and an interim prime minister position to be occupied by a civilian⁵⁰. In the case of Chad, the agreement reached following its national dialogue in 2022 confirmed the head of the transition as the leader of the transitional military council and the prime minister position to be occupied by a civilian appointed by the head of the transition⁵¹. While in South Sudan, the 2018 agreement stipulates that the two main parties in the civil war would form a national unity

Table 3: Elements of transitional agreements

Country	Transition duration	Agreement name and date	Precipitating crisis and nature of transition	Current outcome	Intended length of agreement	Transitional government composition	Eligibility for post-transition elections
Burkina Faso	24 months (interrupted by the second coup)	Transition Charter, March 2022 ⁵²	January 2022 coup triggers a military-to-civilian transition	Superseded by the Transition Charter of October 2022	36 months, dating from February 2022; later revised to 30 months, dating from January 2022 to July 2024	Military head and civilian prime minister	No (New junta agreed to the terms of previous agreement)
Burkina Faso		Transition Charter, October 2022 ⁵³	September 2022 coup displaces previous military authorities but does not (theoretically) disrupt the scheduled military-to-civilian transition	In place at the time of writing	21 months, dating from Oct. 2022 to July 2024	Military head and civilian prime minister	n/a
Chad	18 months (later extended by 24 months)	Transition Charter, April 2021 ⁵⁴	April 2021 coup triggers a military-to-civilian transition	N/A	18 months, dating from April 2021 to October 2022; renewable once, which the authorities invoked in October 2022	Military head and civilian prime minister	Yes (revised agreement leaves open Deby's participation)

Chad		Revised Transition Charter, October 2022 ⁵⁵	2022 National Dialogue; expiration of the original Transition Charter leads to an extension of the previous military-to-civilian transition	In place at the time of writing	24 months dating from October 2022 to October 2024		Yes
Guinea	24 months	Transition Charter, September 2021 ⁵⁶	September 2021 coup triggers a military-to-civilian transition	In place at the time of writing	Open-ended	Military head Civilian prime minister	No
Mali	24 months (interrupted by the second coup in June 2022)	Transition Charter, September 2020 ⁵⁷	August 2020 coup triggers a military-to-civilian transition	Superseded by Law 2022-001 and Decree 2022-0342	18 months, through February-March 2022, fell apart in May 2021	Military or civilian head and deputy (current interim prime minister is a colonel)	Yes, so long as they resign from the armed forces
Mali	24 months	Law 2022-001, February 2022; ⁵⁸ Decree 2022-0335, June 2022 ⁵⁹	May 2021 coup and January 2022 ECOWAS sanctions trigger compromise on a revised timeline for a military-to-civilian transition	In place at the time of writing	24 months, dating from March 2022 to March 2024	Military head Civilian prime minister	n/a
South Sudan	36 months (extended by 24 months)	Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, August 2015 ⁶⁰	Outbreak of civil war in December 2013 leads to a power-sharing agreement between contending factions	A short-lived Transitional Government of National Unity (April 2016-July 2016) before renewed hostilities broke out	90-day pre-transitional period, dating from August 2015; then 30-month transition period to May 2018, which fell apart in July 2016	Incumbent president and leader of the opposition group	Yes
South Sudan		Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, September 2018 ⁶¹	The breakdown of the previous agreement, 2016-17, led to a renewed power-sharing agreement.	Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (February 2020-present)	Eight-month pre-transition period, dating from September 2018; then 36-month transition period to May 2022		n/a

Sudan	39 months (interrupted by the second coup)	Constitutional Charter for the Transitional Period, August 2019 ⁶²	April 2019 coup leads to military-civilian power-sharing agreement and transition	Undermined by the October 2021 coup and its aftermath, negotiations over a replacement constitution are ongoing at the time of writing ⁶³	39 months, dating from August 2019 to November 2022, fell apart in October 2021	Military head Civilian prime minister	No
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Source: Authors analysis as assessed per agreement

government with Kiir remaining as president and Machar, as one of the vice presidents⁶⁴.

Another core provision is the eligibility of those participating in the transition to contest elections to mark the restoration of constitutional order and electoral democracy. The AU's African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance includes a provision that prohibits those who acquired power illegally from contesting in later elections. The transitional agreements of Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Sudan explicitly state that the transition leaders will not contest elections that the transition authorities have been charged to organize so as to restore constitutional order. Chad's agreement allows the interim president, Mahamat Déby, to contest for elections following the transition period. In contrast, South Sudan's agreement does not prevent transition leaders from competing elections.

Conclusion

The analysis in this policy brief has revealed that the use of transitions has also had a distorting effect on civil society amid a growing authoritarian atmosphere. While agreements have been met, the role of women and youths have been significantly missing in all these agreements and processes with several missed opportunities for the AGA and FemWise-Africa to plug into the transitional processes, and encourage transitional authorities to be more inclusive. While some countries are considerably further down the path to new constitutions than others, several of the transition charters constitute skeletal provisional constitutions in and of themselves. The most decisive impact of transitional authorities on constitutions is the strengthening of the interim presidents or prime minister who are often occupied by military leaders. In addition, the transitional government—those forming part of the government and civil service—are responsible to the president rather than the National Assembly⁶⁵. This translates to an expansion of executive power, combined with the possibility that current military heads of state will seek to run as candidates in upcoming elections. This suggests that some military leaders may have their political futures in mind when drafting the constitutions.

The transition agreement impacts the legal system where there has been a rise in the use of laws as a tool of authoritarianism. Military leaders have taken steps to criminalize dissent and punish critical media outlets and opposition protest. In the cases analyzed in this policy brief, there has been the instrumentalization of corruption probes to target political opponents. This has been accompanied with most countries under military rule closing public space that could have long-lasting impacts on the political climate and integrity of legal systems in the post-transition phase.

While the transitional agreements have created roadmaps for post-coup and post-war situations with orderly and plausible processes for restoring civilian governance and/or repairing the rifts that led to a crisis in the first place, significant challenges remain. These challenges relate to structural weaknesses as well as the fragile institutional capacity of states managing the transitional agreements and navigating past states' structures. Another challenge is when the responsibility

for implementation is left to actors who are themselves parties to the political crises and have a high stake in the outcome of the post-coup agreements. With this complexity comes critical failures such as prolonging of transition periods, repeated coups within coups, difficulty in implementing transitions amid widespread insecurity and attempts by local and foreign actors to gain political power during and after coups and transitions. While the policy brief did not analyse the influence of external actors, it should be noted that their competing geopolitical interests and demands also continue to influence the transitional agreements. The extension of the transitional period where authorities announced a transition extension has also been a challenge.

In the analysis of the six cases discussed above, it does not only show how military regimes are using transitional agreements but also highlights failures to hold transitional governments accountable. This has led to transitional arrangements becoming a tool and mechanism used by coup leaders to extend their time in power. As recent coups in Niger and Gabon demonstrate, both military juntas announced transitional governments with agreements to supplement their gains. However, the political rhetoric by actors implementing the transitional agreements in all cases did not align with political realities, primarily due to the inability of the transitional governments to dismantle existing power structures or because actors have used these agreements to entrench their forms of military governance structures⁶⁶. Thus, the history and legacy of military rule, internal conflicts and underdevelopment, among other challenges, leave the cases discussed at risk of experiencing outbreaks of violence and the possibility of regressing to full authoritarian regimes. Finally, more must be done to future-proof existing and future transitional agreements with context-specific adaptive stabilization strategies for states entering into transitional power-sharing arrangements.

Policy Recommendation(s)

- Through the PSC, the AU should sustain pressure by applying different methods of coercion, such as targeted and collective sanctions on those undermining the implementation of transitional agreements. Suspension from participating in AU and REC/RM proceedings should remain in place until meaningful and sustainable progress is observed;
- The AU and RECs/RMs must adhere to agreed protocols and avoid ad hoc responses that are not uniformly applied across states;
- Actions from the AU must match and complement those of the relevant RECs to ensure parties to the transitional agreements face maximum pressure in implementing these agreements. Given its goal of facilitating effective coordination between the AU and RECs, the AGA secretariat can play an instrumental role in bringing together RECs, the PSC, and other stakeholders to consider potential appropriate responses beyond suspensions that the PSC can adopt;
- The AU should continue to undertake proactive mediation through a joint departmental and coordinated response with RECs/RMs as well as international partners where the AU/RECs/RMs set the tempo and parameters of the approach;
- When the PSC makes a statement or sets an expectation for a transitional government to fulfil, the AU governance directorate should have an enhanced role in monitoring the transitional authorities' compliance or lack of compliance thereof.

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Governance Challenges in Central Africa: Taking Stock of Significant Strides by the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

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Executive Summary

Weak governance, fragile state structures, political instability and deficiencies regarding the rule of law across countries in Central Africa continue to hamper sustainable development while threatening to derail Africa's democratic journey. In Chad, fears of dynasty succession with the consolidation of power in General Mahamat Deby, as was the case under late president Idris Deby Itno, seriously challenges the possibility of a consensual and peaceful transition to civilian rule in the country. Moreover, threats associated with terrorism and violent extremism in countries like Chad and Cameroon undermine and overwhelm the resilience capacity of the state. In addition to Boko Haram and the Islamic State, Cameroon, which has prided itself for decades as a beacon of stability in a conflict-prone Central Africa region, faces human security challenges with the situation in the North West and South West regions of the country as the ongoing armed conflict in the Anglophone region flares. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC - Congo Kinshasa), renewed fighting between Congolese security forces and the M23 armed group in eastern DRC exacerbates human rights abuses against the civilian population and the humanitarian crises. The relationship between DRC and its neighbouring countries, particularly Rwanda, also keeps deteriorating. Finally, the monopolisation of power by incumbents in countries like Equatorial Guinea, Republic of the Congo (Congo Brazzaville), Cameroon and Gabon (before the August 2023 military coup) further signal threats to peace and security across the subregion. Yet even at that, the prevailing cloud of insecurity provides the opportunity for leaders in Central Africa to commit to democratic shared values and for the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to act decisively to confront triggers and enablers of poor governance and insecurities.

Key Points

Despite the continental proliferation of decisions, policies, norms and enforcement mechanisms that provide a platform for more participatory and improved democratic governance, Central African states consistently struggle to translate declaratory commitments into practice.

Addressing underlying governance challenges such as monopolising power, endemic corruption, and mismanagement is imperative for enforcing good governance in Central Africa.

The AU and ECCAS should be more proactive in dealing with autocratic regimes and leaders by increasing their demand for governance accountability from member states.

Good governance that is accountable, transparent and inclusive is imperative for sustainable development, peace and stability in Central Africa. This will require strong political will, consistent efforts, and commitment from Central African leaders to democratic shared values.

Introduction

Former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, "Good governance is perhaps the most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development" (UNU-WIDER, 2012). Indeed, good governance allows a large proportion, if not all, of the citizens of a country to participate in development while at the same time ensuring the implementation of rules and laws (UNECA, 2003). Consequently, the least developed countries in the world are also countries with relatively weak, dysfunctional, or ineffective governance structures (IIAG, 2023). Moreover, the World Governance Indicators (WGI) identifies voice and accountability, political stability and the absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and the control of corruption as key components of governance (WGI, 2023). Based on these indicators, African countries, especially those in Central Africa, have lagged and do not have a high standard of governance. All Central African countries, except São Tomé & Príncipe, perform below average according to the overall ranking on the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG, 2023) and the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI, 2024). Studies have further shown that poor governance is one of the key drivers of conflict in Africa (Nagar & Njanje, 2016). There has been a tendency for civil conflicts and insurgency in countries with fragile institutions, and poor governance has recently given rise to an unprecedented upsurge of coups on the continent. While the adoption of regional instruments such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG) has been commendable in improving the state of governance in Africa, the continent and Central Africa, in particular, continues to face significant governance challenges. This policy brief analyses political power dynamics in Central African countries to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the interrelationship between peace, security and governance in Africa. It notably assesses democratic governance deficits that mainly characterise Central African countries experiencing governance challenges. It further examines the role played by the AU and ECCAS in curbing these governance challenges and concludes with recommendations to advance good governance in the sub-region.

Good Governance and Leadership in Central Africa: The Challenges

Most Central African countries¹ gained political independence in the 1960s² and embarked on a short-lived democratic and participatory governance journey. Decades of weak governance and underdevelopment underpinned conditions of insecurity and instability in these subregional countries. Similar factors run across these central African countries experiencing governance challenges since achieving their independence: Monopolisation of power, mismanagement and corruption, which in turn undermines socio-economic development and the rule of law.

Monopolisation of Power

Central Africa has one of the longest-serving heads of state in the world. In Equatorial Guinea, Teodoro Obiang Nguema, the longest-serving leader in the world, has been in power since 1979, while Paul Biya has governed Cameroon since 1982. By the time José Eduardo dos Santos of Angola retired in 2017, he was the second-longest-serving president in Africa, surpassed only by Teodoro Obiang Nguema. In Gabon, the "Bongo dynasty" reined for decades, with former president Ali Bongo succeeding his father, Omar Bongo, who had taken the country's reins in 1967. Former president Idriss Déby Itno had equally ruled Chad for more than 30 years before his assassination and the takeover of the country's transitional government by his son Mahamat Déby. Denis Sassou Nguesso, who first came to power in 1979 in the aftermath of a coup d'état and returned to power in 1997, has equally dominated Congolese politics for 40 years, making him one of the longest-serving presidents in Africa.

Recurring constitutional amendments in countries like Congo, Chad and Cameroon that extended presidential terms and removed

1 According to the Economic Community of Central African States, Central Africa is made up of Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe and Chad.

2 Only Angola (1974) and Sao Tome and Principe (1975) gained their independence in the 1970s.

age limits have significantly contributed to this continued stay in power. For instance, President Denis Sassou led constitutional amendments in 2002 and 2015, allowing him to consolidate power by allowing him to run for the presidency in 2016, 2021 and potentially in 2026 (Happi, 2021). The Central African Republic (CAR) has equally joined other Central African countries that have amended constitutions to allow presidents to cling to power. The referendum and validation of a new constitution in July 2023 by the Central African Republic's Constitutional Court notably removed the existing two-term presidential limit and allowed President Faustin-Archange Touadera to extend his rule by running for a third mandate in 2025. Good governance in Central Africa is equally marred by recurrent political violence, which revolves around highly contested elections. Although countries in Central Africa have held elections routinely, which may seem exemplary for good democratic practices, only São Tomé and Príncipe have consistently produced democratic change in power. The change of regime in countries like CAR, DRC, Chad, and more recently, Gabon have, therefore, occurred unconstitutionally through military coups.

Mismanagement and Corruption

Poor governance is indisputably entwined with mismanagement and corruption, and examples from Central African countries clearly illustrate why credible and legitimate democratic institutions are pivotal in any country's effective management of resources. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), for instance, has had one of the most intractable and bloodiest conflicts in Africa. This has been driven and sustained by mismanagement and illegal exploitation of natural resources such as gold and coltan by over 250 local and 14 foreign armed groups fighting over resources in the eastern part of the country (USIP, 2024). Warring parties' illicit trade of these natural resources reportedly finances warfare, thereby sustaining the conflict (USIP, 2024; US Department of State, 2024). Poor governance further generates financial losses due to corruption. For instance, Equatorial Guinea, ranked 17 out of 100 on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2023, is among the world's most corrupt countries (Transparency International, 2024). The country

continues to suffer from alleged exploitation and mismanagement of public funds by the ruling family, as was the case with ousted President Ali Bongo and the "Bongo dynasty" in Gabon, who accumulated wealth for over 55 years (Donmez, 2023).

Moreover, endemic corruption and mismanagement in countries like Chad, CAR, and Cameroon due to increased spending on security, weak anti-corruption policies and weak judicial systems have undermined the region's transparency, accountability and good governance. The judicial system in Central African countries is notably one of the weakest in the world according to the World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index, with DRC ranked 138th, Cameroon 134th, Gabon 124th, Congo 122nd and Angola 115th across 142 Countries (WJP Rule of Law Index, 2023). The lack of transparency, dependency of the judiciary, difficulties in accessing justice and delays in procedures have weakened the judiciary and compromised the judicial system in these countries.

Furthermore, despite being considered one of the most prosperous countries in Central Africa and the fourth-largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa, one-third of Gabon's population lives below the poverty line (Donmez, 2023). This is equally the case with Burundi (2nd), CAR (3rd), DRC (4th) and Chad (13th) all ranked among the fifteen poorest countries in the world (Ventura, 2024).

Source: Compiled by the author from Global Finance Economic Data, 2024

World's Poorest Countries 2024		
Rank	Country	GDP-PPP per capita (\$)
1	South Soudan	455
2	Burundi	916
3	Central African Republic	1,123
4	Democratic Republic of Congo	1,552
5	Mozambique	1,649
6	Niger	1,675
7	Malawi	1,712
8	Liberia	1,882
9	Madagascar	1,979
10	Yemen	1,996
11	Somalia	2,062
12	Sierra Leone	2,189
13	Chad	2,620
14	Solomon Islands	2,713
15	Mali	2,714

Poor economic performance, socio-economic hardship and disparities, and inadequate necessities such as health services, education, employment, electricity and water in most central African countries are mainly attributed to mismanagement and corruption. These governance challenges create conditions for militia and extremist groups to continue their expansion and exacerbate governance challenges by recruiting individuals who are discontented with livelihood insecurities and the state's inadequate provision of basic services.

Taking Stock of Significant Strides by the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

The African Union (AU) has been instrumental in implementing decisions and adopting binding

legal instruments to foster peace, security and good governance on the continent. Instruments such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG), the AU Constitutive Act and the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union were adopted by the AU to protect human rights, promote good governance and consolidate democratic institutions. Unlike the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) does not have a binding legal instrument on governance principles. It relies solely on the AU's ACDEG. This reliance on the main African legal framework of democratic governance benefits ECCAS in terms of its relevance. This is precisely the case given the recent spate of military coups in West Africa (ECOWAS), where complacencies and inconsistencies in the implementation of its December 2001 additional Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance undermined the legitimacy and credibility of ECOWAS and even resulted in the withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger from ECOWAS on 28th January

2024. However, while only four central African states have not ratified the ACDEG (Congo, Gabon, Burundi and DRC), there has generally been no strict compliance with the charter in the subregion where "constitutionalism closely aligns with presidentialism" (ISS, 2021). This is simply because the change of power in most ECCAS countries (as explained in the previous section) is highly influenced by the president to whom excessive power is vested rather than on constitutional norms or the ACDEG.

The AU further launched the African Governance Architecture (AGA), a platform that enhances democratic governance at the national level through AU organs and RECs. It also supports African countries in addressing governance challenges and in entrenching the values of democratic governance into their political systems through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). This specialised agency allows African leaders to subject their governance performance to peer review. The AU, through the GIZ-AU AGA project, notably provided financial and technical support to the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC), intending to harmonise AUABC and RECs efforts in the fight against corruption and other governance deficits (GIZ, 2023). The project also supported the APRM in fostering good governance by undertaking capacity-building measures for national institutions in AU member states (including Chad) towards efficiently implementing Agendas 2063 and 2030 SDGs (GIZ, 2023). While all ECCAS member states have acceded to the APRM, which totals 44 member states (Ntombifuthi, 2024) following the accession of the Central African Republic in February 2024, only Chad has so far undergone country peer review (Gruzd & Clifford, 2022).

To improve the state of governance in Central Africa, the AU further implements monitoring and evaluation mechanisms initiatives such as the deployment of an Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) to oversee and assess presidential elections in line with relevant AU instruments like the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG). Although ECCAS plays a less significant role in improving governance in Central Africa, it has deployed EOMs in its member countries individually or jointly with the AU. Moreover, ECCAS created

regional training schools for electoral officers in an effort to institute electoral democracy and contribute to the consolidation of democracy in its member states (Okechukwu & Ronceray, 2023). They also supported the political transition in Chad and were instrumental in preserving the political and democratic stability in São Tomé and Príncipe following violent contestations of the 2021 presidential elections (Amani Africa, 2021). Despite the continental proliferation of decisions, policies, norms and enforcement mechanisms that provide a platform for more participatory and improved democratic governance, Central African states consistently struggle to translate declaratory commitments into practice.

Conclusion and Recommendations: Translating Democratic Commitments into Practice

In a region with abundant natural resources, governance deficits have hampered sustainable development and perpetuated instability. As a result, addressing the underlying governance challenges such as corruption, mismanagement, and the monopolisation of power becomes an imperative for enforcing good governance. This requires strong political will, consistent efforts and the commitment of Central African leaders to democratic shared values. In light of the above, the following policy options should be noted and actioned:

- ECCAS member states must foster inclusive and participatory governance, respect human rights and uphold the rule of law and democracy. Meaningful participation and representation of civil society, local communities, women, and youth in decision-making and policy-making will improve the quality of governance and development in central Africa.
- ECCAS member states must establish democratically accountable, credible, legitimate and resilient institutions to enable an effective governance system. The absence of strong and efficient institutions undermines socio-economic and political

stability in one of Africa's most fragile and vulnerable regions.

- The AU and ECCAS should be more proactive in dealing with autocratic regimes and leaders by increasing their demand for governance accountability from member states. This would advance good governance and avoid democratic backsliding in Central Africa.

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Democracy and Stability: Building ECOWAS' Legitimacy and Credibility in a Turmoiled West Africa.

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Executive Summary

In July 2023, leaders of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) strongly condemned the Niger coup d'état. They vowed to bring the country back to democratic governance by any means including using military force¹. This exceptionally extreme position of the Western African Regional Economic Community (REC) occurred within the context of successive regional coups in Mali², Burkina Faso³, and Guinea⁴, where both the people and several commenters have criticised the political position and measures taken by ECOWAS concerning the military putsches in these countries⁵. Some commenters have accused the institution of applying double standards by sanctioning military coups while silently tolerating equally unconstitutional third-termism of democratically elected presidents, which is ultimately denounced as unfair by the people⁶. Aside this, as the situation in Niger unfolds, other undemocratic practices in member states like Senegal⁷ have been met with little or no reaction from ECOWAS. This policy brief examines how implementing ECOWAS' anti-unconstitutional changes of regime framework impacts the institution's credibility as a regional player for peace and stability. As I argue, ECOWAS' conflict prevention framework has reached its limits in the current regional strategic environment as it fails to account for emerged key stakeholders and embody representativity. As a result, the institution is perceived as less credible and partial from the perspective of most West Africans.

To prevent such outcome by restoring trust within the region's population and re-establishing its legitimacy in efficiently supporting its member states' struggle for democracy and stability, I formulate a set of recommendations to ECOWAS; member states' governments and civil societies.

Key Points

ECOWAS conflict prevention, democracy and good governance architecture have reached its limits in the new regional strategic environment by structurally failing to account for emerged key stakeholders and failing to embody representativity.

To remain a credible player in the current regional strategic environment, ECOWAS needs to build trust with the population by impartially applying the community rules and demonstrating moderation in her approach to member states' crises.

To maintain its credibility, ECOWAS should leverage representativity through its community parliament, build trust by establishing civil society organisations- or member states-led accountability mechanisms, and encourage participation through independently organised cultural events, women or youth advocacy meetings with officials and exchange of best practices between civil society organisations.

Introduction

Since its establishment, the Regional Economic Community (REC) of West Africa, also known as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has faced 75 coup attempts in her member states, with over half (39) succeeding in overthrowing the ruling government.⁸ Coup d'états have been historically part of West Africa's political landscape, as were intense intra-state conflicts in the formative years of ECOWAS. Indeed, when the organisation was created in 1975, the following countries were reconstructing after their wars: The Nigerian Biafra war (1967-1970)⁹, the civil wars of Liberia (1989-1997; 1999-2003)¹⁰, and Sierra Leone (1991-2002)¹¹. These volatile regional wars prompted ECOWAS to set up a conflict prevention and resolution architecture which comprised two flagship community regulations including the 1999 Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security, and the 2001 additional Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance¹².

Both regulations set an unprecedented situation whereby REC takes intentional steps to stabilise the community through negotiation and the use of force. Before then, only the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) had the right to intervene with military force in a member state's war against that state's will under specific circumstances such as systematised human rights violations¹³. In addition, this conflict prevention and resolution framework led ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to intervene in six member states since the 1990s. The most recent of these interventions was in Gambia when 7,000 ECOWAS troops were deployed to Banjul to compel incumbent President Yahya Jammeh to leave power to Adama Barrow, who had defeated him in the presidential election¹⁴.

Considering these records, ECOWAS intention to intervene militarily in Niger's July 26th coup d'état was not a surprise. However, the regional body showed commitment to democracy in some of her interventions in the regions, but failed to show consistency in her actions across the region. For instance, ECOWAS' double-standard intervention was criticised when it

failed to apply equal intensity of sanctions imposed on Niger in the most recent coups d'états in – Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea instead of mere condemnations¹⁵. These criticisms are justified since different reactions from ECOWAS apply to identical national circumstances – with the notable exception of Guinea, a regional instability marked by terrorism and terror-related problems, which most civilian governments appear to have blatantly failed to stop¹⁶. To the organisation's defence, one might argue that the stability experienced in the Sahel region is relatively new to the larger West African community. Is it then the case that ECOWAS has been applying old (outdated) regulatory tools to a novel strategic environment? After assessing ECOWAS' conflict prevention, democracy and good governance architecture in the region, (I) I make a case for regional credibility and trust as a critical asset for ECOWAS in order to subsist as a relevant player, in the regions' instability. (II) I also recommend some policies to improve the organisation's credibility.

The Limits of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention, Democracy, and Good Governance Architecture in the New Regional Strategic Environment

The two ECOWAS regulations dealing with conflict prevention, conflict management, democracy and good governance have reached their limits regarding two essential features of West African regional strategic environment. First, the diversity of relevant national stakeholders capable of supporting the community's effort for peace has increased in the past few years. Secondly, the continued failure of civilian regimes to effectively tackle the multi-layered crisis that the region is facing poses severe challenges to the perception of democracy.

First, by its structure, the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security centralises powers to prevent,

mediate and mitigate conflicts in the sole hands of the heads of state and their appointed administrators¹⁷. The protocol creates executive-only institutions including The Authority, The Mediation and Security Council, The Executive Secretariat and the Elders Council¹⁸. – whose functions and procedures fail to account for a wealth of relevant national stakeholders that can play a positive role in conflict mediation and prevention. Indeed, as they were faced with intense crises related to transborder crime, drug and fuel trafficking or violent extremism, member states and civil societies developed local solutions that gained momentum by increasing their capacity to impact their local environment positively. As such, the influence of coalitions of traditional or religious leaders or religious-led civil society organisations such as the High Islamic Council of Mali (HCIM) have played a critical role in the progressive transformation of member states' national politics¹⁹. Similarly, in early 2019, Togo gained decisional acuity by designing an approach for preventing and countering violent extremism that centralises the sensitisation, intelligence gathering and kinetic action decision powers in the hands of one institution – the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Prevention and Fight against Violent Extremism (CIPLEV)²⁰.

These emerged actors remain out of the current ECOWAS conflict prevention and mitigation architecture thus, depriving her of potentially critical allies while at the same time transforming them into potential spoilers. Now, it is worth noting that ECOWAS 2001 Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance Supplementary to the Protocol relating to the Mechanism For Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security attempts to compensate for this limitation by recognising civil-society organisations' role in promoting democracy and peace²¹. However, the protocol does not go as far as to clearly define the roles that the community expects the civil-society organisations to play or how their roles fit in the overall mechanism, especially in terms of promoting and monitoring accountability of the regional institutions or monitoring of civic and human rights abuses .

Secondly, neither the 1999 protocol nor its 2001

supplementing protocol effectively embodies the principle of representativity. This represents a critical shortcoming in organisational and context-relative terms. On the organisational level, Article 13 of July 1993 ECOWAS Revised Treaty, established a Community Parliament²², where mandate and attributions were further detailed in the 2016 Supplementary Act Relating to the Enhancement of the Powers of ECOWAS Parliament²³. In spite of this no amendment was made to the regional body's conflict prevention, democracy, and good governance protocols to incorporate this major development. Hence, while ECOWAS has a community parliament representing West African people, that parliament, and the people, are not represented in the deal with conflict prevention and mitigation. Regarding the regional context, that lack of representativity coincides with a conjecture of multi-layered, multifaceted security crises faced by several member states, in which the failure of civilian regimes to find effective and lasting solutions leads the populations to support the military. To that effect, it is no surprise that the perpetrators of all the recent coups in the region invariably cited the worsening security situation as the basis for their coup justification.²⁴ The military vowed to put an end to the local insurgencies, but in practice, they tend to perform worse than their civilian counterparts²⁵. In definitive, building more representativity within ECOWAS is a conflict prevention mechanism that could serve as a necessity since representativity contributes to reinforcing trust and trust helps to establish the organisation's regional credibility.

The Credibility Spur: Surviving as a Relevant Regional Player in a Turmoiled West Africa

The Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso coup d'états development showed how ineffective ECOWAS has become in preventing coups or at restoring democracy. Thus, questioning the credibility of the organisation as a relevant and positive regional player for peace and stability in West Africa. The community's reaction to those instances has further drifted apart the

regional body and the West African people as evidenced by the massive anti-ECOWAS-sanctions demonstrations in Nigeria²⁶, Mali²⁷, Guinea²⁸, and others. Criticisms against ECOWAS approach to managing these coups ranged from the sanctions' disproportionate effect on the people instead of the military coup perpetrators²⁹, to ECOWAS failing to demonstrate impartiality in similar unconstitutional changes of governments.

Article 1 of the 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance prescribes a community policy of *"zero tolerance for power obtained or maintained by unconstitutional means"*³⁰. Furthermore, the first paragraph of Article 45 makes the policy more specific by stating that ECOWAS may *"impose sanctions"* on the contravening member state if democracy is ended *"by any means"*.³¹ Yet, such instances occurred in Guinea in October, 2020³² and Côte d'Ivoire in November, 2020³³ with complete impunity when the then President Alpha Condé and incumbent President Alassane Ouattara, respectively ran for third terms after an opportunistic and illegal change to his country's constitution by the former and an equally opportunistic re-interpretation of the 2016 constitution by the latter.

One might argue that the two-term limit was not defined in ECOWAS 2001 Protocol as one of the *"constitutional principles"* of democracy,³⁴ and that since President Alpha Condé changed his country's constitutions 8 months before the election³⁵ and President Alassane Ouattara stated that his term clock had been reset to zero in the new constitution in 2016; neither one violated any prescriptions of the 2001 Protocol. However, Amnesty International (AI) documented *"the killing of dozens of people with rifles, guns and machetes"* and *"hundreds"* injured in likely state-perpetrated violence against demonstrators in the direct aftermath of the Côte d'Ivoire presidential election. The total violation of Article 22 of the Protocol which prescribes that *"the use of arms to disperse non-violent meetings or demonstrations shall be forbidden [and] whenever a demonstration becomes violent, only the use of minimal and/or proportionate force shall be authorised."*³⁶ In Guinea the fatality count of demonstrators increased to *"at least 50"* with AI pointing at

defence and security forces as responsible perpetrators³⁷.

There are other examples similar to Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire in the region – one could cite the aborted and violent case of Senegal³⁸. None of these instances led to a clear condemnation, let alone sanction by ECOWAS on the violating country or regime, thus effectively sowing mistrust in the minds of the West African people.

Conclusion

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is one of the world's most advanced Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and one that has achieved historical progress in her attempt at ensuring a stable and secure community³⁹. Her structure for conflict prevention, mediation and good governance has offered the organisation a central position as a key regional player for peace and conflict stabilisation in West Africa. As such, historically, ECOWAS has been able to address the challenges that faced her as a community by responding to the mass human rights violations during civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and putting an end to a long oppressive dictatorship in The Gambia in 2017. However, despite those numerous achievements, ECOWAS conflict prevention, mediation and good governance have reached its limits. This is because there has been an increase in the emergence of stakeholders who can support or oppose the regional body's struggle for stability in an environment layered with multifaceted crises. This situation offers an opportunity for ECOWAS to restructure her conflict prevention, mediation and good governance architecture around the principles of representativity, accountability and trust relations with the West Africans. In the next section, I provide practical policy recommendations for the organisation to adapt successfully.

Policy Recommendations

To ECOWAS Authority of the Heads of State, Commission, and Sectorial Offices

The acceptance of ECOWAS as a relevant regional player is subject to the organisation's ability to project the image of an impartial mediator that gives equal response to the people. As the Gambia and the Sierra Leone historical examples show, West Africans are not fundamentally against ECOWAS intervention to restore constitutional order and peace in member countries, provided those interventions satisfy the principle of impartiality and moderation. Moreover, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger examples show that a top-down imposition of ECOWAS anti-coup sanctions produced adverse effect of further radicalising military leaders and punishing the people thus, effectively posing the risk of further disintegrating the affected region. To avoid such worst-case scenario from occurring, the Heads of state of ECOWAS commission and sectorial offices should:

- Employ the principle of representativity by giving ECOWAS parliament more active roles in deciding for and adjusting the intensity of sanctions on a case-by-case basis. For example, the organisation's parliament should be responsible for consulting key stakeholders in troubled countries to assess the potential effect of sanctions to be imposed through vote by the Heads of State before implementation.
- Show impartiality by equally treating all non-constitutional changes of governments regardless of the method or the perpetrators. ECOWAS' reaction to the coup in Niger was perceived as illegitimate and inappropriate, more so that they were spearheaded by some heads of state who clinched to power by changing their countries' constitutions against the will of most of their population. Consequently, ECOWAS' Heads of State should set clear democratic standards and equal punishment for violators.
- ECOWAS' top officials should exercise caution in giving public statements or addresses to the press. Verbal escalation

has been the major factor behind the coup in Mali and Niger. For example, the organisation's commission, peace and security officer and president of the Heads of State should refrain from publicly using languages that infantilise the military or look down on the people's reactions.

To ECOWAS Member States' Governments and Civil Society Organisations

Even though ECOWAS was created by the will of a few visionary heads of state back in 1975, her relevance and efficacy are sustained by the continuous dedication of her member states and West African populations, who wholeheartedly adopted the principle of the regional community. Quickly imposing harsh sanctions upon communities, people and economies for the offence committed by a small part of their militaries will only reflect the biased and negative image of a self-centred, syndicated and oppressive body that are dominated by few countries' political and economic agenda. To preserve the entire ownership of the regional body, member states and their civil societies should:

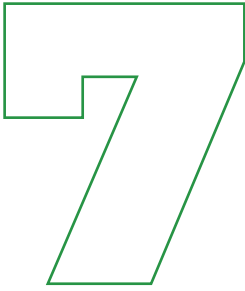
- Ensure accountability within ECOWAS institutions by advocating for transparency at all levels of the organisation including the decisions of the Heads of State, the Commission, and the Parliament. Accountability scheme should allow room for member states and civil society organisations-led checks and balances, with each member state able to take action within their respective judicial system to prosecute and punish offenders.
- Encourage participation in the communities' activities. Member states and civil society organisations should seize the opportunity of this troubled period in West Africa to promote ECOWAS' shared values of democracy, economic integration and cultural pluralism. For example, they may independently organise cultural and artistic events, women or youth advocacy group meetings and organisation of beneficial events within ECOWAS communities.

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The Gulf-States' Engagement in the Horn of Africa: A Critical Appraisal of Challenges and Opportunities

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Executive Summary

The strategic importance of the Horn of Africa stems from its location as the source of the Nile, the gateway to the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Its strategic location on one of the world's major trade sea lanes and land routes makes it critical. Its significance grows due to its proximity to the oil-rich Arabian Peninsula. The region has always been a magnet for international powers because of the sea traffic routes, major ports in the area, tremendous nearby riches and crossing points for people. This makes the region a highly strategic focus for various forms of global competition from the Gulf-states, Eastern and Western super-powers. The increased engagement of Gulf States across the Red Sea has had a significant impact on the prevailing order in the Horn of Africa. The Gulf States, particularly Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar have increased their influence in the Horn of Africa. Today, the Gulf States' proactive role in the Horn of Africa goes beyond economic interests but also extends to critical security issues.

Several reasons have been adduced for the Gulf States' heavy investments in the Horn of Africa, including geopolitical interest, geographic proximity, shared history and culture, economic and security interests. As a result of the Gulf States' heavy engagement in the name of investment, the Horn of Africa has faced a variety of critical challenges. The challenges include regional tension and insecurity, religious radicalization and incitation of hostility between and among the Horn of African countries. The prospects include encouraging trade, creating job opportunities and encouraging investments in real estate, health care, transportation, and telecommunication services. As a result of these, the primary goal of this paper is to develop a policy brief on the challenges and opportunities associated with Gulf States' political and economic engagement in the Horn of Africa.

Key Points

The Horn of Africa Region was and continues to be a highly strategic subject of various forms of global competition.

Unfortunately, the Horn of Africa remains a typical example of a vulnerable and unstable region, exacerbated by the presence of numerous foreign interventions.

The prevailing order in the Horn of Africa has been heavily influenced by increased engagement from Gulf States across the Red Sea.

The Gulf States' presence in the Horn of Africa poses significant policy challenges, such as navigating the region's multiple overlapping tensions and disputes.

Countries in the Horn of Africa remain politically vulnerable due to limited democratic governance, social justice, law and order and the prevalence of poverty and diseases.

Introduction

From time immemorial, the Horn of Africa Region has been a highly strategic area, subject to various forms of global competition. The region has historically been at a crossroad. Trade and investment are conducted from north to south and west to east across the region. Empires have risen and fallen. From the beginning of each faith, Islam and Christianity were deeply rooted in the region. The Nile River rises in the region and flows through to Egypt, linking riparian states who struggle for their share of the Nile's benefits. Its eastern coast connects to the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. Its people have engaged in trade for millennia, connecting them to the Gulf and beyond. The region's diversity in geography, history, population, politics and culture has piqued the interest of various foreign powers, allowing outsiders to engage in proxy politics with the region (Alexander Rondos, 2016: 150).

The region faces three major challenges. The first is how states persuade the population to support a national project; wherein lies the critical distinction between persuasion and coercion, with the former necessitating deliberation, which may one day evolve into a form of democracy. The second obstacle is the task of regional integration, which is a connection between internal politics and regional integration. Finally, the Horn of Africa has served as a convenient playground for players from outside the region. Hence, poor governance, mutual destabilization and external intervention are combustible ingredients in the region that constantly result in chaos and in effects, insecurity (Ibid: 152).

The Horn of Africa's geostrategic importance has made it a major ground for superpower contention and competition for decades. Some of the rivalries include religious competition, Western world and Chinese rivalry, the Arab Israel conflict and the Iranian and Saudi-led GCC crisis. Countries in the Horn of Africa remain politically vulnerable due to their infant democratic culture, poor administration, limited social justice and minimal press freedom. Furthermore, civil war, poverty, migration, diseases, trafficking in human, drugs and arms are among the critical challenges that plague

the Horn of Africa region and societies. The economy is not in good shape as a result of its growing corruption (Nolte, 2010).

In terms of peace and security, the Horn of Africa remains an unfortunate example of an insecure and unstable region exacerbated by the presence of so many foreign military forces. This is because competition among foreign militaries to influence Africa's hotspots has resulted in a plethora of activities that have overburdened the security landscape, particularly in the Sahel and Horn of Africa. Except Ethiopia, the countries of the Horn of Africa have a common colonial history. Italy, France and the United Kingdom all left an increasingly distant imprint. Sudan, Somalia, South Sudan and Ethiopia all have ongoing civil wars. In the cases of Eritrea and South Sudan, the Horn is also the only part of Africa where secession has been recognized.

The presence of foreign and excessive military forces poses the risk of Africa becoming a proxy turf for extra-regional competition. (Andrews, 2019). The region is very fragile and volatile, and conflict and war can take the form of interstate, intrastate, ethnic or proxy war. Scholars believe that the region's instability is primarily as a result of external actors (Alem, 2007).

In this regard, I affirm that the competition and contention of external actors for control of the horn of Africa's geostrategic and geopolitical area contributes to the region's instability and insecurity. To protect their national interests, these actors employ a variety of strategies, including propaganda and support for proxy wars, which in turn, undermines the region's security and stability. Furthermore, these external actors have been involved in efforts to address African problems using their own methods. These foreign-made solutions cannot solve the deep-rooted and long-standing African multifaceted problems but rather, harm the chances of finding an 'African home-grown' solution that can solve the problem from its very root.

Over the last half-decade, the prevailing order in the Horn of Africa has been heavily influenced by increased engagement from Gulf States

across the Red Sea. Their growing presence in the Horn of Africa's region poses significant policy challenges as they seek to leverage interest and competition to further their own objectives with Gulf's players and their allies, while navigating the multiple overlapping tensions and disputes that have long marked the Horn's region (Roundtable Agenda, 2019).

Gulf States are asserting themselves in the Horn of Africa like never before. This unprecedented surge in political, economic and strategic engagement across the Red Sea is challenging old assumptions and erasing old boundaries. As the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey seek to expand their spheres of influence, including through commercial ports and military outposts on Africa's Red Sea coast, fierce Middle Eastern rivalries are playing out on a larger chessboard.

According to Simon (2017), there are growing concerns and criticisms about the political, economic, and security implications of the Gulf Cooperation Council (hereafter GCC) states' involvement in the Horn of Africa. Analysts who emphasize the actual and potential negative consequences of GCC-Horn of Africa relations point to the possibility that these vulnerable Horn of Africa states will be drawn into the tensions between Iran and certain GCC states or the competition between Qatar and the Saudi-led alliance.

There are also more mundane concerns about potential incompatibility and tensions between the security interests of certain GCC states and the states in the Horn, which appear to be using the Horn as a proxy for internal Gulf rivalries. Saudi and Emirati rivalry with Turkey and Qatar have erupted, exacerbating pre-existing divisions and raising questions about whether the Gulf Arab states are a more destabilizing force in the Horn of Africa's region. It also militarizes the Horn, which has been a long-standing fort for foreign military bases in Djibouti. Such conditions inevitably pose a challenge to the Horn's long-term sustainable development (Larsen & Stepputat, 2019).

Moreover, GCC states are increasingly collaborating with authorities in the Horn of Africa to provide long-term investments

in critical infrastructure, which will create competition in the Horn of Africa and influences its already volatile power dynamics (Ibid). Consequent upon this, the Gulf investments primarily has followed Gulf States' own agendas on economic, security and political issues.

Thus, while the UAE is Somalia's largest trading partner and is currently investing in its infrastructure, the UAE and other Gulf States are also receiving illicitly traded charcoal from the Somali militant group, Al-Shabaab (Jessica & Finn, 2019). This not only undermines the UN Security Council's 2012 ban on the illegal Somali charcoal trade but has also weakens Mogadishu's tenuous grip on the security situation because it has hindered her provision of Al-Shabaab with vital funding for their violent operations (Ibid).

In the short term, most interactions could be viewed largely as one-way traffic from a limited number of attentive Gulf patrons to relatively eager recipients in the Horn. This means that the Gulf States' political considerations dominate and frame the relationship while intrastate and intraregional tensions in the Horn of Africa take a back seat. As a result, many writers assert their views on the asymmetric economic interdependence of Horn of Africa countries and Gulf States.

According to Katz (2017), using Somalia as an example, while Gulf States' aid and investment in the region has been a lifeline particularly for many Somalis, rivalries between them for influence around the Red Sea and in the Horn of Africa have added a dangerous new twist to Somalia's instability. As a result, it is unclear what the long-term implications of a growing Gulf presence in the region will mean for local political dynamics. However, it is clear that as Gulf Arab states increase their influence in the Horn of Africa, the region's future is being re-imagined.

Thus, the Gulf States' involvement in the Horn's political economy and its rise as a global political player has become a paradigmatic example of a contemporary political market that incorporates Yemen and the countries of the Arabian Gulf into an integrated region. Therefore, this portends that the political,

economy and conflict in the Horn of Africa requires a clear policy-based intervention to effectively deal with the challenges.

Based on the foregoing, the following implications would be derived from this policy brief: This brief provides current and timely information about the Gulf States' deepening political and economic engagement in the Horn of Africa as well as its challenges and opportunities for the Horn's Region. Second, it provides a fresh perspective on how stakeholders can put more emphasis on alleviating the problem, as Horn of Africa is thought to be among the most volatile and conflict-ridden region. Third, it offers insight into unprecedented economic and security problems that have arisen as a result of the Gulf States' ambiguous and economic statecraft-based engagement in the Horn of Africa. Fourth, it suggests some critical policy interventions and measures that stakeholders can take to provide a relatively balanced relationship on the two regional blocs and to achieve a win-win advantage from their mutual relationships. Finally, the policy brief serves as a springboard for policy-makers to develop well-founded policies that are beneficial for both regional blocs.

Generally, the Horn of Africa is among the world's most geo-strategically important regions. Its geo-strategic importance is determined by a variety of factors. For example, its proximity to the Red Sea makes it a bridge between Africa and the oil-rich Middle East. Second, its closeness to the Strait of Bab el Mandeb has elevated the region to the status of geo-strategic importance. As a result, Western and emerging South powers want to ensure uninterrupted flow of oil to their respective regions. Finally, the region is essential for maritime security, naval bases, military bases, anti-piracy, and terrorism. Owing to this, the area is crucial for anti-piracy and anti-terrorism operations which are of interest to the external and internal powers.

Discussion

According to theoretical and empirical data, the Gulf States particularly Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar have increased

their sphere of influence in the Horn of Africa in recent years. While their relationship with the Horn has a long history, their renewed focus on the region is far deeper and broader than ever before.

Presently, their proactive role in the Horn of Africa extends beyond the cultivation and strengthening of commercial and investment ties to include critical security aspects. The Arab Axis' aggressive strategy has a commercial motivation but the primary goal is political. Its main goal is to isolate Iran, with whom it has a long-standing feud and to limit the influence of the Qatar-Turkey Axis, which it accuses of promoting "political Islam".

Furthermore, a variety of factors motivate Gulf Arab states to deepen their engagement in the Horn of Africa. The main factors that motivate Gulf States to invest in the Horn of Africa include geopolitical interest, geographical proximity, shared history and culture (including religion), economic and security interests. However, Gulf influence in the Horn is far from homogeneous: there are significant differences between each Gulf State's goals, instruments, project types and recipients in the Horn.

Effective engagement in this context thus necessitates a more nuanced understanding of the role that specific Gulf actors play in a given region, rather than a generalized and securitized interpretation of the risks associated with Gulf influences. As a result, accurate assessment of the involved actors, goals and scope of Gulf activities in the context is required to efficiently mitigate any associated risks.

The Gulf States' involvement in the Horn of Africa produces mixed results. This is because their deeply intertwined political influence has both positive and negative consequences. Certain risks arise as a result of their unhealthy intra-competition, as well as some hidden and subtle agendas pursued in the name of stability. Among the various risks or threats include regional tension and insecurity, religious radicalization, escalating division and hostility among horn of African countries. In addition, the Gulf States are persuading the Horn of African states to give them political support.

Despite this, Gulf States are now major players

in the Horn of Africa. They regard the Bab-el-Mandeb strait and the Horn region as strategic spaces relevant to both the containment of Iranian influences and intra-Arabic competition. To achieve this goal, they have been actively engaging the Horn actors through a wide range of financial and economic instruments to secure these interests. The Gulf States' activities in the Horn are significant and their influence in the Horn is a long-standing phenomenon deeply ingrained in Horn politics. Actors on both sides have a vested interest in the relationship's survival because the Horn has long had cultural, religious and economic ties with the other side of the Red Sea.

Thus, developments in the Horn cannot be understood without considering the influences emanating from the Gulf States because these states have continued to play a significant role in shaping the current political and economic landscape in the Horn. As a result, the role of gulf's engagement in the Horn of Africa could be viewed from various perspectives. Job opportunities, foreign direct investment, remittances, knowledge transfer, alternative port development and conflict mediation strategies could be considered as some of the major opportunities acquired as a result of Gulf States' deepening and broadening engagement in the Horn of Africa.

In terms of trade and investment, Gulf States, led by the UAE, have significantly increased investments in Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia in real estate, hospitality, transportation and telecommunications. Following the 2008 global food supply shortage caused by rising food prices, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) investors began to focus their attention on Africa, specifically Ethiopia and Sudan, which had available farmlands.

Ethiopia and Sudan, in particular, were viewed as viable options for providing domestic populations with consistent sources of key agricultural products to meet their food security needs. Despite the fact that many Horn of Africa countries have enormous potential for irrigated agricultural production and livestock products, the comparative advantage gained has been insufficient.

Contrary to this belief, gulf Arab states, particularly the Emirate, are deepening their engagement in the Horn of Africa in order to control major trading routes or ports and become a strong state in the long run. However, the heart land theory differs significantly from the findings because its central tenet differs with the fact that many super-powers as well as newly emerging rival states compete in the red sea and its environs. Mackinder (1904) in his pivot area theory stated that:

Any state controlling this region was a pivot state with the ability to disrupt existing global power relations at the expense of maritime powers. Mackinder dubbed this pivotal region the Heartland. As a result, his main thesis stipulates three critical conditions for unipolar global dominance: whoever controls the heartland controls the world island. Whoever controls the World Island will soon rule the world. In other words, the group or nation that dominates the heartland can then extend its dominance to a much larger area (Mackinder, 1904).

Because the Horn of Africa is burdened with divisive historical baggage, overcoming these challenges will be difficult. The challenges of economic growth, political pluralism and participation, trade security, the fight against radicalization and terrorism and regional economic integration must all be transformed into a collaborative effort that will allow the Horn of Africa to be integrated into a platform of security and economic cooperation. In a similar vein, regional leaders and other stakeholders must work tirelessly to reduce the excessive involvement of external actors in efforts to address African problems by seeking an 'African home-grown' solution to African problems.

All of the issues raised and discussed above call for a clear and timely policy intervention to mitigate, if not eliminate, the challenges while increasing and strengthening the opportunities. Therefore, this policy brief will help stakeholders in providing a timely response and pragmatic solution to the problems at hand. Based on this study's analysis, the following policy recommendations are made.

Policy Recommendations

On the Need to Strengthening Regional Integration

Leaders of the Horn of Africa countries must pursue a more assertive, pragmatic and feasible Gulf foreign policy. They should consider how to set institutional boundaries on competition so that the Horn can resist the most destructive external rivalries, penalize behavior that undermines local institutions, and oppose unfair stipulations in commercial contracts. The already initiated efforts to create regional fora where Gulf and Horn countries can discuss their concerns should be strengthened, and all efforts should be made to maintain mutual benefit between the two regions.

As noted in the discussion, the Gulf States' involvement in the Horn poses certain threats or risks. These issues cannot be solved by dealing unilaterally with Horn states and Gulf-Arab states. Rather, it is possible through their organizations such as Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) and the Red Sea Council. However, the organization has not yet taken sufficient measures to combat associated risks. Thus, even though members of the Horn of Africa have differences, by compromising their differences, they can work cooperatively and strengthen their regional integration to alleviate future problems. Even though such problems cannot be solved unilaterally, the Horn of Africa countries should develop a common regional plan of action or strategy.

Concerning Red Sea Forum

The Red Sea Forum was established to promote interregional political dialogue by assisting in the development of a diplomatic track between states in the Gulf and Horn of Africa. It primarily focuses on littoral states in the Red Sea region. Despite being a non-littoral state, Ethiopia is the heart and hegemonic state in the Horn region, with almost all imports and exports passing through the Red Sea collider. Ethiopia is becoming more aggressive as a result of its exclusion from the Red Sea Forum.

As a result, Ethiopia has to be invited to join the forum in order to discuss common problems

and future prospects. In fact, the Red Sea forum will not bring shared prosperity or cure all ills but it will provide an avenue for this diverse set of actors to shape the emerging trans-regional order, maximizing opportunity and minimizing risk in what could otherwise become a dangerously chaotic arena or finger pointing.

On the Need to Economic Integration Among the Horn and Gulf states

Economic integration fosters the potential of current Gulf-led infrastructure developments by enhancing regional trade among Horn of Africa states. To capitalize on the economic potential of Gulf investments in critical infrastructure, governments in the Horn of Africa should work to create a favorable environment and alternatives that strengthen mutual comparative advantage. Supporting cross-border exchanges among Horn states may reduce inter-regional and external rivalries by fostering regional integration and cohesion while achieving individual-state and collective economic development.

Other super-power policies should also directly mitigate the negative effects of the Gulf's involvement in the Horn. Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), for example, are facilitating strategic engagement and political dialogue between governments spanning the Gulf and Horn of Africa. This could help to bridge the gap between Horn countries and balance rival Gulf States' foreign policy priorities.

Policy Discussions and Engagement Strategies

Policy discussions and engagement strategies aimed at dealing with Gulf influences in the Horn of Africa should be informed by an accurate assessment of the involved actors, goals and scope of Gulf activities in their context, in order to effectively mitigate any associated risks. Strengthening dialogue between Western and Gulf policymakers could allow actors to capitalize on their shared interest in the Horn of Africa's stability. This would necessitate Western

policy makers to develop shared realistic goals and expectations from such coordination which might benefit from increased bilateral interactions between Horn-based diplomatic staff.

As a result, the researcher suggests that efforts be made by each region to formulate Red Sea sub-focus policies that will be adopted by the two regions. These engagements require the employment of a comprehensive approach combining civil, military instruments, and inter-institutional coordination across regional desks.

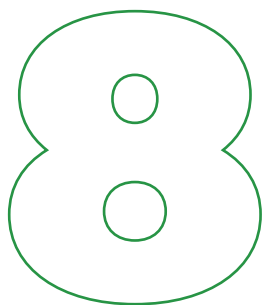
Furthermore, despite the existence of significant potential in some Horn of Africa countries such as Ethiopia, production and productivity levels of food and cash crop production have been quite low. Thus, regional and sub-Regional organizations like Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) should work hard to solve food and cash crop production and productivity problems, and to encourage processing industries to operate at full capacity. To that end, the following policy measures must be implemented to alleviate various problems faced by investors:

- The government must implement policies to encourage domestic and foreign producers and investors to invest in raw material production and manufacturing industries.
- Measures such as tax exemptions for key investment inputs and machinery, making investment land available at attractive lease prices or using other incentive provision mechanisms will attract interest of investors.

As critical investment promotion services improve, provision should be made for necessary infrastructure such as roads, electricity, water supply services.

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European Solidarity in Africa: What Influences on the AfCFTA?

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About the Author

Dr. Idah RAZAFINDRAKOTO is originally from Madagascar. She holds a PhD in Governance and Regional Integration from the Pan-African University of the African Union and the University of Yaounde II, Cameroon. She is a specialist in African international relations and international project management. She is also a researcher in social sciences (political science and cultural studies) and is particularly interested in themes of governance, African regional integration, the green economy, the blue economy, institutional development and youth.

Executive Summary

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is Africa's new major project to strengthen economic ties across the continent. Grouped together as a continental market, Africa offers a colossal space for intra-African economic trade. The advent of this project therefore brings renewed considerations to how Africa interacts with the international market especially in this era of globalization. This study therefore proposes to focus on the approach of Westerners, particularly Europe vis-à-vis AfCFTA. To do this, this research focuses on European solidarity. It is a geopolitical tact which is characterized by inclusiveness, humane principles and Western soft power. As a result, this research deals with the aftermath of the position of European solidarity on AfCFTA and especially what the new facts are.

Key Points

In international relations, European solidarity is based on a more humane and generous approach

There are many myths and paradoxes in African appreciation of European influences. As a result, the European solidarity approach influences trade in Africa

To develop, AfCFTA needs to be a mixed and synergistic market which could necessarily integrate non-African actors.

Introduction

In this contemporary era, the African continent is exposed to various foreign influences. Globalization has always favored the development of trade in Africa. Given its promising natural resources, there is international interest in accessing market share on the continent based on win-win principle. Thus, faced with the emergence of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), foreign approaches are being renewed, transformed and adapted. On one hand, the stakes are higher for example, accessibility to a broader market with continental specificity while on the other hand, the search for a less aggressive and more humane approach is necessary. Indeed, several researchers are already studying in depth, the place of Africa in the globalized world of commerce (AfDB, 2020; Ajayi, 2001; Gourdon et al 2022). A series of recommendations have already been proposed for the successful implementation of AfCFTA which emphasizes positioning the continent in an advantageous place.

In view of the above, this brief will consider the concept of "European solidarity" and the transformation of European geopolitical strategies with regard to AfCFTA. European solidarity refers to new forms of international cooperation, centered on institutional generosity and "human rights based" approach. As a result, this research is interested in the new approaches and arguments for European institutional programs (*which may also include volunteering, scholarships and grants in favor of young Africans and new targets such as journalists, entrepreneurs, content creators, youth-led organizations, young leaders, civil societies, minorities in the technological world (Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics - STEM) and artists*). Several projects are emerging: financial support, awards, donations, fellowships, sponsored training courses, international mobility trips, scholarships, fully funded capacity building programs, pitch competitions, sponsored entrepreneurship programs, incubation centers grants, humanitarian internships, etc. Faced with the multiplication of these European initiatives in favor of Africans, this brief will determine **how European solidarity influences the AfCFTA and**

how Europe may access the African free trade area. In short, by focusing on the European solidarity approach, this brief analyzes current phenomena and proposes recommendations and new perspectives in this context of international collaboration and globalization.

To carry out this study, the reflection is based on the theory of constructivism (Weber, 1949; Balzacq, 2016) which is used for the analysis of discourses (perceptions, speeches, public opinion and famous narratives). The methodology used is based on documentary research and in-person observations carried out in 10 African countries (Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Namibia, South Africa, Togo, Benin, Rwanda, Madagascar, Tanzania) and 3 European countries (Italy, France and Belgium) between 2016 and 2023.

Attempt to Define "European solidarity"

Solidarity is now considered as the fundamental principles of Europe. The COVID-19 crisis provided good conditions for European solidarity to emerge. Even the European Union's funding mechanism can be considered as solidarity-based (Otto, 2022). This concept of solidarity is closely linked to cohesion and brotherhood in the conduct of international relations in Europe and internationally. As a result, European solidarity could be defined as a "counterfactual reciprocity" which integrates both the idea of "charity" (considered a moral quality) and "insurance". This is part of Europe's new approach and is based on various foundations such as cooperation, world governance, mutual assistance from European Union member states and responsibility (Fabry, 2010). Furthermore, it is a changing concept because it highlights a "social Europe" which is more centered on citizens (Fabry, 2010).

However, although European solidarity is an approach to diplomacy, it remains debated and complex to define given its various connotations. As an example: the concept of 'EU solidarity' is often used by European leaders in times of crisis to shore up calls for cooperation and justify joint decision-making (Pornschnegler, 2021). It is often seen as a buzzword. As a

result, European solidarity does not yet have a solid conceptual basis. Several attempts at definitions remain recommended (Fabry, 2010), as the concept of European solidarity remains very vague and broad. It is however important to attempt to define it, and within the framework of our analysis, we will focus on the notions of communitarianism, cohesion, spirit of unity, generosity, philanthropy, diplomacy and altruistic aid. For the purpose of our study, European solidarity refers to the legacy of the Western bloc which has softened and adapted to sympathize with African realities. This compassion results from historical narratives that accused former colonialists of abusing and plundering the continent. These accusatory narratives exist on a number of levels including: [1] on the political level through the speeches of La Baule, which aroused criticism of democratic mechanisms and diplomatic interference; [2] on the economic level via the disadvantageous approaches of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) or even the discontent and hostilities to Africans with regard to international financial institutions and establishments; [3] on the level of identity via nostalgic reproaches regarding the death of Sankara and Gaddafi "*assassinated by the whites*", etc. Historically, there has been an underpinning of hostile mentalities toward the West among African generations. We can cite the global classifications (*Human Development Index, etc.*), which gives rise to a hidden feeling of humiliation of Africa or the migration crises which negatively exposes Africans in the news. We can therefore admit that this mega-relational context between Europe and Africa fuels inequity and unhappiness for Africans who remain disadvantaged.

Europe has relied on data showing Africa's weak socio-economic status in the development of its initiatives on the continent. These initiatives, having names such as "*international cooperation for development*" or even "*international initiatives*" are usually in the form of donations (legacy, aid and grants), investments out of interest or even justified projects. They are broadly categorized. Using a new approach founded on human rights, governance and inclusion through the collective gaze and communitarian discourses, European solidarity manages to repel hostile opinions and gain credibility and sympathy.

Thus, as part of our analysis, we will try to define European solidarity as the set of initiatives and mechanisms undertaken by the institutions of European countries while forming a bloc or not. It does not advocate capitalist or economic conquest but the objectives are to support the development of Africa and the consolidation of relations between the two continents. Our analysis will therefore address the realities of public establishments, international organizations, university structures, civil society and entrepreneurial movements. However, our analysis excludes data and facts on private sector, financial markets and large infrastructural services (multinationals, large operators, large lobby groups, etc.).

And Regarding the AfCFTA...

The history of African regional integration has always been based on the principle of Pan-Africanism. This principle derived the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) which transformed into the African Union (AU) in 1992. When Africa referred to the trajectory of European integration and it understood that it really wanted to walk together across a bloc, it launched the idea of establishing a strong institution called the "African Economic Community" and the first step was to set up a zone of African Continental Free Trade (AfCFTA) (OAU, 1991). Africa is well aware that this great institutional machine could resolve its main economic challenges and consolidate its transnational development within the continent (UA & al., 2020; Molanga, 2022; Jones & al, 2019 & UA, 2019). However, it must be remembered that this free trade zone remains discreetly controversial and doubted by scientists (Dhafer & al., 2015) and also by internal members of the African Union (where there had been delays in ratification).

But the free trade zone is not only a colossal economic advantage for Africans but also for exogenous actors such as Europe and China, which view the customs relief and free access to the continental market in a positive light. The opening of regional markets has also become very common in the contemporary era as the industrial and technological revolution has brought the countries of the world closer

together for trade. Africa is well aware of its strategic position in the international trade system. Therefore, we certainly can infer that the establishment of AfCFTA in 2022 forms an attractive prospective trading partner for Europe. Europe is an entity which informs itself, is interested in phenomena and anticipates them. It is entirely normal that it deploys approaches to better accommodate new facts. As a result, in this context, we will therefore try to better understand how European solidarity is configured and how African and European relations manifest themselves from cause to effect and how this has repercussions on (or access to) AfCFTA.

The Major Trends in European Solidarity and Their Repercussions in Africa

Without limiting ourselves to the legacies of classic postcolonial debates, European presence in Africa is undeniable and this is demonstrated via its established institutions (diplomatic, representative, economic, etc.). In addition, European consumables and cultural products are also popular across the continent (brands, cultures, various artistic products, etc.). European solidarity consolidates this trend of consumption of Western products by promoting European ideals as a global reference (ideals which have already been validated on a global level, such as the ideals on climate change, gender, the blue economy, the rights of minorities, etc.).

However, as this influence spreads across African societies, it could be transformed and distorted. Among the direct but controversial influences is the "unlimited discourse of gratuity." To better illustrate this: European solidarity is established in Africa, mobilizes for Africa and offers financing (and sometimes accompanied by technical support). A very large number of initiatives are launched and led by Europeans in favor of social projects in Africa (Songwe, 2021). European political will also boosts these dynamics (Razafindrakoto, 2022).

This funding system is always perceived by Africans as "free" and charitable aid. Obviously,

even if the information is transparent and accessible on European networks & information channels, it is not the very common practice of European institutions to automatically provide information on the origin of funds. Since the sources are not mechanically mentioned by donors and Africans do not have the reflex to question (for lack of curiosity or documentation), a myth is automatically established that makes people think that these unlimited funds are free. This seeming disconnection with reality can therefore distort the views of African actors because they will have integrated the culture of the discourse of poverty and begging without being interested in how financial flows and development funds (which they benefit) work.

To verify this point, we asked several actors from African civil society, academics, research and other African elites: *"To carry out your actions, you necessarily depend on funding from foreign donors, but tell me, do you know where these funds that we grant you come from?"*. Very few managed to respond by stating that it came from percentages of taxes, donations from philanthropists or state contributions. Some respondents stated that it was by moral and historical obligation or by ambition to maintain international leadership. But the vast majority have faltered and limited themselves to the complacency of just chasing exogenous funding and getting it. In summary, we can therefore understand that European solidarity creates great institutional enthusiasm in Africa that is perceived as a reservoir of opportunities, nevertheless, via the myth of free access (inexhaustible and endless funds), the function of financing remains little known, neglected and ignored by Africans. A blur is therefore maintained. Shocks of perceptions, negative and tendentious interpretations can therefore arise and be fueled by a multiplier effect. Let's take the following table as an example.

Table 1: Example of shock of perceptions between Europeans and Africans fueled by the “myth of gratuity”

Perceptions of Europeans		SHOCK OF PERCEPTIONS	Perceptions of Africans	
Popular myths	Realities		Popular myths	Realities
"The funds come from the over-taxation of citizens by the State"	"The funds are re-injected to finance development projects in Africa"		"The funds are means of domination of Africa by Europeans because they have interests there"	"The funds would help finance development projects in Africa"
				

Source: Author, 2023.

If Africans do not make the effort to understand the bases of international cooperation as well as Western interpretations of their relationship, they will therefore continue to rely on tendentious and subjective (even emotional) narratives. They are therefore reduced to the status of implementers without vision, short-termist and "blind". The risk would be that they obtain fundings to be spent within a specific time frame, and that this does not generate regional economic added values which could benefit Africans and consequently benefit AfCFTA. Such benefits include creating transnational companies to increasingly disseminate knowledge and ideas for sub-regional projects.

If the discourse of accusation, reproaches, victimization and begging for free things still remains, it is because we can say that Africans have always worked with Europeans without really knowing Europeans on the aspects that go beyond the colonial history and administrative procedures that separate them. And yet, there are many positive things that Africa can learn from European solidarity and intercontinental collaborations: rigor, tact, standards, principles, opportunities, art of negotiation, equality, competitiveness, ethics, innovation, value of time, etc.

In short, through the deficient reading of the concept of gratuity by Africans, they themselves create an obstacle to identifying their real needs in the implementation of AfCFTA. Therefore, the benefits they obtain through

European solidarity may not be sufficiently invested in the need to develop AfCFTA and be the potential actors as aspired by pan-African policies (AU, 2023). We must remember that European solidarity offers financial and technical possibilities (in addition to the cultural products already in place). It is therefore up to Africa to become more aware and exploit its own potential to innovate and create more transnational connections.

The African Paradox with Regard to European Solidarity

It is important to note that Africa is under several pressures which can destabilize it. Even if the idea of emancipating oneself from the discourse of gratuity is revealing and attractive, African actors remain very paradoxical. Let us consider two rather delicate paradoxes generated by the presence of European solidarity in the case of relations between French-speaking Africa and France: [1] First, the spate of coups d'état in French-speaking African countries has revealed publicly in the media, the anti-French/ European tendencies in these countries. This is therefore the reason France, which is an important European nation is losing influence in the region. [2] Second, the African migration crisis in Europe has also intensified the feeling of discontent among Africans. But this situation can be tendentious and reciprocal. We could

base ourselves on the following example: *"When French-speaking Africans see too many surplus French people getting rich in Africa, they feel invaded" and this feeling of invasion is equal to the fact that "When the French see too much surplus of French-speaking Africans who benefit from the French system in France, they feel invaded."* However, this situation is not valid in all contexts. For example, French-speaking Africans are less hostile and prejudiced towards Scandinavians, Spanish and Germans, although contrasts exist.

Despite these two notable elements, the emotional preference of Africans vis-à-vis Westerners remains unchanged. As long as Europe is the reference of excellence for the African imagination, this Western preference will remain settled. In essence, although the paradoxes exist, this African preferences for Western influence will continue to consolidate and bring about sustainability of exchanges in terms of cooperation for development and commercial relations. As a result, international solidarity remains a key foundation that guarantees access to AfCFTA.

When European Solidarity is Interested in African Regional Integration

We understand that European solidarity involves very diplomatic discursive and argumentative work. To be as inclusive as possible, it tries to avoid offensive terms like "poor countries" and prefers the use of concepts such as "low-income countries" or "developing countries". This kind of discursive work is very relevant because it stabilizes diplomatic relations characterized by power inequalities. Moreover, the concepts of parity and balance have made Europeans aware of the need to recognize diversity and consider minorities and the most disadvantaged.

Apart from its discursive approach, Europe also invests in themes. Champion of international relations, it closely follows the evolution of African regional integration which is evolving at the same time in the era of globalization. On the other hand, as part of its financial contributions, if it does not propose, it is solicited. Europe

co-develops and finances international projects that benefit regional integration. This seems quite paradoxical because the basis of Pan-Africanism in history was to create a purely African coalition to protect Africa from exogenous domination. But as we observed previously, Western preponderance cannot be ruled out.

Examples of the flagship projects that focus on regional integration and therefore the AfCFTA, include the co-financing of the Pan-African University of the African Union by Germany. Several African projects are in fact supported by European solidarity, notably the continental innovation competitions by Germany, the leadership programs for young Africans on the theme of transnational governance by Italy and the European Union. A notable fact is that the German agency also has a department whose mission is to support the regional relations of African sub-regional communities which is the case for the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) in Botswana. There are indeed numerous European initiatives. Through this trend, it is clear that regional integration is a process undertaken by endogenous as well as exogenous actors.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendation

This brief has attempted to address important issues that revolve around international solidarity. The list of influences and repercussions is not exhaustive and can be expanded constantly. For our part, we wanted to look at the direct influences visible but less mentioned in the literature. This is why we attempted to define European solidarity within the framework of our thinking. It remains encompassing but can be functional to designate Europe's new geopolitical approach towards Africa. In summary, we have therefore observed that European solidarity generates the development of a movement of emotional preferences and attachment by interest of Africans towards the European country. This is mobilized by intercultural shocks, elements of dependencies and new hybrid and inclusive programs. The preference of the European partnership is therefore maintained.

During our analysis, we found out that Africans lack the true understanding of the "gratuity concept" of the opportunities emanating from European solidarity, which therefore reduces or deviates from the focus that could have benefited AfCFTA. In parallel, the emotional base and Western preferences of Africans offer an undeniable guarantee to European products (material or not), particularly for their access to markets and opportunities offered by the AfCFTA. However, we also demonstrated that although this duality and paradox exist, European solidarity still deploys investments to accelerate African regional integration.

Therefore, at the end of this analysis, it is important to note that AfCFTA cannot be an endogenous and uniquely African construction. The Western presence in local markets that is already in place (*banking, insurance, telecommunications, research institutions, etc.*) reveals that the road to the free trade zone is complex. It indeed integrates multi-actors and very large stakeholders (internal and international).

It is therefore time to move beyond hateful and self-victimizing speeches and to look at more win-win approaches which consider scenarios that integrate more African actors into the logic of the financial and technical contributions provided by the international solidarity. The step forward is therefore for Africans to base themselves on the real needs (Sidiropoulos, 2022) of the intra-African market. If Africa needs to absorb unemployed young people, Africans should propose coherent projects for this, for example: the establishment of seed grants for the creation of local or even transnational industrial businesses which could benefit the dynamism of AfCFTA. If Africa needs more mobility of goods and services, they must propose advocacy or a popular petition for legislative facilitations that reduce customs costs. But these initiatives should be led and proposed by Africans themselves, hence the abandonment of followership and complacency. It would therefore be important that the funds injected into social projects (raised and granted by European solidarity) aim a little more at local economic production.

Furthermore, it is irrelevant to suggest that AfCFTA is only in the business of economic

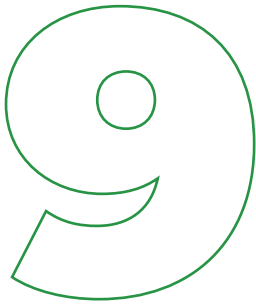
operators and business structures because in reality, it can integrate a very large network of actors (students, academics, traders, lawyers, researchers, farmers, etc.). It can in fact, streamline the commercial exchanges of African companies or those present in Africa on a continental level. It can also constitute a force in the movement of people to fluctuate the transfer of knowledge and the various possible transnational collaborations. Africans must therefore promote this transversal aspect among countries. A discursive effort and promotions of AfCFTA at the same level as the SDGs or Agenda 63 is therefore important so that African populations feel concerned and engaged in the process.

In sum, Africa will therefore have to better familiarize herself with the real challenges of globalization (Okonjo-Iweala & Sangafowa Coulibaly, 2019) and adapt herself. Consequently, the policy recommendations are summarized as follows:

- When African nationals benefit from European solidarity or experience mobility in Europe, it would be important not just to visit Europe but to learn to understand Europe and how Europe works. The discourses that will result from this experience could change the mentalities that are stagnant in Africa and improve the narratives. Considering the contributions of European solidarity in Africa, it is suggested that Africans detach themselves from the simplistic and reductive reading of gratuity and base themselves on the real needs and develop possible links with the progress of AfCFTA. .
- Be favorable to the idea of the advent of a mixed AfCFTA, mosaic and in synergy with exogenous actors and where the main beneficiary entities remain African companies, and where the major interest remains the growth of African economies (and their competitiveness). It is therefore a question of moving forward with an Afro-centric view of the AfCFTA while remaining favorable to the prospects of exogenous collaborations.
- African countries should place AfCFTA in the same consideration as other major political visions in order to mobilize the enthusiasm of African populations.

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Addressing Africa's Cyber Security Concerns Through Regional Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation

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Executive Summary

In light of Africa's rapid advancement in technology, increased dependence on cyber space and the resultant cyber threats, there is a clear need to address cyber security challenges in the continent. To be effective, this should extend beyond traditional intergovernmental approaches. In recent years, a new form of multi-stakeholders' cooperation has gained wide acceptance as an optimal way to address key cyber security concerns. This new form of cooperation ensures stakeholders' inclusion in cyber governance processes. Despite its merits, the number of cybersecurity-related initiatives conducted in collaboration with non-state actors in Africa remains low. Currently, means of cooperation to respond to cyber threats and create a culture of cyber security in Africa are international, intergovernmental, regional, private and public partnerships (PPPs). While such PPPs can be leveraged as a form of multi-stakeholders' cooperation, there is not yet an institutional framework to guide how governments and private entities should cooperate multilaterally. To develop regional multi-stakeholders' cooperation, the African Union should develop a framework which both defines the key areas of cooperation and identifies the key stakeholders.

Key Points

Despite growing recognition of the need for multi-stakeholder cooperation, participation by African multi-stakeholders in global cyber security-related deliberations remains weak.

Significant opportunities exist for regional multistakeholder cooperation in Africa that are currently not being capitalized on within the continent.

There is no clear framework for regional multi-stakeholder cooperation in Africa, which may limit how governments can engage with various stakeholders in shaping cyber-related policies at the regional level.

Introduction

Internet connectivity in Africa has increased rapidly over the past decade. Recent statistics show that Africa has more than 500 million internet users. Africa is positioning herself in (numerical terms) ahead of other regions like North America, South America and the Middle East (Interpol, 2021:8). From being unconnected almost twenty years ago, the continent is now home to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) start-ups and tech hubs and has also embraced ICTs across a range of key sectors like banking, education and telecommunications. While increased internet connectivity has brought fundamental changes to the society with new opportunities for development in the region, it has also opened up the continent to the downsides of digitalization. In 2020, Africa was ranked as one of the regions with the largest number of countries with high exposure to cyber-attacks, a concept that measures both the level of risk and the consequences once a risk is actualized (Cybersecurity Exposure Index (CEI), 2020).

Despite these concerns, Africa as a region ranks lowest in terms of effective cyber security measures and legislation to address these threats. According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), only nine African countries – Egypt, Tanzania, Nigeria, Ghana, Tunisia, Morocco, Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa – are ranked in the top 60 in the global cyber security index score (ITU, 2021). The biggest challenge in Africa is that many countries are leapfrogging into using relatively advanced technology with poor infrastructure and inadequate cyber security and cyber governance systems. In this regard, some of the key cyber-security challenges that affect most African countries are the lack of adequate legal, technical, organizational, capacity development and cooperation measures (ITU Global Cyber Security Index, 2020).

Given these challenges, the need to address cyber security in the continent is pressing. But while the need may be clear, regulating the 'new' cyber domain remains a challenge. This is because it is a complex and dynamic space, driven mainly by networked systems that traverse several states, and decisions

regarding it are taken by multiple actors: governments, businesses and individuals. For many years, debates primarily focused on states as the primary regulators and lawmakers of this domain. However, recent discussions are shifting in favour of looking at the role that other key stakeholders can play, given that ICTs are largely owned and managed by the private sector and other actors.

The need to include non-governmental stakeholders in cyber governance processes has gained widespread attention and recognition over the years. Even so, there are debates between proponents of the multistakeholder approach (such as the United States) and supporters of a multilateral approach such as Russia and China, who advocate for state sovereignty in cyber space (Stifel, 2017). Supporters of a multilateral approach traditionally looked at multistakeholderism with scepticism especially because the US, an avid supporter of multistakeholderism maintained authority over the Internet through the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) until 2016 when she gave up her authority.

African governments on the other hand, have not always been perceived to favour multistakeholderism. Perhaps, this is because, at the global level, most African countries supported a UN resolution to develop an international cybercrime treaty sponsored by China and Russia in 2019. In addition, African governments are said to participate more in international multilateral processes than in international multistakeholder processes (Calandro, 2017). The problem here is that the global multilateral processes are more attuned to mature democracies and may fail to reflect the realities and challenges of African countries.

To address the African regional priorities, regional multistakeholder cooperation — between the African Union (AU) Member States and key actors in cyber security within the region — provides a unique opportunity to connect global policy commitments to African regional realities. In this context, this paper explores the extent to which African countries cooperate with multi-stakeholders at a regional level, highlighting examples of such cooperation

at the international level, describing the participation of African governments in global multi-stakeholder initiatives, and discussing the challenges of implementing multi-stakeholder cooperation within Africa. It makes a case for regional multi-stakeholder collaboration within the continent in the hope that this will stimulate relevant policy debates across the continent.

The Rationale for a Multi-Stakeholder Approach to Cyber Governance

In 2005, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) adopted a multi-stakeholder approach as the global model for cyber governance. The Summit noted that the management of the internet encompasses both technical and public policy issues and should involve all stakeholders. Thus, new forms of cooperation, partnership and solidarity between governments and other stakeholders are essential in creating an inclusive information society (ITU, 2005).

Broadly speaking, a multi-stakeholder initiative is a bottom-up approach that involves governments, businesses, civil society, technical experts, and other stakeholders participating in deliberating and making policy decisions. The argument is that governments cannot effectively regulate cyber space on their own but should cooperate with relevant stakeholders in order to benefit from the knowledge, expertise and competencies of the various stakeholders. Thus, in view of the dynamic nature of cyber space and those involved in its development, operation and management, a multi-stakeholder approach is widely accepted. This is especially the case in fields where 'cross border or international cooperation' is required such as internet governance (Research ICT Africa, 2018). Naturally, a multi-stakeholder approach does not seek to replace states as the primary regulators; it seeks only an inclusive approach that ensures the effective participation of other key stakeholders as well.

In this light, multi-stakeholder cooperation provides two key practical benefits. First, it considers diverse perspectives and expertise,

thereby 'achieving well-informed and evidence-based policy outcomes' (Tagarev & Sharkov, 2016). Second, all stakeholders have an equal opportunity to be heard when they participate in the process. An analysis of how multi-stakeholder cooperation occurs at the global and regional levels permits further exploration of the approach.

Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation in Global Cyber Governance Organizations

Several international organizations address aspects of cyber security and governance in various ways. However, given the breadth of this paper, only three organizations are highlighted: the United Nations, the ITU and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers.

United Nations

Although a multi-stakeholder approach to cyber governance is important, it was only in the early 2000s that the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) recognized the role of non-state actors in safeguarding cyber space (Liaropoulos, 2016; p 20). Specifically, in 2003, the UN General Assembly recognized the roles of 'government, business, other organizations and individual owners and users of information technologies' in enhancing cyber security (UNGA, 2003; Preamble). In practice however, deliberations on creating global cyber norms have involved mainly governments.

In 2004, the UN General Assembly established the Group of Governmental Experts (UNGGE) to study 'existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security and possible cooperative measures to address them' (UNGA, 2003; para 4). The Group membership was limited. It comprised twenty-five members of governmental experts, three of whom were African - Kenya, Mauritius, and South Africa. The Group came up with voluntary non-binding norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace in the context of international security. Non-governmental participants were not included in the deliberations and development of the norms.

In 2018, the UN General Assembly established the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) whose mandate was almost similar to the UNGGE. However, unlike the UNGGE whose participation was limited, the OEWG is open to all UN Member States and includes some degree of multi-stakeholder participation. Recently, the OEWG came up with modalities of multi-stakeholder participation in the OEWG, in which Member States of the OEWG commit to engage with stakeholders in a 'systematic, sustained and substantive manner.' Relevant Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) status can participate in the work of the OEWG and other interested NGOs can participate on a non-objection basis as observers (OEWG, 2022). However, negotiations and decision-making at the OEWG remain the prerogative of Member States. The following year in 2019, the UN General Assembly established an open-ended ad hoc intergovernmental committee of experts to develop an international treaty on 'countering the use of ICTs for criminal purposes.' Similar to the UNGGE and OEWG, non-governmental entities are not involved in negotiations and decision-making.

International Telecommunication Union

The ITU is a specialized agency of the UN. It was originally founded in 1865 to facilitate international connectivity in communication networks, develop technical standards for seamless interconnectivity and improve global access to ICTs. Currently, it comprises all 193 UN Member States. However, at the heart of its activities to shape ICT policies and regulatory environment is a multi-stakeholder approach. The ITU works in close collaboration with academic institutions, regional and international organizations, public and private sectors and civil society to discuss the key challenges in the ICT sector and the solutions required. African governments are relatively active in terms of participating in multilateral processes such as the ITU but what is often lacking is 'national multistakeholder engagement at the level of formulating positions or reporting back on the outcomes' (Stantec, 2022: 82).

Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

Established in 1998 as a nonprofit public-benefit corporation with numerous global participants, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is in charge of allocating, coordinating and developing policy on Domain Name System (DNS) and Internet Protocol (IP) addresses across the world. ICANN stands out as a 'truly global multi-stakeholder community' (Yan, 2019: 123). Its policies are developed through a 'bottom-up, consensus-based multistakeholder process' involving numerous stakeholders including businesses, governments, internet users and civil society. Its policy recommendations are developed by the ICANN Community through its Supporting Organizations (SOs) and influenced by Advisory Committees (ACs) in which African stakeholders participate (ICANN).

Governments and intergovernmental organizations participate in ICANN at an advisory level through the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC). The GAC advises ICANN on public policy issues, including where the Corporation's activities or policies interact with national laws or international agreements. While African countries participate in the GAC, research in 2013 showed that only a few countries were able to meaningfully participate in the policy-making process and some African leaders felt that 'they were not fully included in the decision-making process' (Enrico et al, 2013). Besides, although African stakeholders participate in ICANN, it is suggested that their participation should be strengthened (Stantec, 2022: 82).

Regional Cyber Security Initiatives in Africa and Multi-Stakeholder Cooperation

In its 'Africa Agenda 2063', the African Union envisions the establishment of a Pan African E-Network that involves a wide range of stakeholders putting in place policies and strategies that will lead to transformative cyber

security and other areas related to e-service (African Union, 2015: 138). However, today, the heart of Africa's cybersecurity-related framework is the African Union Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection. The Convention establishes a legal framework for cyber security and personal data protection. While it does not expressly provide for multi-stakeholder cooperation, it lists PPPs as a means of cooperation to respond to cyber threats and create a culture of cyber security.

Article 28(4) of the Convention requires its states' parties to use existing channels of cooperation (international, intergovernmental, regional or private and public partnerships) to respond to cyber threats, improve cyber security and stimulate dialogue between stakeholders. In addition, Article 26 requires states parties to promote a 'culture of cyber security among all stakeholders' including developing a 'public-private partnership as a model to engage industry, the civil society and academia in the promotion and enhancement of a culture of cyber security.' Indeed, PPPs can bridge gaps that exist in formal international, intergovernmental, and regional cooperation engagements which are mostly government-led. They can close institutional, participation, implementation, infrastructure, and financing gaps. However, the language of the Convention does not necessarily require the PPPs to be multistakeholder.

Nonetheless, PPPs can help governments leverage the expertise of the private sector by taking various forms. The European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) identifies four types of PPPs: Institutional PPPs under a legislative act on protecting critical infrastructure; Goal-oriented PPPs established to create a cybersecurity culture; Service-outsourcing PPPs that outsource cybersecurity services; and Hybrid PPPs which combine service outsourcing and institutional PPPs (ENISA, 2017:20). While such frameworks can easily be replicated by African states at a national level, more clarity is needed on how to operationalize them at the regional level. Unfortunately, the Malabo Convention does not create a clear framework on how PPPs cooperate. Besides, unlike established practice at the African Union, where NGOs must

undergo a rigorous screening process to get consultative status, there is no framework that regulates the AU's engagement with the private sector.

Nevertheless, in practice, the AU has developed partnerships with the private sector and other stakeholders through standard-setting. To take an example, in 2017, the African Union Commission and the Internet Society jointly developed the Internet Infrastructure Security Guidelines for Africa. The Guidelines draw attention to the significance of a 'multistakeholder model and a collaborative security approach' in protecting cyber infrastructure' and emphasize that such an approach at regional and national levels can help African countries mitigate cyber risks. The guidelines recommend various steps that stakeholders can take to mitigate these risks considering the unique features of the African cyber security environment. Importantly, the Guidelines recommend the establishment of an Africa-Wide Cyber Security Collaboration and Coordination Committee (ACS3C) as a multistakeholder group to advise the African Union Commission and policymakers on cyber strategies across the region. In January 2018, the African Union Executive Council endorsed a decision to create the Committee which is now known as the African Union Cyber Security Expert Group.

At the sub-regional policy level, Regional Economic Communities have developed policies and model laws on cyber security and cybercrime. However, most of the provisions are punitive. This means that cooperation, even with various stakeholders, is defined in terms of judicial cooperation and cooperation with law enforcement. Even so, some RECs still recognize the importance of multistakeholderism. For instance, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS, 2019) encourages a multistakeholder approach to cyber governance in the region. In practice, at a national level, Ghana is a leading example of where a country has adopted a 'citizen-centric, multistakeholder approach' with a three-tier cyber governance structure with key civilian, security sector and non-governmental stakeholders (Adu-Amanfoh and Allen, 2023). However, much effort remains to replicate such approaches at the African regional level.

From Recognition to Action: Developing Africa Union Guidelines

Despite the merits of a multistakeholder approach to cyber governance, there are no guidelines on multistakeholder approaches and how to operationalize them at a regional level. To do so, it is important to first look at African cyber security needs and realities and define the areas of cooperation in relation to the key cyber security challenges Africa faces: the lack of adequate legal, technical, organizational, capacity development and cooperation measures. Second, it is critical to identify the key stakeholders involved in cyber security across the region. Third is the need to define key common objectives between AU member states and key stakeholders. Fourth a framework for cooperation, which defines the modalities of cooperation with multi-stakeholders needs to be elaborated.

It must be emphasized, however, that several challenges can affect the successful implementation of regional multi-stakeholder cooperation. These include: (1) dominant state-centric approaches on cyber security (2) state support for multilateral processes (3) the presence of multiple stakeholders in Africa and power imbalances between states; (4) different national priorities; and (5) the absence of coordination framework. These challenges notwithstanding, the importance of 'multistakeholderism' cannot be overemphasized.

Conclusion

There is a clear trend toward multilateralism in cyber governance, which includes all stakeholders in decision and policymaking. But much work remains to be done in order to develop a clear cooperation strategy at a regional level. However, there are reasons for optimism in Africa. The example of the Internet Infrastructure Security Guidelines for Africa offers lessons on how multi-stakeholder cooperation can work to develop guidelines at a regional level. Such initiatives can be replicated to make cyber security governance

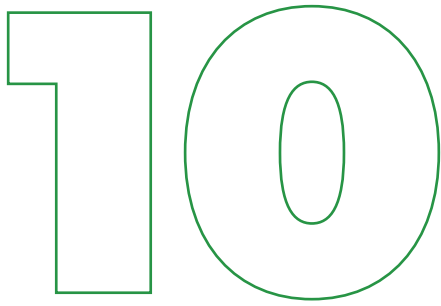
more inclusive. Moreover, the prospect of multi-stakeholder cooperation is slowly gaining traction in AU policy documents in ICT that call for such cooperation. What remains is a clear framework of such collaboration at a regional level as well as its implementation with regards to cyber security.

Recommendations

Moving forward, the African Union has an opportunity to support the development of regional multi-stakeholder cooperation and bring it into action in several ways. First, it should provide a forum for dialogue between AU member states, the AU Commission, and multi-stakeholders by organizing an annual stakeholder conference to review the progress of cyber security maturing at the regional level and submitting the outcome of these deliberations in an annual report. Second, it should develop a widely accessible regional online repository for monitoring cyber-security-related policies and projects within the continent, and reviewing the progress made by African states in addressing some of the continents' cyber security concerns. Stakeholders who are unable to participate in regional events can easily engage through the online platform. Third, to further ensure the participation of a wide array of stakeholders, the African Union should create issue-specific working groups that look at various aspects of cyber security to allow input from experts, who have competence in various fields. Finally, it should establish a regional coordinating body for coordination and information sharing among stakeholders. This would be a positive step forward.

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Resolving Climate-Induced Environmental Conflicts in West Africa: Is AI the Silver Bullet?

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About the Author

Adetayo Adetuyi is a senior consultant at Brooks and Knights Legal Consultants. Adetayo is passionate about Africa's energy and trade policy matters. He has written extensively on the impact of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) on African markets as well as the democratisation process in the Western region of Africa. He is an avid author and has published in acclaimed legal and business publications and websites. He holds an LL.M in Energy Law from the University of Ibadan and another LL.M in International and Comparative Law from the University of Eastern Finland, where he majored in Environmental and Climate Change Law.

Executive Summary

Climate change, a global phenomenon with local impact, is caused by the release of large amounts of greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which has caused global temperatures to reach unprecedented heights. Research has found that climate change plays a significant role in exacerbating environmental issues. The western region of Africa is a region that is not only vulnerable to the impacts of global warming and climate change but also to climate-induced environmental conflicts. Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo and Nigeria are countries in West Africa that experience violence and conflicts with climate change underpinnings. In West Africa, the impact of climate change is experienced locally through floods, droughts, storms and the spread of tropical diseases, which further impacts the cities' basic services, infrastructure, housing, human livelihoods and health. As more people experience a lack of basic services, tensions rise, ultimately culminating in conflict.

The challenge of climate-induced environmental conflicts in West Africa begs for urgent recourse to innovative tools beyond traditional approaches, institutions and mechanisms. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has, in recent years, developed the increased capacity to learn to predict all environmental issues before they arise, as well as proffer solutions to these challenges when they eventually occur. This article assesses the need for West African heads of government and policymakers to adopt AI to resolve climate-induced environmental conflicts in West Africa, considering, first, as a result of the steady rise in the earth's temperature, already existing environmental conditions would only get worse, second, the absence of the global coordinated effort to reduce carbon emissions means that the earth will continue to warm if nothing is urgently done. Third, AI continues to improve in resolving environmental issues.

Key Points

West African countries are amongst the most vulnerable countries to climate change impact.

West Africa currently experiences several environmental conflicts exacerbated by climate change.

Land use conflicts, water-based conflicts and food insecurity are three manifestations of climate-induced environmental conflicts.

AI can be deployed as a preventative tool to resolve climate-induced environmental conflicts in West Africa. AI can predict weather patterns, monitor environmental changes, optimise agriculture, enhance disaster response and support vulnerable communities.

The benefits of AI in resolving climate-induced environmental conflicts far outweigh its drawbacks. Still, its deployment faces enormous challenges due to the financial capacity of many West African countries.

Introduction

Over the years, climate change has become one of the biggest environmental challenges. Largely anthropogenic, it has become a subject of intense debate and criticism in international fora. Pundits believe the continual increase in greenhouse gases without respite would increase global temperatures. Increased global temperatures could result in rising sea levels, ecosystem disruption, and extreme weather events such as droughts, flooding, hurricanes and cyclones. Climate change impacts countries all over the world, as well as the oceans.

Nonetheless, responses to this environmental emergency differ from one country to another. This may be attributed to these countries' coping mechanisms, which can also be a function of that country's financial capacity or national wealth. In other words, when dealing with climate change's environmental impacts, wealthy countries have better coping power than poor countries. It is, therefore, now a fact that poor countries are more vulnerable to climate events than rich countries. There are sixteen countries in West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde (Cape Verde), Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. These countries are ranked as either lower-income or lower-middle-income countries by the World Bank, indicating the state of their national incomes compared to other countries.

The impact of climate change hard hits West African countries. Even though they have contributed the least to global warming, they must deal with the impact. The impact is worsened by the fact that agriculture, the continent's most significant economic sector and engages more than 60% of the population, is the hardest hit by the impact of climate change. Water, land and food are three resources in West Africa acutely affected by climate change. In Nigeria, research has found a link between global rising temperatures and the mean annual rainfall reduction. Droughts and flooding are currently common occurrences and have been predicted to happen more frequently in West Africa. These often impact the socio-economy of these countries as people's livelihoods are

severely affected, resulting in loss of jobs and livelihood, health challenges, and ultimately, political instability. The abundance of these factors could inevitably lead to environmental conflict. Resolving these challenges thus begs a recourse to a non-traditional method – AI.

Artificial Intelligence (AI), as the name implies, is human-level intelligence attributable to machine-based systems for learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception and language understanding. AI is consistently being developed to be more accurate in solving environmental problems. At its current level, AI, through machine learning, can learn to predict all environmental issues before they arise and proffer solutions to these challenges when they eventually occur. This article aims to assess the different forms of climate-induced environmental conflicts and how AI can be used to resolve these challenges. For the benefit of West African heads of government and policymakers, it highlights the merits and demerits of deploying AI within the West African landscape in resolving climate-induced environmental conflicts.

Climate Change and Environmental Conflict in West Africa

West Africa has a tumultuous history that spans decades or even centuries, with many unresolved issues. With the increasing impact of climate change on the African sub-region, the question that begs the answer is whether Africa now faces a new type of conflict fuelled by climate change – environmental conflict. Environmental conflict is a conflict that is "caused by the environmental scarcity of a resource." The scarcity of natural resources often results in the struggle for scarce resources amongst and among the population. Combined with climate-induced desertification, the vulnerability of West African countries' populations to climate change's impact deepens, and conflict arises.

Climate-induced Water-related Conflicts

Water is a resource that is essential for human existence. Despite its importance, water is a finite resource. This is so not because the earth does not have abundant water but because

about 97.5% of the earth's water resources comprise saline water, and the remaining 2.5% is freshwater. Only about 1% of this freshwater is accessible for direct human use. Groundwater, which accounts for 99% of the earth's freshwater stock, is the world's most accessed freshwater reservoir and accounts for half of all drinking water worldwide, 40% of irrigation water, and a third of industry. The world's increasing population cum demand for freshwater for industrialisation and agriculture continues to stretch the earth's freshwater beyond its carrying capacity. Different regions of the world have varying levels of freshwater storage. West Africa has been described as a sub-region vulnerable to water challenges largely because of the variation in its rainfalls. Combined with the potential impact of climate change and a growing population, which will result in increased extraction of the limited freshwater and groundwater resources to meet the increased demands, they form a recipe for conflict in a sub-region that already suffers from insecurity challenges.

The rise of social tensions in many dryland countries of Sub-Saharan Africa in recent decades has also led scholars to suspect a likely causal relation with environmental changes. Several studies have highlighted a possible relationship between the increase in global temperature, water scarcity and conflicts within West Africa. For instance, freshwater scarcity has increased the prevalence of conflicts in the Northern part of Nigeria between farmers and pastoralists, with the competition for scarce water resources pitching one group against the other. These conflicts can explode into large-scale, intra-state or inter-state conflicts as resource scarcities interact with other social variables. Research also indicates that water-related conflicts are intense in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, where many sedentary groups have been forced to relocate from their ancestral homes due to water scarcity. Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin are countries expected to experience increased loss of land area due to rising sea levels. Lagos in Nigeria is also a classic example of a locale experiencing the impacts of rising sea levels with a projection of the complete disappearance of the beach and "a consistent loss of built-up areas into the ocean before 2029".

Climate-induced Land-use Conflicts

In *Tragedy of the Commons*, Garrett Hardin explained the concept of land use conflict using the analogy of herdsman in a pasture. Hardin's pasture has limited carrying capacity regarding the number of cattle it can sustain. Hardin explains that the selfishness of a herdsman to introduce additional cattle to make an extra profit will be at the expense of the pasture and the expense of the other herdsman. Hardin further explains that this action of a single selfish herdsman can create tension between all the herdsman, resulting in resource depletion and, ultimately, conflict. Hardin didn't foresee in his theory the influence of an external factor beyond the control of the herdsman, which also results in resource depletion – climate change. Two natural events, exacerbated by climate change, are often responsible for driving land-use challenges – sea level rise and desertification. With the increase in sea levels, the sea claims coastal land, permanently displacing its original residents and triggering migration movements. When displaced people migrate to a new place, conflict may occur with the existing population over resource use. While sea level rise impacts coastal cities and areas, desertification impacts arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. Various factors, including climatic variations and human activities, cause desertification. As desertification, exacerbated by climate change, encroaches on arable lands, lands available for agriculture and other economic uses are lost, thus threatening the livelihood of residents and resulting in conflict over the available resources. Niger and Chad are countries that have recently been plagued by concentrated rainfall, not unlinked to climate change, which has resulted in flooding within their territories. Flooding has resulted in the displacement of large groups of people. Economic challenges and food scarcity are also a result of the flooding of farmlands. Food scarcity is bound to arise when planted crops are destroyed by too much rainfall. The Niger and Volta Rivers overflow in 2020 and 2010, respectively, are events that reflect the effect of climate change—these events left in their wake the displacement of people and destruction of farmlands. The consequences of severe drought are similar – a long spell of dryness with no rainfall also leads to economic losses and food scarcity as farmers

cannot plant or experience poor harvest. Long periods of drought also affect the availability of drinking water, and in a region that has always had challenges accessing portable water, this problem is exacerbated.

Climate-induced Food insecurity

Food shortage is a driver of conflict, just as conflict is a driver of food insecurity. West African countries are prone to droughts caused mainly by unfavourable weather patterns and climatic variations. Food shortage in West Africa is often a result of several factors, including climate-induced phenomena such as floods, severe rainfall, drought, cyclones, and storms. These are all climate-induced phenomena that negatively influence rural income and food security in West Africa. Droughts are common in many parts of West Africa. For instance, in many parts of northern Nigeria, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire, drought is frequently experienced. This situation is projected to worsen as global temperatures increase. Food shortage drives migration, which in turn may lead to conflict. For instance, in northern Nigeria, insufficient grazing for cattle due to increased desertification exacerbated by climate change is one of the drivers of the herdsman-pastoralist conflict. Long spells of drought would impact agricultural and economic activities and exacerbate conflict as more people would be inclined to take up arms.

West Africa's Climate-Induced Environmental Conflicts and the AI Conversation

Artificial intelligence (AI), which has recently become a popular buzzword, has come a long way since it was coined in 1956 by John McCarthy. Defining AI is not easy due to how it has evolved into an essential part of daily living. It is everywhere and in everything. The term is derived from the combining 'artificial' and 'intelligence'. In its simplest form, it means 'intelligence demonstrated by machines'. It is sometimes also described as "machines that mimic cognitive functions that humans associate with the human mind, such as

learning and problem-solving." Hussein Abbas (2021) gives two definitions in his Editorial on AI. He defines it firstly as the "automation of cognition" and secondly as the "social and cognitive phenomena that enables a machine to socially integrate with a society to perform competitive tasks requiring cognitive processes and communicate with other entities in society by exchanging messages with high information content and shorter representations." The second definition expresses AI's evolving and near-ubiquitous nature and emphasises that AI has gone beyond being a technology or a machine alone. It is now a social phenomenon that continues to reach beyond its initial conceptual limits.

AI has been deployed in almost every area of human endeavour. In the last decade, AI has been deployed extensively in transportation, entertainment and IT industries. It has been used to control self-driving vehicles to trade on the stock market, as well as social media platforms, web browsers, and search engines. AI techniques have been used to forecast global mean temperature changes, predict climactic and oceanic phenomena such as El Niño, cloud systems, and tropical instability waves, better understand aspects of the weather system - like rainfall, generally and in specific locales, and their knock-on consequences, like water demand. In preventing and resolving climate-induced water conflicts in West Africa, AI can be used to forecast water availability, analyse historical conflict data to identify areas of conflict risk, optimise water availability for agriculture uses by effectively allocating water resources among different users and stop leakages promptly identify areas prone to drought, and water scarcity. AI can also boost community engagement and education by providing tools to foster community cooperation. AI tool data will provide policymakers with the necessary information to deal decisively with water issues before they escalate into conflicts.

In preventing and resolving climate-induced land use conflicts in West Africa, AI can analyse satellite imagery and aerial data to monitor land use changes, deforestation, desertification and urban expansion. AI can be used to develop plans for efficient land management in the face of climate change impacting land use. It

can also be a valuable tool in creating avenues for community engagement by facilitating dialogue among stakeholders and for education and enlightenment on land use rights, the impact of human activities, and climate change on land degradation. AI can potentially prevent and resolve climate-induced food insecurity by analysing historical data, weather patterns and soil health to help farmers make informed decisions about planting and harvesting. AI will also help educate farmers on the weather-resilient seeds that can be cultivated. The optimisation of irrigation practices is another AI use. AI can optimise crop production, ensuring food security amid changing climate conditions. AI can also forecast droughts, floods, and rainfall patterns. This would help to alleviate food insecurity and help policymakers respond promptly to the problem that climate change may create for food security in West Africa. Deploying AI will enable decision-makers and the government to make adequate preparations to cushion the impact of these natural disasters on their people. For instance, Google Research has developed an AI system that can identify river flooding weeks before it happens. This tool will be helpful to West Africa in predicting when rivers will become flooded as a result of the variability in rainfall.

Deploying AI to combat climate-induced conflict in West Africa is not without its setbacks. First, the cost of deploying AI is colossal. AI technologies are not easy or cheap to manufacture, rebuild, repair or maintain. Many West African countries with low national income cannot afford to deploy AI for climate adaptation. Thus, poverty truncates the AI deployment goal. Second, climate change is regarded as indirectly influencing many environmental conflicts. Many environmental conflicts in Africa have other primary causes that sometimes trump the climate causative aspect. Thus, deploying AI to solve the climate aspect of these conflicts will not entirely resolve the conflict. Third, data management and breach concerns continue to plague AI's large-scale deployment in developed countries with the resources to deploy these technologies. With their weak legal and regulatory framework, West African countries may not adequately manage AI's complexities. Fourth, AI can be quite energy-intensive. Data centres where AI

models are designed, managed and stored have been described as energy-hungry as they use electricity for cooling and processing power. A report states that data centre energy requirements could account for between 4.6% and 9.1% of total US electricity generated by 2030. Many West African countries suffer from weak electricity supply, and experience frequent brownouts and blackouts. Power-hungry data centres could strain many African countries' existing weak electricity infrastructure.

Conclusion

Climate-induced conflicts in West Africa often have other underlying causes that sometimes may overshadow the climate aspect. Despite its shortcomings, AI is a tool or technique that can be successfully deployed to manage this climate aspect and other aspects. Therefore, West African countries must take advantage of the development undertaken by other advanced countries in AI, establish an adequate legal and regulatory framework for AI, improve and strengthen their electricity systems to accommodate data centres and successfully deploy these AI technologies. Unfortunately, no silver bullet has been found to solve Africa's environmental challenges and conflicts, but AI can be one of the bullets in the arsenal.

Recommendations

- Effective deployment of AI requires that West African leaders invest the necessary financial and infrastructural resources to develop this technology. This investment, although massive, will yield the desired result of boosting the sub-region's climate adaptation strategies.
- The huge financial cost of developing AI may necessitate that West African countries jointly combine their financial resources. One country may not have the sufficient financial capacity to deploy AI on the scale needed to resolve climate-induced environmental issues in the sub-region.
- There is a need for West African policymakers to develop the proper legal and regulatory framework for the management of AI.

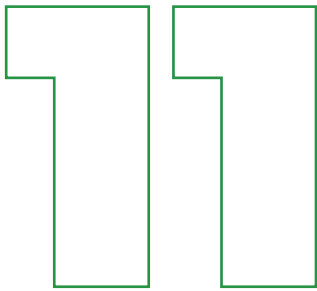
- Due to the transboundary nature of the impact of climate change, West African countries need to collaborate in terms of resources and the exchange of know-how and expertise in developing regional native AI solutions to climate-induced environmental challenges.

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Addressing Climate-Conflict Risks Through the Adoption of AI in Disaster Preparedness in East Africa: Lessons from the Desert Locust Outbreak 2019-2021

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About the Author

Monique Bennett is a South African-born researcher, coder, and educator. African affairs, whether at the local, regional, or continent-wide level, have been the primary focus of her research. Her academic journey began with an interest in environmental governance, agri-science development projects and food sovereignty. Since then, she has sought to bridge her understanding of environmental challenges with topics like peacebuilding and conflict recurrence. Currently, she is a doctoral candidate at Stellenbosch University and was awarded the DISARM project scholarship with the Peace Research Institute of Oslo. Her PhD aims to contribute to existing peace and security policy/research by unpacking how peacebuilding missions and DDR influence the dynamics of peace and conflict within southern African countries.

Executive Summary

This policy paper underscores the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Big Data in enhancing climate resilience across Africa. Focusing on the 2019-2021 East African desert locust outbreak across Kenya and Ethiopia, it reveals the critical role of these technologies in disaster preparedness and response. International collaboration and investment in data infrastructure, research and development, capacity building and cross-sector cooperation are essential for harnessing these innovations effectively. This policy paper argues the need for tailored national AI strategies, continental collaboration, ethical considerations and robust data infrastructure to harness AI technologies in disaster management effectively.

Key Points

Climate change and extreme weather disasters significantly threaten Africa, leading to increased disasters like cyclones, droughts and locust infestations, thus, exacerbating existing security challenges.

AI and Big Data offer transformative solutions by enabling predictive models, remote sensing and drone technology for disaster management and climate adaptation.

Lessons from using AI technology in Kenya and Ethiopia against the desert locust outbreak can help customise national AI strategies that prioritise AI integration into disaster management systems.

The AU should facilitate collaboration and knowledge sharing among member states by guiding AI policy and disaster preparedness.

Establishing ethical frameworks and regulations for AI use in disaster management is crucial thereby emphasising transparency and accountability.

Building robust data infrastructure, capacity building, cross-sector collaboration, and information sharing are essential for effective AI adoption in disaster risk reduction and climate resilience efforts.

Introduction

Climate change poses a significant threat to the security and stability of the African continent. Its impact has become increasingly evident through the increased frequency of cyclones, migratory pest infestations (i.e. desert locusts), severe drought and flooding and extreme heat. African policymakers must contend with complex scenarios of food insecurity, displacement and loss of livelihoods and thus, require carefully developed mitigation and adaptation strategies. Although environmental stress is not seen to be an immediate cause of insecurity and conflict, it is an exacerbating factor that can multiply existing security threats (Dabelko, 2022).

Recent studies reveal that Artificial Intelligence (AI) plays a more significant role in helping to make improved predictions on climate change's short- and long-term impacts (Rutenberg et al., 2021). AI can be defined as intelligence expressed by computer systems rather than humans (Abid et al., 2021). Machine learning, remote sensing, geospatial analysis and hotspot assessment are just a few AI applications used in environmental change and DRR. These systems require big data, powerful computers and abundant human capital. However, they can play a crucial role in driving and facilitating critical societal changes, particularly in how states respond to climate change. Kenya has taken active steps to become a regional AI hub by establishing the AI Kenya Taskforce to draft a roadmap for AI development and promote emerging technologies through the Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs (Gwagwa et al., 2020). Ethiopia has also shown interest in advancing its AI capabilities by establishing the Ethiopian AI Institute and launching its first satellite, ETRSS-1, which has the potential for applications in AI and data analytics (Adegoke, 2019). The satellite will operate about 700 km from the earth's surface and provide crucial data on agriculture, climate, mining and weather patterns.

This policy paper argues that adopting AI and Big Data frameworks can assist the AU and its member states in addressing climate-induced disasters, using the 2019-2021 desert locust outbreak in Kenya and Ethiopia as case studies.

The outbreak revealed gaps and limitations in country and regional disaster preparedness, response and recovery efforts. Since then, experts have shown how AI is used to prepare better for future outbreaks. I propose how AI-based predictive models, remote sensing data and drones can help effectively forecast and monitor climate-induced disasters by enabling timely interventions and resource allocation.

AI's Implications for Disaster Risk Reduction Policy Frameworks

Existing Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) policy frameworks, alongside technology adoption can play a critical role in improving the preparedness of vulnerable communities already at risk. The Sendai Framework for DRR (2015-2030) is a global strategy that United Nations (UN) member states adopted in 2015 to guide efforts in preparing for and building resilience to disasters. In 2017, African Union (AU) member states, in alignment with Sendai, adopted a new Programme of Action to implement the framework across all member states (Van Niekerk et al., 2020). In 2020, the AU Commission, supported by the European Union, released a detailed road map to improve the use of early warning systems for DRR across the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), AU and selected case study countries across the continent (Road Map Team, 2020). The report reveals common challenges shared by Ethiopia and others in their early warning systems. These challenges include inadequate quantitative risk assessments and preparedness plans, resource constraints affecting monitoring and forecasting, communication equipment redundancy and resilience issues and warnings that often fail to trigger appropriate responses.

The case study of the desert locust outbreak underscores the transformative potential of AI and Big Data in building resilience and mitigating climate change impacts in Africa. As the continent navigates the Fourth Industrial Revolution, these technologies offer a multifaceted approach to addressing its pressing challenges. AI, interconnected with the IoT, allows for real-time monitoring

and precise data analysis, offering accurate insights into climate change effects on people, industries, and resources. Moreover, remote-sensing technologies, complemented by satellite data collaboration with agencies like NASA and the European Space Agency, provide a comprehensive understanding of locust behaviour, enabling governments to track, forecast, and respond to locust outbreaks effectively.

The African Union's policy goals for climate adaptation capacity and resilience align well with these AI-driven strategies (African Union, 2022). By incorporating predictive models, remote sensing, and drone technology, nations can enhance their disaster preparedness and response capabilities, fulfilling the African Union's vision for improved risk management. As climate change drives locust outbreaks and other environmental challenges, adopting these technological advancements will ensure food security, reduce poverty (SDG1) and eliminate hunger (SDG2) across the continent. FAO's use of innovative technology in the battle against desert locusts serves as a compelling example of how Africa can harness these tools to safeguard its future in the face of climate change.

Desert Locust Outbreak 2019-2021

In 2019, the North Indian Ocean witnessed an unprecedented cyclone season, setting the stage for a significant locust outbreak across the Arabian Peninsula (Hansen, 2019). Desert locusts (*Schistocerca gregaria*) are driven by specific weather, soil and vegetation conditions conducive for their reproduction and transformation from an otherwise solitary creature into one that matures and develops into destructive swarms of up to 150 million locusts (Zhang et al., 2019). At the time of the invasion, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania had already over 12 million forcibly displaced and 21 million people facing acute food insecurity (FAO, 2020). In 2020, the combined impact of locust invasion and the COVID-19 pandemic amplified levels of food insecurity significantly, leading the Food and Agriculture Organisations (FAO) to call for

food assistance for an estimated 43 million people in the region (FAO, 2019).

Desert locusts are among the most destructive migratory pests for cropland. Despite early warnings during the 2019 cyclone season, the locust invasion could not be averted in time. While our understanding of desert locust ecology has improved, regional and national policy implementation and cooperation remain challenging (Salih et al., 2020). The outbreak highlighted the capacity gap between regional organisations and national locust control units (Bennett, 2020). The Desert Locust Control Organisation for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA) was established in 1962 to foster cooperation among Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda for locust control. The DLCO-EA struggled to manage the outbreak due to lack of funding and resources.

Moreover, the conflict in breeding areas of Yemen and Somalia made certain areas inaccessible. In many cases, the necessary pesticides, personal protective gear and local control experts were not made available in time to control the pests at a local level. The economic impact of the outbreak was substantial with millions of tons of crop production being damaged (Usman et al., 2022). The loss of crops not only affected food security but also led to a decline in income for farmers and increased food prices in the affected areas (Retkute et al., 2021). The outbreak also had indirect economic consequences such as increased healthcare costs due to the spread of diseases and the need for pest control measures ("Funding gap for locust crisis", 2020).

The Role of AI and Big Data in Climate Change Mitigation

The severe nature of the 2019-2021 desert locust outbreak necessitated an urgent and focused approach to mitigate the consequences of the outbreak. Technology emerged as a vital ally in tackling this formidable challenge. To complement existing strategies, the FAO introduced tools that helped empower governments and control officers to monitor

and control the locusts actively. Several strategies played an important role in mitigating the impact of the outbreak and could be used for future disasters of a similar nature. The first strategy is the use of AI predictive models, second is the use of remote-sensing data and finally, the use of drones, which also help collect valuable information for predictive models and data analysis. The challenges of applying these AI techniques will also be highlighted within each. Finally, the section will examine some ethical dilemmas in adopting AI technology.

AI Prediction for Breeding Sites

In a recent study with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Emily Kimathi and her Kenyan team pioneered a machine-learning algorithm to predict desert locust breeding sites (Kimathi et al., 2020). This approach used temperature, rainfall and soil moisture to combine 9,000+ locust data points from Mauritania, Morocco and Saudi Arabia. They aimed to predict desert locust breeding areas in Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan and Sudan. The models performed well in forecasting breeding sites across all test regions. The study revealed that extensive areas in Kenya, Sudan, Uganda and South Sudan faced a significant risk of creating a suitable breeding habitat for desert locusts.

Further validation and field testing are essential for practically applying machine-learning predictive algorithms. Additionally, researchers must explore whether the algorithm is equally effective against the destructive desert locust as it is against migratory locusts and investigate the possibility of creating artificial pheromones to attract locusts for capture and destruction. Although significant locust upsurges are infrequent with the last event occurring 15 years ago, sustained underfunding has weakened locust surveillance and research efforts (Bennett, 2020). To mitigate future threats effectively, national and international funders must prioritise and support ongoing research and preparedness efforts in this area.

One of the main challenges of employing machine-learning predictive techniques is its reliance on historical data. AI algorithms are trained on past data, and their predictions are based on patterns observed in the

historical record. If significant changes in environmental conditions or locust behaviour deviate from historical patterns, the accuracy of the predictions may be compromised (Xu et al., 2018). This highlights the importance of continuously updating and refining the AI models to account for changing conditions. Another weakness is the potential for false positives or negatives in the predictions. AI models are not infallible and can make errors in their predictions. False positives can lead to unnecessary panic and resource allocation while false negatives can result in lack of preparedness and inadequate response (Xu et al., 2018). It is crucial to validate and verify the predictions generated by AI models through on-the-ground observations and expert knowledge.

Remote-Sensing Technology

On the ground, FAO equipped national partners with eLocust3, a standard surveillance technology for locust infestations (FAO Headquarters, 2020). In response to the crisis, Penn State University collaborated with FAO to swiftly develop eLocust3m, a mobile phone version accessible through app stores. This mobile tool enabled field officers to report geo-referenced locust sightings and control efforts in real-time by significantly enhancing communication and data sharing. Furthermore, FAO distributed eLocust3g, a compact GPS device with satellite connectivity and basic eLocust3 functions to countries affected by the invasion. These devices allow field officers to record locust encounters, monitor their developmental stages and document treated areas. The real-time collected data integrates into national geographic information systems, connecting with a global FAO headquarters system. This network provided decision-makers with daily on-the-ground insights.

There were several challenges encountered during the implementation of the eLocust3 technology. They included difficulties in engaging national actors in Somalia, internet outages in Ethiopia and the ongoing conflict in Yemen (FAO, 2022). Despite these challenges, the adoption and utilisation of eLocust3 technology saw broad success. Notably, the GPS version, known as eLocust3g, took some time to roll out fully but has consistently

produced high-quality data. Additionally, incorporating satellite data via 51 degrees has enhanced surveillance data coverage in Kenya and is planned for deployment in Somalia and Ethiopia.

SERVIR, a collaborative program between NASA and USAID, joined forces with the Desert Locust Information System of the FAO to leverage satellite technology in the battle against the locust invasion (Patel, 2020). Their collaborative efforts led to maps that explained locust behaviour by considering environmental factors like soil moisture and vegetation. These maps, driven by satellite data, helped governments track locust swarms, generate forecasts regarding outbreak locations and durations and implement preventive measures. For example, SERVIR employed Cyclone Global Navigation Satellite System micro-satellites to measure soil moisture, pinpointing potential breeding grounds and facilitating targeted pesticide application. Additionally, NASA researchers used data from the Terra satellite to produce a map illustrating changes in green vegetation, a key determinant of locust behaviour. This can help predict locust movements and intensification by identifying regions with ample greenery. These innovative maps and satellite datasets empower states to manage locust swarms effectively, assess damage, forecast outbreaks, develop strategies for preventing large-scale infestations and reporting the devastating impact of locusts on crops and food security across affected regions.

Drones

Rotary and fixed-wing drones have proved vital for monitoring remote and challenging locust-infested regions. Rotary drones offer real-time locust concentration analysis and potential treatment campaigns while fixed-wing drones cover extensive areas ideal for spotting locust feeding grounds in arid regions. Furthermore, space-based technology including satellites from NASA and the European Space Agency is instrumental in locust management. These satellites provide crucial data for forecasting locust movements and identifying breeding conditions, aiding in early threat detection and resource mapping. In tackling the growing challenge of locust infestations amid climate change-induced weather unpredictability,

FAO's integration of innovative technology empowers nations to respond effectively to emergencies while aligning with SDG's focus on poverty reduction and hunger eradication.

Security and Ethical Challenges Posed by AI in Africa

One of the main concerns in adopting AI is privacy and cyber security. AI's reliance on data and algorithms makes them vulnerable to cyber-attacks, data breaches and unauthorised access (Antwi et al., 2021). Poor equipment maintenance and outdated infrastructure can exacerbate these security risks (Antwi et al., 2021). Moreover, AI-powered technologies can be manipulated or exploited to spread disinformation, conduct cyber warfare or engage in surveillance (Arakpogun et al., 2021). Additionally, more broadly, the lack of regulations and standards for AI systems in Africa poses challenges in ensuring their safety and effectiveness (Badi et al., 2021). There are concerns about the potential for these systems to undermine privacy rights and limit political agency especially in civic and electoral processes. Finally, the adoption of AI can exacerbate existing social and economic inequalities. There is a risk that AI technologies may reinforce biases and discrimination, leading to unfair outcomes and marginalisation of certain groups (Arakpogun et al., 2021).

To address these security threats, it is crucial to develop robust cybersecurity measures and regulations that protect data privacy and ensure the integrity of AI systems (Antwi et al., 2021). Collaboration between governments, the private sector, academia, and research institutions is essential to address the challenges and opportunities of AI adoption (Ibeneme et al., 2021). Capacity building and awareness programs can also help mitigate the risks associated with AI and promote responsible and ethical use of the technology (Arakpogun et al., 2021).

Adopting AI within DRR Policy Frameworks:

Ethiopia and Kenya have been active in developing national strategies toward adopting AI into various sectors such as healthcare, education, e-commerce and manufacturing. In 2020, Ethiopia opened the country's first AI research centre, the Ethiopian Institute of Artificial Intelligence. It has sought to help develop guidelines for the country's technology adoption for future social and economic development. In June 2023, Ethiopia's Ministry of Innovation and Technology announced that it was finalising the country's national policy on AI, which the institute contributed to (Ethiopia News Agency, 2023). In Kenya, a Blockchain and Artificial Intelligence Task Force was constituted in February 2018 to provide the government with recommendations on harnessing the emerging technology over the following five years.

A recent synthesis report commissioned by the Human Sciences Research Council, the Department of Science and Innovation in South Africa and Meta (formerly Facebook) sought to help develop guiding principles and frameworks for adopting AI in Africa (Gaffley et al., 2022). Several research teams from across the continent, including Ethiopia and Kenya were awarded grants to research the social and ethical challenges of AI, healthcare and AI African approaches to AI ethics and regulatory approaches to AI in Africa. The University of Nairobi, in its research on digital credit, raised questions about the transparency of automated lending decisions and their impact on users (Gaffley et al., 2022). They also explored issues of exploitation and power imbalances, mainly due to the dominance of Safaricom in the fintech space. The study highlighted the importance of fair and transparent use of personal data in AI risk assessment. In the context of disaster preparedness and AI integration, social inequalities and bias should be closely considered to ensure that vulnerable groups are protected and included. Overall, the study recommended prioritising consumer protection through the development of data laws and policies, which can then be integrated into disaster risk reduction policies

to ensure that AI technologies used in disaster management adhere to ethical standards and protect the rights of affected populations.

The Addis Ababa Institute of Technology research team aimed to understand AI's design, development and implementation in the context of local culture and society in Africa (Gaffley et al., 2022). They explored the ethical implications of AI, especially concerning its potential impact on social values and disadvantaged groups. They developed African ethical principles to guide AI design, with the hope of contributing to Africa's socio-economic development. These principles included: "respect for persons, beneficence, maleficence, harmony, explicability and ethnic neutrality" (Gaffley et al., 2022, p. 9). Another paper from the team focused on the intersection of AI and social media, highlighting the emergence of social justice challenges in the digital world. They emphasised the importance of exploring social justice in AI design and deployment from an African perspective. AI's biases in algorithms and data were seen as potentially undermining fairness. For disaster preparedness, AI can be used to analyse data from social media for early detection of disaster-related events. Natural language processing algorithms can identify keywords and patterns in social media posts to detect emerging disasters such as wildfires, floods or desert locusts. This can provide authorities with valuable lead time to initiate disaster response measures. AI can also assist with allocating resources during disaster response and serve as a channel for delivering emergency alerts and updates.

These existing initiatives in Ethiopia and Kenya and the broader research efforts across Africa provide valuable insights into the potential of AI adoption across various sectors. As both countries advance their national policies on AI, there is a clear opportunity to leverage this transformative technology in disaster preparedness and climate change mitigation. These efforts underscore the importance of ethical principles, transparency, and inclusivity in AI integration, ensuring that vulnerable groups are protected and AI contributes positively to socio-economic development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the intersection of AI and disaster risk reduction policy frameworks offers a promising pathway for addressing Africa's growing threats of climate change. The recent desert locust outbreak in Kenya and Ethiopia has demonstrated how AI predictive models, remote sensing technology and drones can significantly enhance disaster preparedness and response. These technological advancements align seamlessly with the African Union's vision for climate adaptation and resilience, fostering a more secure and sustainable future for the continent. This policy paper underscores the significance of embedding AI and Big Data within African policy frameworks to address climate-induced disasters comprehensively. Embracing these innovations through international collaboration empowers African nations to adapt, mitigate climate impacts, and promote sustainable development. However, it is crucial to navigate the security and ethical challenges posed by AI adoption diligently, ensuring that these innovations serve the interests of all and uphold the principles of fairness and inclusivity.

Policy Recommendations

- Recognising the diversity among East African countries, each nation should develop its own national AI strategy, customised to its unique economic, social and technological circumstances. These strategies should prioritise the integration of AI into climate change mitigation and disaster management systems, with a clear emphasis on early warning systems, disaster risk reduction and response mechanisms. Governments should establish expert AI committees composed of academia, policymakers and stakeholders from various sectors to design and implement these strategies. Additionally, these strategies should outline pathways for capacity building and international cooperation by ensuring the country is well-prepared to harness AI technologies for disaster resilience.
- At the continental level, the AU should be central in fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing among East African countries. The AU has already established an AU-AI strategy working group to assist member states in developing legal frameworks for AI. The strategy should also include advice on how disaster management and climate change mitigation can be included in the strategy when presented next year. The strategy can serve as a resource hub for countries seeking guidance and support in developing their AI policies, disaster preparedness and climate frameworks.
- As AI adoption accelerates in disaster management, it is essential to establish ethical frameworks and regulations that govern the use of AI technologies in this context. Both national and continental policies should emphasise the importance of transparency, fairness and accountability in AI applications for disaster response and recovery. Countries should enact legislation and regulatory bodies responsible for monitoring AI systems to ensure they adhere to ethical standards. The African Union can provide guidance and model regulations to assist member states in developing and implementing these ethical frameworks.
- Prioritise building robust data infrastructure, including data collection, storage, and sharing mechanisms to ensure high-quality, real-time data availability. This infrastructure should support integrating AI and Big Data technologies for climate monitoring and early warning systems, particularly concerning disaster risk profiling.
- Invest in capacity-building programs to empower local experts, institutions and governments with the skills to effectively harness AI and Big Data. Promote knowledge sharing and technical training to ensure sustainable use of these technologies.
- Foster cross-sector collaboration and information sharing among government agencies, regional organisations and international bodies. Promote the development of standardised data formats and protocols to facilitate seamless data exchange and cooperation in climate resilience efforts.

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Strengthening Africa's Ownership Through Localized Approaches to Preventing Violent Extremism in Africa

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Executive Summary

The world is witnessing an era of changing geopolitics in which Western States have become more inward-looking and securitized, while African countries question international norms and interventions. While Western approaches to counter-terrorism have primarily emphasised a military-dominated approach, the African context demands efforts that address localized historical injustices relating to marginalization and discrimination. Some African countries are now applying new and innovative efforts at Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) that emphasise 'Pax Africana' as a bottom-up and people-centred process, in line with the recognition that Africa is politically, religiously and socially heterogeneous. These strategies are more appropriate, effective and sustainable as they embody community-driven initiatives that are cognizant of the specific drivers of conflict while also offering more cost-effective solutions.

Using examples from Nigeria and Kenya, this paper offers insights and awareness for other parts of the continent that are experiencing extreme violence. In Nigeria, a new hybrid model is being applied to mass defections from Boko Haram. This puts communities at the forefront of determining reintegration processes for low-level perpetrators by emphasising dialogue, reconciliation and transitional justice. In Kenya, localized County Action Plans (CAPs) for preventing violent extremism have been seen as important for building trust between the government and civil society stakeholders, and providing a framework for working across different thematic areas. These CAPs seek to address issues of marginalization but could do more to apply a transitional justice lens to address the needs of the most vulnerable as espoused in the African Union's Transitional Justice Policy (2019). This paper makes recommendations for how the African Union can best support these efforts.

Key Points

Marginalization and discrimination are key drivers of extremism in the African context. Approaches to Preventing Violent Extremism should therefore address these root causes.

Pax Africana should be conceived as community-centred and localized approaches that fit specific contexts.

There are already many innovative practices that exist from around the continent, for example, in countries like Nigeria and Kenya, that embody community-centred approaches.

Introduction

With the Sahel now considered the epicentre of violent attacks emanating from extremism (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2023)¹, Africa must consider new approaches to prevention that go beyond militarized solutions alone. In Mali, a climate of anti-colonial sentiment among the local population, disillusioned by the ineffectiveness of peacekeeping ten years after the mission began, prompted the withdrawal of French troops and the drawdown of the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission, MINUSMA. This leaves the root causes of the conflict as the marginalization of the north, a resentment towards the central state and the exploitation and politicisation of interethnic tensions, (Chauzal, 2015). The root causes of violent extremism are complex but are often driven by political, ethnic and identity-based factors that demand contextualized approaches. This paper first highlights how counter-terrorism frameworks have grown to encompass 'Counter-terrorism' and then 'Preventing Violent Extremism'. It highlights innovative practices in Kenya and Nigeria that illustrate a shift in thinking towards more people-centred approaches that embody the spirit of Pax-Africana. It concludes with recommendations for the African Union.

Discussion

September 11, 2001 was a pivotal turning point for the world, as the UN and its Member States rushed to condemn extremist attacks and set in place an institutional architecture for Counter-Terrorism. This was followed by more than 50 UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) that include the creation of the United Nations Office for Counter-Terrorism (as established by UN General Assembly Resolution 71/291), and the growth of peace enforcement missions. The language adopted in these UNSCRs (which are legally binding) were often strongly worded with documents that labelled certain groups, including Boko Haram as 'terrorists' and placed anyone associated with the group, whether

they are sympathisers, forcibly recruited or senior commanders under the same category. In doing so, the approach was one that failed to consider the groups' motives or the broader societal conflict (Ette and Joe, 2019; Walker, 2012) and removed any possibilities of political dialogue with them, (Brechenmacher, 2019).

However, with violent extremism continuing to spread around the globe, a growing consensus emerged that more efforts were needed to prevent the conditions that gave rise to extremism, such as bad governance and lack of respect for human rights. In 2015, the UN acknowledged that these elements were often overlooked. It subsequently set out a framework for Preventing Violent Extremism by proposing that national governments should adopt action plans that embody a more comprehensive approach. This encompasses preventative measures that examine the underlying conditions that drive individuals to become radicalized or to join extremist groups (UN, 2015).

However, in practice, governments continued to primarily opt for securitized efforts. In Mozambique, for example, the government's first response was to bilaterally deploy Russian Wagner and South African van Dyck militaries to fight a growing insurgency that began attacks in 2017. After they had failed to stem the insurgency, troops from Rwanda and the Southern African Development Community were then deployed. Initially, the SADC Mission in Mozambique was deployed to "neutralize" the terrorist threat, which later expanded to encompass police and civilian personnel (Dzinesa, 2023) while Rwanda carried out combat operations and assisted refugees in returning home. This is potentially problematic as UNDP (2017, 2023) shows that grievances against security actors are often the tipping points to extremism and therefore military solutions, if not managed in an environment of accountability and respect for human rights, can actually degenerate into further extremism. Thus, unless these issues are addressed within the Mozambican Armed Forces, violent responses could further trigger extremism. Furthermore, the peacekeeping missions provide a semblance of stability but draw the focus away from addressing the root causes of

1 The term 'terrorism' is used in the Global Peace Index to signify "intentional acts of violence or threat of violence by a non-state actor." The term extremism, used throughout this paper, is broader than terrorism as it can include forms of ideologically motivated violence that do not necessarily encompass terrorist acts.

the conflict.

In Kenya, foreign actors such as United States and the United Kingdom saw the country as a key partner for the “war on terror.” In response, the government adopted anti-terror legislation, which drew condemnation from the Muslim community over fears that they would be unfairly targeted and that the legislation would infringe on civil liberties and freedoms (Githigaro 2018).

The Kenyan government therefore moved to balance its hard approach with a more comprehensive whole-of-society effort, being the first country on the African continent to adopt a National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism in 2016 which is in line with the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. The Strategy has nine pillars, namely media and online; psychosocial; education; legal and policy; arts and culture; training and capacity building; political; faith-based ideologies and security. However, they took this further by also adopting CAPs with county-specific pillars, the first of which were developed in Mombasa, Lamu and Kwale countries –an approach that was accepted. In a survey of Kenyan Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), 98% of NGOs stated that Preventing Violent Extremism was a useful and relevant framework for addressing violent and hateful crimes (Rass, 2023). Each of these plans have been tailored to the local context and have proven useful in addressing the specific challenges faced by communities. In terms of the typologies of community-based programming that has fed into these action plans, efforts include multi-stakeholder dialogues, community policing, the development of youth-led policies and economic empowerment, the development of counter-narratives, theatre, sport and trauma healing (Githigaro, 2018).

Moreover, research by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) in August 2023 in Nairobi, Mombasa and Lamu found that county action plans for countering and preventing violent extremism have been critical for knowledge sharing, promoting collaboration and partnerships with a broad range of stakeholders, avoiding duplication, assigning roles and responsibilities, and

integrating peace, security and development (IJR, forthcoming). Many of these community-based approaches apply different elements of restorative transitional justice that address past histories of marginalization and discrimination, in order to promote social cohesion through trust-building, for example, innovative practice has been used by religious women leaders in developing counter-narratives among women. This is particularly important given the way through which women are recruited into extremism and the need to counter the narratives used by Al Shabaab to recruit both women and men (Badurdeen, 2018). In Lamu, the gender pillar has been mainstreamed to reflect these nuances and to allow for the greater inclusion of women in decision-making processes. The security pillar has improved community policing and developed greater avenues for trust building through sports tournaments.

However, Badurdeen cautions that it is important for communities to develop their own definitions and indicators of extremism, since reliance on externally-led and funded frameworks can lead to a skewed focus on Islamist extremism and negate other forms of violent extremism that address wider societal issues. Just like the case of Pastor Paul MacKenzie, extremism can operate across different sides of the ideological spectrum. In this instance, it was discovered that the Pastor had convinced more than 400 followers to fast to death with the promise of meeting Jesus. Thus, attention must be paid to how plans for countering and preventing violent extremism have the potential to also stigmatize communities who use violent ways of minimizing these risks. As such, the development of these CAPs in Kenya offers lessons on the importance of local ownership in project design and flexible and sustainable funding. For example, Van Zyl notes that 64% of NGOs preferred to use a community/resilience-building framework to that of PVE thus, illustrating how the labelling of actions in a certain way can hinder programming.

On the other side of the radicalization spectrum, Nigeria’s Borno state has developed policies that deal with the issue of Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation, Reinsertion and Reintegration of persons

(DDRRR) associated with Boko Haram after a wave of mass defections began in 2021.² This is a hybrid model that complements national efforts to address high risk defectors with more localized responses known as Operation Safe Corridor. Localize Operation Safe Corridor employs screening, prosecutions, rehabilitation through de-radicalization programmes, psycho-social support and vocational training courses and reintegration. However, there have been challenges with reintegration into communities. People have seen the scheme as unfairly rewarding those accused of perpetrating violence over those that have renounced it (Hassan and Tyvoll, 2018). It also does not provide for people that have been associated with the group but not necessarily as senior-level commanders or perpetrators of gross human rights violations. In an evaluation of Operation Safe Corridor, USAID (2021) found that an “over emphasis on pre-release activities and minimal attention to community reintegration and reconciliation is a historic weakness repeating itself in NE Nigeria.”

In response, Borno State has now developed a Community-Based Reconciliation and Reintegration Programme, which is awaiting approval by the State Assembly. This programme departs from past efforts at DDRRR by placing communities at the forefront of the strategy through the establishment of Community-Based Reconciliation and Reintegration Committees. The policy involves three key components: community engagement and dialogue, reconciliation and transitional justice. The policy allows the committees to decide on the approach for reconciliation depending on the local context and situation. While it also makes provision for the establishment of Islamic Sulhu courts for lower level and repentant perpetrators, the approach can be further refined according to local drivers and circumstances of extremism.

The policy is careful to make provision for all Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs), which refers to “all persons (regardless of age, relationship or gender) who have had some contact with the groups (as concluded by the authorities

during the screening phase) without presuming or prejudging the nature of their relationship to the armed group in question.” It also takes into account the challenges of distinguishing clearly between victims and perpetrators since many people associated with armed groups were victims before becoming perpetrators. The policy also allows for a dual targeting of NSAG associates and members of the community to ensure that everyone is fairly awarded economic, social, psychosocial and security support (Draft Borno State Community-Based Reconciliation and Reintegration Policy). While it is too early to evaluate the policy, it represents a novel and innovative attempt to develop context-specific and community-based approaches to DDRRR.

Countries that are facing rising extremism can therefore learn from the experiences of Kenya and Nigeria by moving away from security-centric approaches towards holistic and comprehensive frameworks and policies. Extremism operates in a different context to armed conflict since there is no peace agreement and the labelling of people as ‘terrorists’ often removes a broader consideration of the conditions that give rise to extremism (United Nations General Assembly, 2019). Despite this, it has become increasingly apparent that issues of past marginalization and discrimination need to be addressed.

Transitional justice is a means of addressing these past legacies of exclusion and driving a people-centred approach. In this regard, the UN (2022) considers recognition to be the central aim of transitional justice, noting that it must be connected with efforts towards representation and redistribution. The African Union’s Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP, 2019) offers eleven indicative elements to consider. They are peace processes, transitional justice commissions, African transitional justice mechanisms, reconciliation and social cohesion, reparations, redistributive (socio-economic justice), memorialization, justice and accountability (including amnesties, plea bargains and mitigation/ alternative forms of punishment), political and institutional reforms, human and people’s rights and diversity management. These can also be considered for different country’s environments. However, the application of transitional justice requires

² It should also be noted that Nigeria also adopted a National Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism, which is now being revised to respond to the new approaches to DDRRR being used in the country.

contextualized and nuanced understanding of individual country's situations and the different motivations of extremist groups within the broader political, social and ethnic arena; This is to fashion effective and appropriate responses that draw on these different indicative elements. It also requires the inclusion of communities in the design of a transitional justice framework and a clear communications strategy.

solutions to preventing violent extremism through dialogue.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

This policy brief has argued that African countries cannot rely on militarized solutions alone when addressing violent extremism. Rather, military efforts should be complemented by community-based frameworks, policies and solutions. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, since Africa is not homogenous, therefore a Pax-Africana approach would embody these nuanced understandings and shift the focus from top-down to bottom-up efforts. As the cases of Kenya and Nigeria demonstrate, there are innovative practices that are taking place across the continent, and it will be important to share these different experiences across countries, and to develop more nuanced transitional justice frameworks for the context of violent extremism. Ultimately, violent extremism is a social and political phenomenon, and this requires that communities be placed at the forefront of any solutions. As such, the following policy recommendations are made to the African Union:

1. Provide platforms for Member States to share innovative community-based approaches to Preventing Violent Extremism across different African countries.
2. Analyze the indicative elements of the African Union's Transitional Justice Policy (2019) to guide approaches to extremism that can address legacies of exclusion but which also consider the specific country and local context.
3. Provide political guidance as well as technical and financial support to ensure that communities are involved not only in the implementation but also the design of

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African Agency in a Multipolar Global Order: African Ideas and Values of a Decolonised International System.

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About the Author

Dr. Namhla Thando Matshanda is a political historian with an interest in the Horn of Africa. She is currently Senior Lecturer in International Relations and African Politics in the Department of Political Studies at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). She holds a PhD in African Studies from the University of Edinburgh and a Master's degree in International Relations from the University of the Witwatersrand. Her research is grounded in an interdisciplinary approach where she draws insights from various disciplinary viewpoints. Much of her research has focused on the tensions between state and nation-building in the Horn of Africa, with a focus on Ethiopia.

Executive Summary

Towards the end of the Second World War, the motive behind Africa's role in the international system has been decolonisation. This is the foundation upon which African intellectuals made a political argument for sovereignty and independence. They also used decolonisation to draw on precolonial institutional structures and political values to show the relevance of Africa's past in the present. To showcase the potential of its contributions and value to the international society, Africa needs to be more proactive in asserting her dominance in shaping the multipolar international system. It is common knowledge that Western ideas and values of social existence have been the most dominant within the international system. The advent of a multipolar order presents Africa with an opportunity to exercise her power by leading Africa-centred ideas and values devoid of colonization among the international society. This begins with the conceptualization and implementation of ideas and values. Ideas need to once again take centre-stage if Africa is to successfully claim its place in a multipolar world. This brief reformulates African agency in the context of a multipolar global order by highlighting the historical contributions of African intellectuals and political figures. The brief also highlights the efforts of contemporary African institutions and intellectuals whose work and ideas can be channelled towards shaping Africa's international relations in a multipolar global order. Finally, practical recommendations are made for what Africa can do in the context of multipolarity to proactively assert its agency.

Key Points

Since independence, African countries have struggled to shape and influence global politics due to the hierarchical and exclusionary nature of the international system.

The discipline of International Relations and the practice of international relations have historically, and in the present, aligned to marginalise and exclude Africa.

The period before, during and after independence, saw African political leaders and intellectuals articulate Africa-centred ideas and values on how to make the international system more inclusive. However, these efforts were constrained during the bipolar and unipolar world orders.

A multipolar world order presents Africa with an opportunity to assert its agency in global politics by once again putting forward Africa-centred ideas and values; these can be channelled through contemporary African institutions.

The era of a multipolar order must be fully embraced by Africans as it provides the continent with the opportunity to remake the international system into a just and inclusive one.

Introduction

Mainstream International Relations (IR) discourse suggests that the African agency is severely constrained within global politics. This is largely a consequence of the post-1945 world order that has been dominated by the Global North. This was challenged during the Cold War where we saw the emergence of a bipolar world order. However, by the end of this period in the late 1980s, the US had emerged as the leading power in what became a unipolar world order. Africa struggled to assert herself during the previous world orders. The 2008 Global Financial Crisis is considered to have heralded the beginning of a multipolar order where economic power and geopolitical influence appeared to be distributed between various actors across different regions of the world.¹

The multipolar order is characterised by what is regarded as the 'decline of the West and rise of the rest'². Central to this reconfiguration of global politics is the diminishing power of dominant powers who are located in the Global North and the ability of new powers to emerge, most of which are in the Global South. A clear example of this is the growing global influence of regional powers like China, India and Brazil. The alliance of these powers led to the establishment of the BRIC formation, which later invited and included South Africa to form BRICS. At the recently concluded 2023 BRICS summit held in South Africa, the formation announced the inclusion of six new members with two of the new inclusions coming from Africa – Ethiopia and Egypt. This latest development positions BRICS as possibly the clearest indication of the global shift towards multipolarity³. This formation brings countries of the Global South to the centre of global politics and provides them with more agency.

This brief outlines the importance of this current epoch for Africa. The freedom to fully express an African identity in international politics is a positive step towards progress on the continent. The bipolar and unipolar world orders both constrained the African agency, but did not entirely suppress it. The debate on African agency reveals that it has even greater potential within a multipolar order. In this brief, African ideas and values on international issues

are explored through the eyes of historical and contemporary African leaders and intellectuals. The international thought of political figures such as Kwame Nkrumah, Cheikh Anta Diop and Thabo Mbeki are explored alongside contemporary intellectual figures like Adom Getachew and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni. Together, their ideas and insights allow us to weave a particularistic understanding of the kind of international system Africans envision.

'Agency' in international relations is seen as the ability to shape and influence global politics. Africa has lacked this most basic function. The continent has been on the receiving end of global decisions with very limited agency in decision-making. This has left the continent with a limited ability to push for international decisions that benefit Africa. This is not due to an absence of ideas or guiding principles and values in Africa, it is a consequence of how the international system is structured. In classic IR texts, Africa is posited as an empty space with no history and it is claimed that it cannot make any meaningful contributions to IR theory.⁴ This fallacy has continued unabated where Africa has found herself marginalised within the discipline of IR and in the practice of global politics. This is a distorted reflection of what Africa has contributed and continues to contribute in the study and practice of global politics. What has been at play is the deliberate exclusion of Africa. The evolution of the discipline of IR came to influence its practice, with both becoming deeply rooted in racial hierarchies of imperialism and colonialism.⁵ There is no doubt, therefore, that the legacies of race, colonialism and empire are integral to the discipline of IR.⁶ The reality however, is that Africa has made notable attempts to reconfigure the international system by positing emancipatory ideas and values.

African Agency in Changing International Contexts

This section outlines some of the constraints and limitations to African agency. It also highlights some of the foundational ideas that have underlined Africa's international engagements. In the course of the previous world orders, African agency existed but it

was unable to shape and influence the system due to the exclusionary nature of the system. Understanding African agency in international context means knowing how the international system is structured and organised. The context is characterised by power imbalances between countries of the Global South and the Global North. These imbalances take the form of limitations and constraints on the agency of the countries in the Global South. The crux of the problem is widely seen to be a lack of inclusivity⁷ and the dominance of Eurocentric ideas and approaches⁸.

The bipolar world order was characterised by the Cold War. The East-West ideological rivalry began shortly after the end of World War 2 and lasted until the end of the 1980s. The East (Soviet Union and her allies) and the West (United States and her allies) defined and shaped international politics for the duration of this period. It was inevitable that African countries would be drawn into this rivalry. The start of the Cold War coincided with the retreat of European colonial powers from Africa. This was a critical moment in the political history of the newly independent African states. The newest additions to the system of sovereign states soon learned of the hierarchies within the international system. This propelled the idea of African unity which was expressed through the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The latter was established with the idea of centring African ideas for the benefit of Africa. The OAU also presented African positions on international matters such as solidarity with the developing world, non-alignment and support for the United Nations.

The OAU was underpinned by ideological and practical notions of African unity that were formulated by African leaders. Founding president of independent Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah was one of the key proponents for the establishment of a Pan-African organisation. Nkrumah not only articulated a demand for national independence, he went a step further to translate black nationalism into a vision of Pan-African federation⁹. Classical African regionalism, as rooted in Pan-Africanism, was rooted in ideas of decolonisation, anti-colonial and neo-colonial struggles and continental unity¹⁰. The interplay between Pan-Africanism

and regionalism informed Africa's approach to international politics. Yet, the continent still struggled to fully express her ideas on the international stage. The end of the Cold War saw the supposed victory of the West under the leadership of the United States of America (USA). This period was dominated by one superpower.¹¹ The period of unipolarity saw the USA occupy a superior position where it possessed commercial and military power with the US dollar as the dominant reserve currency. Under these conditions Africans conceptualised ideas for surviving the consequences of a unipolar order and the neo-liberal political and economic ideology that came with it. These ideas included the establishment of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) for economic development.

The Promise of a Decolonized International Society and Africa's Role

At the height of independence and soon after, many African nationalist leaders and intellectuals began to formulate ideas on the kind of international system they envisaged. We see this in the leadership role of African figures like Kwame Nkrumah in the establishment of the OAU. These leaders soon became well acquainted with the inequality that characterised the system. Self-determination, sovereignty and Pan-Africanism were some of the underlying ideas and values that informed African international thought during this period. Africa struggled to push these ideas forward and to make them work for the continent. Khadiagala notes that the territorial, geographical and political fragmentation of African states has been the biggest impediment to the universal acceptance of ideas in Africa¹².

Yet, where these ideas found fertile ground to germinate, they have been powerful and sometimes made their way into institutional frameworks. We see this in the founding documents of the OAU and subsequent regional bodies on the continent. A closer look at the LPA, for instance, reveals some ideas on energy, science and technology and natural resources as important areas for economic development in Africa. Nearly a decade earlier, in his

articulation of what African sovereignty might look like, Cheikh Anta Diop had advocated for a continent-wide energy doctrine, and the exploration of renewable and unrenewable energy sources¹³. This demonstrates the potential for synergies between ideas, values and policy making.

Present-day intellectuals such as Adom Getachew and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni remind us that Africa has held a moral position in global politics and continues to do so. Getachew narrates the history of African nationalist leaders and intellectuals who embarked on what she calls a universal nationalism project of worldmaking¹⁴. Rather than a narrow nationalist focus, these leaders held far-reaching ambitions that sought to transform the international society in its entirety. The idea of sovereignty presupposes an international order where states interact, create diplomatic agreements and safeguard their interests on an equal basis. Ndlovu-Gatsheni reminds us of African contributions to anti-slavery and anti-colonial struggles but laments how these efforts failed to translate into a new postcolonial world¹⁵. The importance of the work of these intellectuals lies in the fact that they remind Africans of what they are capable of and the potential of their ideas and values in shaping global politics.

The transformation of the OAU to the AU in the late 1990s was characterised by the introduction and reinvigoration of African ideas and values on development and economic integration. Africa has been cognisant of its developmental challenges since the period of independence in the 1960s, as such, ideas of development and economic integration have been advancing since then. However, the OAU had limited success in the implementation of many of these, arguably partly because of the prevailing international contexts. At the dawn of the new millennium, a new generation of African leaders articulated a new vision for Africa.

The New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) became the flagship economic development framework for the AU. One of its key architects, former South African president Thabo Mbeki sought to reshape Africa's agency in the international system.

Although NEPAD faced some criticism, it was nonetheless borne out of the strong desire to address Africa's developmental challenges^{16,17}. Thabo Mbeki also went a step further and introduced the idea of the African Renaissance. Some argued that this may have been a tool to sanitise South Africa's diplomatic image on the continent after the end of apartheid, nonetheless, it still managed to influence policy¹⁸. For others, Mbeki's African Renaissance joins Cheikh Anta Diop's attempts at a recovery of an African identity¹⁹. The African Renaissance permeated different areas of life across the continent, not just in South Africa. The idea resonated with many. It represented a rebirth and an assertion of Africa's greatness.

In the context of a multipolar order, one of the key African institutions that is well-positioned to advance African agency is the African Union Commission (AUC). Contrary to popular belief, the AUC has been shown to demonstrate a considerable amount of agency in international affairs. Despite some of its challenges, the Commission is often at the centre of "agenda setting, norm development, decision making, rule creation, policy development and sometimes provides strategic leadership"²⁰. In his study of the AUC, Tiekou demonstrates how the Commission punches above its weight in global politics. He outlines the different areas where the Commission exercises agency in its interactions with the outside world. The main areas where we see AUC agency are: rule-drafting powers, rule-enforcement powers, recommendation powers, representational duties, agenda-setting and proposal initiating and possessing strategic powers²¹. Through the AUC, African ideas and values stand the best chance for advancement in global politics.

It is recommended, therefore, that Africa heeds the calls of Ndlovu-Gatsheni, who advocates for the decolonisation and de-imperialisation of the international system. What this means for Ndlovu-Gatsheni is that "the 'European game,' which denies African agency can only be resolved through a simultaneous process of decolonisation or de-imperialisation."²² This necessarily involves a broad range of African actors, from intergovernmental organisations to sub-regional entities such as the RECs, state actors and non-state actors. For Ndlovu-

Gatsheni, the process requires ongoing dialogue between the Global South and the Global North. With the kind of power the AUC demonstrates in its international engagements, it can be further empowered and supported to do more in the quest for decolonisation and de-imperialisation. A case in point are the multidimensional collaborative efforts between the AU and the European Union, which reveals a relationship of pure inter-regionalism and hybrid or quasi-interregional cooperation²³. This collaboration ought to be strategically used by the AU to further drive the decolonisation agenda in global politics.

Conclusion

Some of Africa's greatest contributions to global politics can be found in the area of ideas and values which are centred on decolonisation and equality. The articulation of sovereignty and self-determination marked Africa's entry-point into global politics in the period before and during political independence. However, African agency was highly constrained during the bipolar and unipolar world orders. The advent of a multipolar order presents Africa with an opportunity to invigorate and strengthen its agency in global politics.

This brief has shown that there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that Africa is not devoid of emancipatory ideas and values of fairness and inclusivity in international politics. Furthermore, key African institutions, state and non-state actors have been central to giving practical expression to fundamental ideas and values in the post-colonial period. The current moment of a multipolar global order offers an opportunity to revisit these earlier efforts to transform the international system.

Recommendations

- There should be clarity and a level of consensus through consultation on the ideas and values that drive and inform Africa's international relations. Regional bodies, state and non-state actors should all be involved to ensure the universal acceptance of these ideas on the continent.
- Efforts should be made to avoid contradictory ideas and values between the AU and state actors, while also giving the latter the necessary freedoms to pursue individual foreign policies.
- African scholars, intellectuals and policy makers must continue working together to shape a value and idea-driven African agenda in the multipolar world order.
- The African Union Commission should continue to play a leading role in Africa's international relations.
- African countries should trust and empower the African Union Commission as their representative in its interactions with international actors.

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