



African Journal of Political Science Revue Africaine de Science Politique

The AJPS is published by the African Association of Political Sciences (AAPS), with the aim of providing a platform for African issues or perspectives on politics and society in Africa. It is published twice a year – in April and September, and targeted at the social science community, policy-makers and university students.



African Association of Political Science

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EDITORIAL

The Significance of the African Development Bank on the Occasion of its Recent Presidential Election

SIPHAMANDLA ZONDI , TINUADE OJO  & JOSEF KEUTCHEU 
Editors



On 29 May, marking the end of the Africa month, and at the conclusion of its meeting on “Making Africa’s Capital Work Better for Africa’s Development”, the African Development Bank elected Sidi Ould Tah of Mauritania as its president. Tah faces a mammoth task to deliver now an agenda that is old but remains elusive.

The AfDB, established in 1964, stands as one of the most significant institutions for Africa’s economic and political advancement. As it celebrates its 61st anniversary in 2025, the Bank remains not only a crucial financial mechanism for development but also a powerful symbol of pan-African unity, ambition, and self-reliance. The election of a new president in this milestone year adds heightened significance to the event, signaling both continuity and potential transformation in the Bank’s strategic vision. At a time when Africa faces a range of critical challenges—from climate change and debt vulnerability to youth unemployment and digital transformation—the leadership of the AfDB is central to shaping the continent’s response and future.

Economically, the AfDB is one of the leading sources of development finance in Africa, with a mandate to foster sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty. Its projects span energy, transport, agriculture, education, and health—often funding infrastructure and social investments that individual states cannot undertake alone. With assets valued at over \$200 billion and a strong credit rating, the Bank has become a trusted financial partner for African countries and an effective channel for multilateral aid (AfDB, 2024). The newly elected president will thus oversee the direction of this influential portfolio, determining which sectors and regions receive priority, and how the AfDB navigates evolving challenges such as debt sustainability and green financing.

Symbolically, the AfDB carries profound importance. As an institution founded by Africans for Africans, it affirms the continent’s commitment to crafting homegrown solutions and reducing dependency on institutions historically dominated by external powers. The AfDB provides an alternative development model—one that emphasizes regional ownership, tailored policy design, and inclusive growth (Taylor, 2019). The leadership transition in this 61st anniversary year is therefore not merely administrative but emblematic of Africa’s broader journey toward asserting greater agency in its development path. The identity, vision, and diplomatic posture of the new president will shape how Africa projects itself on the world stage.

Additionally, the AfDB is strategically positioned within a rapidly shifting global order. Africa’s population, projected to reach 2.5 billion by 2050, makes it a focal point for global investment, innovation, and labor. The AfDB plays a key role in coordinating regional development strategies and advocating for Africa’s interests in global financial and climate governance. As the world grapples with inequality, climate vulnerability, and digital divides, the Bank’s leadership will be critical in ensuring Africa is not just a subject of global agendas but a leader in defining them (Ade-sina, 2020). In this context, the new presidency becomes an opportunity to further elevate the Bank’s role as a continental voice and vision bearer.

Despite its many achievements, the AfDB has also faced a number of criticisms. Some observers argue that the Bank’s lending practices tend to favor large infrastructure projects at the expense of social services and grassroots development, thereby overlooking the immediate needs of vulnerable communities. Others point to bureaucratic inefficiencies and limited transparency in project implementation and evaluation. There have also been concerns about the Bank’s in-

ternal governance, particularly regarding accountability and the concentration of decision-making power among a few member states. Additionally, critics have noted that while the AfDB promotes pan-African ideals, it sometimes falls short in addressing the diverse political and economic realities across regions, resulting in uneven development impact (Bond, 2021; Cissé, 2022).

So, the AfDB's 61st anniversary in 2025 is a reminder of its long-standing mission to drive Africa's development through solidarity and strategic investment. The election of a new president in this commemorative year is both a symbolic and strategic moment—offering a chance to reinforce the Bank's legacy while adapting to new realities. The future of Africa's development hinges not only on the funds it secures but also on the principles it champions. The AfDB, under new leadership, has the opportunity to lead that transformation from within.

This edition with articles discussing a variety of concerns in Africa including infrastructural development, regional integration, expansion of education, external debt, peace and matters related to Africa's relations with others is dedicated to the pursuit of African integration. The AfDB was meant to play a critical role in this and under its new president.

I wish to thank all our authors in this edition, the reviewers who did a great job in guiding revisions to original submissions, and the editorial staff of the journal for shepherding yet another insightful edition.

Siphamandla Zondi
Editor-in-Chief

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Kenya's Infrastructural Question

Examining the Renegotiation of the SGR Debt with China

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Date Received: 6 Feb 2023

Date Accepted: 31 May 2025

Abstract

Kenya's Standard Gauge Railway (SGR), the country's largest infrastructure project since its 1963 independence, was initially seen as a mutually advantageous endeavour for both Kenya and China. For China, the SGR complemented its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), while President Uhuru Kenyatta viewed it as a monumental infrastructure development that would solidify his legacy. This article critically assesses Kenyatta's infrastructure legacy, with a particular focus on the parliamentary transport committee's proposal to renegotiate the SGR loan terms with China. Drawing on both secondary and primary sources, including the SGR loan agreements, the analysis indicates that the project was driven more by political interests than by genuine developmental needs. Kenyatta kept the SGR deal's details confidential and bypassed important oversight institutions. The leaked Auditor General's letter claiming that Mombasa Port had been used as collateral for the railway, raised concerns about a potential debt trap scenario with China. The article concludes that the SGR was primarily a Kenyan initiative, with the ensuing debt distress attributable to poor decision-making processes within the president's executive office, thereby necessitating calls for renegotiation of the loan terms.

Introduction

Kenya exemplifies how African countries can negotiate unfavourable deals, resulting in substantial debt to China. Following its independence in 1963, Kenya and China maintained a stable relationship, although this was significantly disrupted by allegations of actions undermining sovereignty during Jomo Kenyatta's presidency. Relations began to stabilise during the tenure of President Daniel Moi (Patroba, 2012, p.6). The concern that China might seize control of Mombasa port in the event of debt repayment defaults underscored the issue of debt-trap diplomacy in Africa-China relations. The term "debt-trap diplomacy" gained prominence in

2017 following Indian scholar Brahma Chellaney's critique of China's creditor imperialism. Debt-trap diplomacy refers to the practice where lenders use loans to gain access to strategic assets in developing countries, which are then exploited. Chellaney argues that China employs this strategy to acquire strategic assets in countries such as Sri Lanka that fail to meet their payment obligations(Chellaney, 2017).

An alternative perspective argues that the issue is not Chinese debt trap diplomacy but rather an African debt trap created by political elites who prioritised their interests over national economic needs. In Kenya, the government struggled to repay loans from China for the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and other infrastructure projects. The SGR agreement comprised a concessional loan of USD 1.6 billion, repayable over twenty years with a seven-year grace period and a two per cent interest rate, and a commercial loan of USD 1.63 billion for ten years with a five-year grace period(The Buyer Credit Loan Agreement, 2014).

Kenya committed to repaying the loans using the operational proceeds from the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and provided additional credit safeguards through a fifteen-year take-or-pay agreement (TOPA).

The TOPA agreement, signed between the Kenya Railway Corporation (KRC), the SGR's owner, and the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA), stipulated that KPA would transport a specified volume of freight annually via the SGR and required compensation for any shortfall if this target was not met (Brautigam et al., 2022)

In 2020, Kenya's transport parliamentary committee recommended renegotiating the terms of the bilateral agreement with China (Miriri, 2020). This recommendation prompted questions about the feasibility of Kenya successfully renegotiating the SGR loan agreement with China. While China does not force countries to accept its loans, it offers significant advantages over Western financial institutions by providing infrastructure loans with less stringent conditions. This is appealing to many African countries that face financial constraints and lack the capacity to independently develop infrastructure. Typically, Chinese loans are contingent upon the involvement of Chinese companies in project implementation, which has contributed to their dominance in Africa's infrastructure sector. President Kenyatta sought China's assistance for his infrastructure development agenda without fully considering the long-term economic implications for the country. Consequently, with China's support, Kenyatta's administration asserted that it had achieved greater infrastructure development, particularly in road construction, than any previous administration in Kenya's history (Shiundu, 2022). This article contributes to the discourse on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the potential of Chinese investments to evolve into a debt trap for African countries. The article begins with an examination of Africa's debt crisis, followed by an outline of the historical context of Kenya-China relations. It then analyses Kenya-China infrastructure relations during President Kenyatta's tenure, critically evaluates the SGR contract and the government's attempts to renegotiate its terms, and concludes by drawing lessons from Kenya-China relations concerning the SGR loan.

The Debt Crisis in Africa: A Conceptual Overview

The historical perspective highlights that the discourse on debt in Africa has persisted for a considerable duration. Following the decolonisation period, there was widespread anticipation that independence would lead to rapid development and improved quality of life for the population (Ezenwe, 1993). Contrary to expectations, many African countries faced various political, social, and economic challenges. Between 1980 and 2000, the continent faced a severe economic crisis characterised by the inability to achieve consistent economic growth and maintain macroeconomic

stability. This crisis hindered efforts to effectively reduce poverty in the short term and ultimately eliminate it in the long term (Geda, 2019, p. 2). It is well-documented that Africa experienced minimal or negligible economic growth from 1980 to 1990. Notably, the sub-Saharan region saw a decline in economic growth at an average annual rate of -1.2 per cent (Mbaku, 1994, p. 14). In stark contrast, regions in Asia recorded robust positive growth rates, averaging 8 per cent per year (Rispen, 2009, p.5). The economic challenges were evident through various indicators such as high levels of unemployment, stagnant growth in the agricultural sector, food shortages, drought conditions, political instability, declining trade conditions, foreign debt, and economic mismanagement characterised by corruption and misuse of resources (Ghai & de Alcántara, 1990, pp. 391-393). Developing countries faced challenges in countering their economies, leading to struggles with growing economic crises and large foreign debts. These countries had limited resources available to address these situations (Oppong, 2014, p. 321).

The implementation of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was a response to the economic challenges facing sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s. These programmes, aimed at economic recovery and self-sustainable development, primarily involved loans conditioned on measures such as currency devaluation, trade liberalisation, privatisation, and reduction of public spending (Bawa & Ateku, 2020, p.6). Despite these efforts, SAPs largely failed to yield positive outcomes. They led to a significant reduction in funding for education and health, increased unemployment due to staff layoffs, and adversely affected the agricultural sector due to the withdrawal of government subsidies. Thompson (2010) and Fatton (1992) both concluded that SAPs had detrimental effects on African governments, burdening them with significant debt and causing widespread economic and social failures (as cited in Logan, 2015). For instance, reduced spending on educational infrastructure led to a decline in school enrolment from 80 per cent in 1980 to 69 per cent in 1990 (Cheru, 1995, p. 237).

African rulers responded to the ineffectiveness of SAPs by devising their own initiatives to foster development and tackle the prevailing economic crisis and debt predicament. The African initiatives in question garnered extensive backing from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). They included, the Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty, which aimed to establish the African Economic Community (AEC), the Africa Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER), and the African Alternative Framework for Structural Adjustment (AAF-SAP). However, the efforts made proved to be futile and can be attributed to two main factors: firstly, the African governments' inability to implement the proposed measures, and secondly, the lack of support from Western creditors such as the World Bank and IMF, who perceived these African initiatives as potential competitors to their own undertakings (Bawa & Ateku, 2020, p. 13).

In the 1990s, the World Bank and IMF launched the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, offering debt relief to countries with strong governance, anti-corruption efforts, and prioritisation of healthcare and education. HIPC was later upgraded to HIPC II to provide more comprehensive and expedited relief, linking debt relief with poverty reduction and social policies. These initiatives required countries to implement political and economic liberalisation, deregulation, and privatisation (Omotola & Saliu, 2009, pp. 93-95). Despite these efforts, Africa remains heavily burdened by debt, thereby dispelling the notion that China is solely responsible for the continent's debt predicament.

Like Western creditors, China plays a significant role in global development finance. China's condition stands apart, in that it is relatively less stringent, requiring adherence to the one-China policy. In the context of developing countries, concerns emerge regarding their ability to negotiate development financing with China, particularly due to the contentious issue of debt

trap diplomacy associated with China's lending practices. China's history of lending to African countries dates back to projects such as the Tanzania-Zambia Railway (TAZARA) in the 1970s, which received substantial Chinese financial backing totalling USD 560 million (Yu, 2016, p.14). Notably, the TAZARA project did not initially raise significant concerns about China's development financing practices.

The discourse on debt trap diplomacy is often associated with the BRI, a geopolitical strategy launched by President Xi Jinping in 2013 (Himmer & Rod, 2023, p.250). The BRI aims to enhance trade, infrastructure, and investment links between China and over sixty countries across three continents (Nantulya, 2019). Of the 54 African countries, 52 have signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with China to participate in the initiative. The only notable exceptions are Mauritius and Eswatini. However, Mauritius may align with the BRI in the future due to its Free Trade Agreement with China concluded in 2019 (Gu et al., 2022, p.6). Conversely, Eswatini's participation remains unlikely due to its lack of diplomatic relations with China, a situation linked to its continued recognition of Taiwan. While the BRI presents African countries with opportunities to address infrastructural challenges, concerns have emerged regarding its potential to precipitate a new wave of debt characterised by a lack of transparency, unfair procurement practices, minimal technology transfer, limited local employment opportunities, non-compliance with national design standards, and substandard infrastructure quality (Lisinge, 2020, pp 2-3). In December 2018, an internal audit document highlighted the risk that Kenya might lose control of the strategic Mombasa port if it defaulted on loans from China, which were primarily used for constructing the SGR (Omondi, 2020). These concerns underscore the need for a thorough analysis of the BRI's potential impact on African countries. The following section offers an overview of Kenya-China relations.

Kenya-China Relations: An Overview

Kenya-China relations commenced in 1963 when China recognised Kenya's independence. Despite ideological differences, the two countries maintained a cordial relationship. As the most developed economy in East Africa, Kenya held significant international political and economic value (Mulati, 2019, p. 737). Under Jomo Kenyatta's government, bilateral relations began favourably with the appointment of Wang Yutien as the Chinese ambassador to Kenya in February 1964. That same year, Vice-President Jaramogi Odinga led a high-level Kenyan delegation to China, urging Chinese participation in a collective African effort to combat apartheid in South Africa and address colonial remnants in Africa (Mulati, 2019, p. 738). Exchanges involving senior government officials intensified to establish a solid foundation for bilateral relations. However, during Jomo Kenyatta's administration, bilateral relations between Kenya and China were notably unstable, with escalating tensions leading to the expulsion of diplomats from both countries (Plummer, 2019, pp. 13-14). This instability caused a temporary interruption in relations until the Moi administration took power in 1978.

According to (Shilaho, 2021, p. 181), the normalisation of Kenya-China relations occurred after Mao Zedong and Jomo Kenyatta exited the political stage. To stabilise these relations, President Daniel Arap Moi adopted a proactive engagement strategy with China, reflecting a significant departure from his previous scepticism during the 1960s. Moi had previously harboured suspicions about China's role in Kenya, even alleging Chinese involvement in a purported plot to incite revolution within the country. During Moi's administration (1978-2002), significant measures were undertaken to restore diplomatic relations. Notably, Kenya appointed an ambassador to China, and in return, China appointed an ambassador to Kenya. This mutual exchange signified the primary manifestation of the complete restoration of relations between the two countries (Mulati,

2019, p. 739). President Moi achieved a historical milestone in 1980, becoming the first Kenyan head of state to officially visit China. The primary outcome of this visit centred on Kenya's efforts to diversify its external partners, which culminated in the signing of a new economic and technical agreement, intended to replace the previous one that was finalised in 1964 (Sun, 2023, p. 137). This agreement incorporated an important provision wherein China pledged financial support to construct the Moi International Sports Centre, which served as the designated venue for the fourth edition of the 1987 All Africa Games. Moreover, within the framework of the economic cooperation agreement, President Moi successfully obtained funding for development projects that primarily benefited his political constituency situated in the Rift Valley region. Since gaining independence, Kenya has predominantly been governed by leaders from two ethnic groups, the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin. The presidents originating from these tribes have consistently prioritised the development of their respective regions, thereby illustrating the ethnically driven nature of Kenyan politics. The development projects included the building of a teaching hospital at the Moi University in Eldoret, the construction of the Gambogi-Serem highway and the supply of teaching equipment to Egerton University. Additionally, China pledged to provide Kenya with a total of ten scholarships annually and to facilitate two high-level military exchanges each year (Mulati, 2019, p. 739). President Moi made two additional visits to China during his tenure in office, specifically in 1988 and 1994 (Onjala, 2008, p.6). It can be argued that the Moi administration significantly contributed to the promotion and strengthening of the bilateral relations between Kenya and China, consequently paving the way for new opportunities to foster continuous growth and development.

President Mwai Kibaki, who succeeded Moi, introduced Kenya's Look East Policy to attract investments from China and other Asian countries (Kagwanja, 2015). Political tensions in Kenya have often strained relations with its traditional Western partners, driving the country to seek closer ties with China and other Eastern nations. Although perceived as anti-Western, this policy aimed to diversify Kenya's funding sources by engaging with Asian countries (Otele & Etyang, 2019, p.145). Despite this shift, the Kibaki administration maintained strong relations with Western allies, particularly in security matters (Otondi, 2014, p. 63). Kenya-China relations notably improved under Kibaki, beginning with his 2005 visit to China, which resulted in the signing of agreements in infrastructure, energy, and other sectors (Chege, 2008, p.26). Chinese President Hu Jintao's 2006 visit, the second by a Chinese president, marked a key moment, resulting in agreements for various projects including road maintenance and anti-malaria initiatives (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2006). The trade relationship between Kenya and China has remained an area necessitating improvement, as the trade balance is markedly skewed in favour of China. In 2002, Kenya's exports to China were only USD 5.798 million against China's exports to Kenya of USD 180.576 million, reflecting a significant trade imbalance. This situation reveals a significant disparity in the trading patterns between the two countries, with Kenya having previously enjoyed a more favourable position at the time of its independence. Trading patterns of this nature are, common in Africa-China relations, leading to a trade deficit for African countries, including Kenya. The Kibaki administration acknowledged this imbalance and pledged to work with the Chinese government to address and reduce this gap (Onjala, 2010; Patroba, 2012, p. 7). In 2008, the Kibaki administration launched Vision 2030, an economic development blueprint aimed at transforming Kenya into a globally competitive, industrialised middle-income nation with an improved quality of life for its citizens by 2030. Within Vision 2030, the Lamu Port, Southern Sudan, and Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET) was designated as a flagship project. The Kenya-led SGR was officially launched in Nairobi during President Kibaki's tenure, marked by a joint communiqué between President Mwai Kibaki and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni (Otele, 2021). The successful implementation of these projects depended on securing substantial financial resources. Recognising the importance of

infrastructure development in Kenya–China relations. In 2012, as part of his “Look East Policy,” President Kibaki sought Chinese investment in LAPSSET during a visit led by Liu Qi, a member of the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) Central Committee. However, with Kibaki’s presidency ending that year, the responsibility for advancing these projects fell to the incoming government (International Department Central Committee, 2012).

Kenya – China infrastructure relations during Uhuru Kenyatta’s presidency (2013–2022)

In August 2013, President Uhuru Kenyatta undertook his inaugural state visit to China, reflecting a continuation of the Look East Policy initiated by the preceding Kibaki administration. This policy, akin to those adopted by other African nations such as Zimbabwe, seeks to diversify sources of development finance, particularly in light of increasingly strained relations with traditional Western development financiers (Ojakerotu & Kamidza, 2018; Wekesa, 2013). The state visit pursued dual objectives: firstly, to enhance diplomatic relations between Kenya and China. During their initial meeting, Presidents Kenyatta and Xi Jinping concurred on upgrading the bilateral relationship to a Comprehensive Cooperative Partnership (Wekesa, 2013). Secondly, the visit aimed to diversify Kenya’s foreign policy options to secure financing for the development agenda of the Jubilee government (Raghavan, 2013; Sitienei, 2021, p. 115). The enhancing of Kenya–China relations under the Jubilee administration was influenced by the strained relations between Kenya and Western governments due to the International Criminal Court (ICC) charges against Kenyatta and his deputy, William Ruto (Sitienei, 2021, p. 114). China supported Kenya’s Jubilee government by endorsing an African Union (AU) motion presented to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which advocated for the deferral of charges against Kenya’s leaders (Kelley & Menya, 2013). Shilaho (2021, p. 184) posits that China’s consistent opposition to the Kenyan ICC cases can be attributed to its defence of economic interests in Africa, a stance influenced by its status as a permanent member of the UNSC.

The bilateral relationship was further enhanced in May 2014 when Chinese Premier Li Keqiang visited Kenya as part of his Africa tour. Several agreements were inked during this visit as part of the two countries’ comprehensive cooperative partnership. The most important feature of this visit was the signing of a USD3.8 billion finance deal for the construction of the SGR railway connecting Nairobi and Mombasa (Taylor, 2020, p. 33), which will help Kenya achieve its Vision 2030 goals. Kenya–China relations advanced further when Presidents Xi and Kenyatta upgraded bilateral ties to a Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership, the second highest classification among East African countries (Xuequan, 2017). China’s partnership diplomacy places comprehensive strategic cooperative partnerships among the higher levels of partnerships, reserved for countries with extensive economic ties with China. The word “cooperative” is added to widen the scope of bilateral relations. Furthermore, countries assigned higher-level partnerships have one or a combination of these attributes: they either trade strategic resources with China, are involved in the BRI, or have strategic resource supply projects with China (Braga, 2018). Although the so-called strategic resources purported to be traded with China are questionable, seeing that there seems to be more benefit to China than there is to Kenya. Kenya is not a mineral-rich resource country, but it does have BRI projects, which explains its high-ranking relationship with China.

Under Kenyatta’s administration, Kenya–China relations were upgraded twice, demonstrating the importance of the relationship. High-level visits also increased during Kenyatta’s presidency. Between 2013 and 2022, Kenya and China exchanged several high-level visits. President Kenyatta visited China four times since taking office. Kenyan opposition politicians Raila Odinga and Kalonzo Musyoka also visited China. Following the 2017 elections, which were marked by heightened political tensions, Beijing sought to ensure that both the opposition and the government adopted

a unified stance (Wafula, 2018). On the Chinese side, Premier Li Keqiang, State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Wang Yang (Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference – CPPCC), and Special Envoy Yang Jiechi are among the high-level Chinese leaders who have visited Kenya. Despite the strong ties between Kenya and China, it is notable that Kenya has yet to host a high-level visit from President Xi Jinping. The absence of a state visit to Kenya by President Xi Jinping suggests that the relationship between Nairobi and Beijing remains in the process of development. Consequently, assuming that the relationship is symmetrical and of equal significance to both parties does not accurately reflect the true nature of the bilateral relationship.

It was under Kenyatta's government (2013–2022), that Kenya significantly increased its borrowing from China, ranking among the African countries with the highest external debt to China. Figure 1 below demonstrates that Chinese lending reached its peak during President Kenyatta's tenure. Kell (2023) asserts that the persistent inclination to seek loans was rooted in a history of ineffective decision-making in Kenya and a planning process that prioritised short-term electoral considerations over long-term strategic needs.

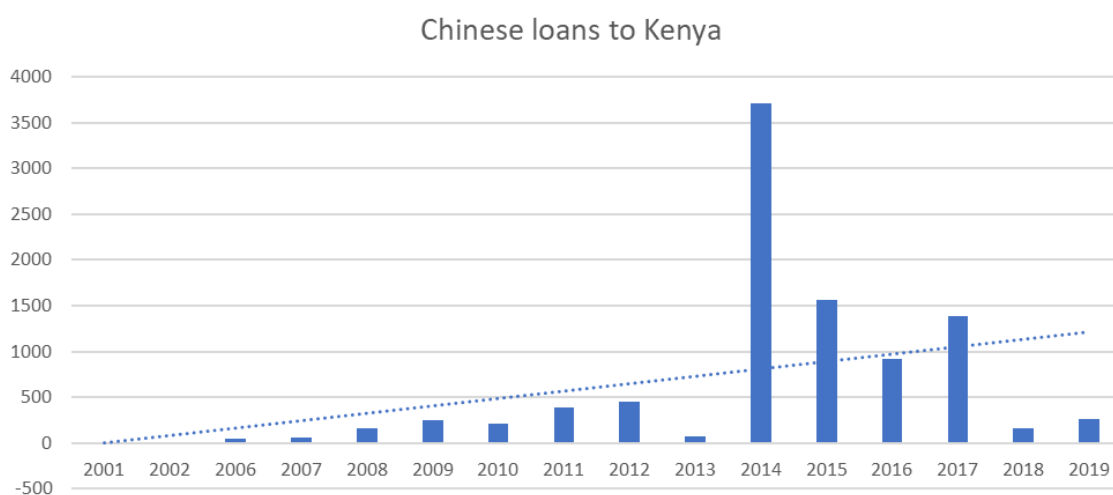


Figure 1: Chinese loans to Kenya

Source: (Chinese Loans to Africa Database, 2024)

China's strategic engagement with Kenya focused on infrastructure development, with the Kenyatta administration relying heavily on Chinese financing for major projects. Chinese companies, including Huawei and China Roads and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), dominated Kenya's infrastructure sector, mirroring their extensive involvement across Africa. For instance, Huawei committed USD 172.7 million to finance and construct a data centre and smart city in Konza Technology City (Moss, 2019), though the impact of this investment on Kenya remains to be fully assessed. Similarly, CRBC, despite being blacklisted by the World Bank for corrupt practices in the Philippines, financed and constructed the Nairobi Expressway (Kimari, 2021, p.142). This situation highlights a notable irony: that despite its blacklist status, CRBC continued to secure significant international contracts.

The Nairobi Expressway, one of the significant BRI projects, entailed the construction of a 27km dual-carriage toll road at an estimated cost of USD 668 million (Nyabiage, 2022). This infrastructure will connect Mlolongo in Machakos County with Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) and the Nairobi-Nakuru highway (Adoyo, 2021). It also forms an integral part of the northern transport corridor, which facilitates 85 percent of the freight traffic to neighbouring

landlocked countries, including Uganda, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and South Sudan. Given the substantial benefits that these neighbouring countries were expected to derive from the enhanced road and rail network, they needed to be more actively involved in the decision-making process of this initiative, rather than merely remaining passive observers of Kenya's efforts. According to Adoyo, (2021), the Nairobi Expressway is expected to boost Kenya's competitiveness in East Africa and reinforce Nairobi's position as a major economic hub. However, the project faced criticism due to the 27-year operational contract granted to China Roads and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), which will collect toll payments through its subsidiary, Moja Expressway (Mutua, 2022). This arrangement highlights the imbalanced nature of Kenya-China relations. Legal challenges have been raised against the toll fees due to a lack of public consultation (Kiplagat, 2022), and the tolls, ranging from \$2 to \$3, are set in US dollars to protect the Chinese operator from exchange rate fluctuations (Sipuka, 2023). This situation reflects a broader asymmetry in the Kenya-China relationship, where China appears to profit significantly beyond the initial investment, echoing historical patterns reminiscent of British imperialism in Africa.

Kenya's engagement with the BRI underscores Africa's strategic role in Chinese investments in infrastructure, including roads, railways, airports, bridges, and ports. Djibouti, Kenya, and Egypt were early adopters of the BRI, with additional African countries subsequently signing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with China (Gu et al., 2022; Lisinge, 2020). In 2017, President Kenyatta, during the BRI forum in Beijing, described Kenya's participation as a "paradigm shift" for the continent (Xinhua, 2017). The BRI has been pivotal for Kenya's infrastructure projects, including the SGR and the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) corridor. Initiated in 2013 as part of Vision 2030, LAPSSET aims to become East Africa's largest seaport with 32 berths, enhancing regional connectivity to Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Cameroon's port of Douala (LAPSSET Corridor Development Authority, 2016). This initiative aligns with the African Union's (AU) goals for regional integration (Kabukuru, 2016). While enhancing national competitiveness is crucial, it should not overshadow the importance of regional and continental integration. A nationalist approach may undermine the broader goals of regional and continental development. Africa's fragmentation—characterised by individual countries negotiating bilaterally with external partners—allows global actors, such as China, to exploit these fragmented interactions to their advantage. This can lead to deals that primarily benefit the external partners and potentially exploit African nations. Although Kenya should not abandon its development efforts to the AU, the lack of coordination among African countries remains a significant barrier to achieving common developmental goals.

In 2013, China Communications Construction Company (CCCC) secured the contract to build the initial three berths of the Lamu port project, valued at USD 484 million, after other investors withdrew, giving CCCC a competitive advantage (Anam, 2022; Williams, 2014). The first berth was completed in 2019, with the remaining two finished in early 2022, shortly before Kenyatta's term ended (Global Construction Review, 2021). LAPSSET is anticipated to contribute significantly to the AU's vision of a peaceful, prosperous, and fully integrated continent by 2063. Its admission into the AU's Presidential Infrastructure Championship Initiative (PICI) underscores its critical importance to the continent's regional integration aspirations (Kabukuru, 2016). When fully operational, the Lamu port could enhance Kenya's role in transshipment and maritime trade (Mwita, 2021), with significant Chinese involvement in its development. However, the projected USD 29 billion cost of the LAPSSET project raises concerns about its impact on Kenya's national debt (Chichava & Alden, 2021). At its conceptualisation, the project attracted international investors due to its strategic link to oil-rich South Sudan, aiming to reduce dependence on Sudan for oil exports (Goldsmith, 2020). However, investor interest waned due to concerns over the project's

slow progress, hindered by political, economic, and security challenges, ultimately leaving the Kenyan government to proceed independently(Wangiha, 2024).

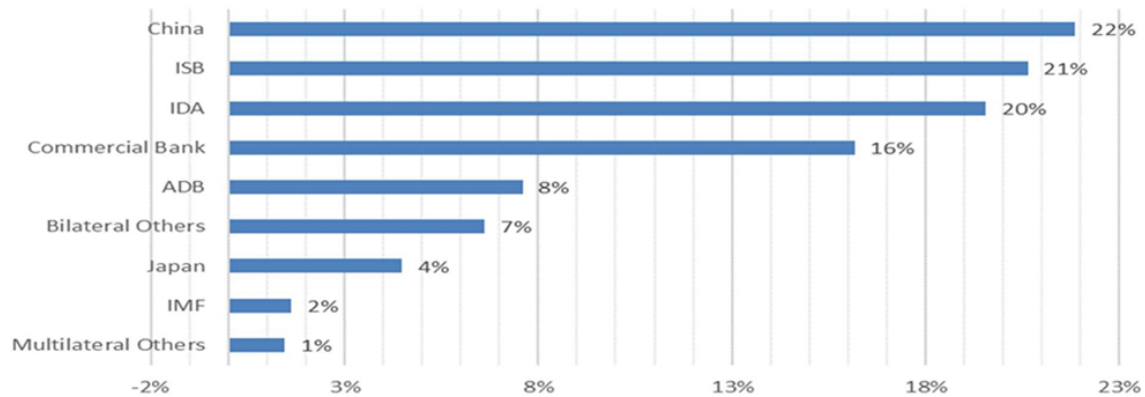


Figure 2: Classification of Kenya's Major Creditors

Source: (National Treasury and Planning, 2019)

At the beginning of Kenyatta's presidency in 2013, Kenya's public debt stood at approximately Ksh 1.89 trillion (USD 14 billion). By the end of his term in 2022, this debt had escalated to Ksh 8.2 trillion (USD 63 billion), partly due to borrowing from China, Kenya's largest creditor. During the Madaraka Day celebrations in June 2022, Kenyatta defended this borrowing as essential for funding infrastructure and accelerating economic growth (Ngugi, 2022). The origins of Kenya's most prominent BRI project, the SGR, are subject to debate. Kenyan oligarch Jimmy Wanjigi, the originator of the initiative, withdrew his support when the project transitioned from a public-private partnership to a government-led initiative(Nantulya, 2021). In April 2008, Du Fei, General Manager of China Roads and Bridges Corporation (CRBC), expressed interest in developing an electric railway linking Nairobi to Mombasa to then-Transport Minister Chirau Ali Makwere. The ministry did not respond, leading the Chinese firm to seek the support of Prime Minister Raila Odinga. Upon taking office in 2013, President Kenyatta integrated the SGR into Vision 2030, leveraging his familiarity with the project from his tenure as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister in Kibaki's administration(Alden & Otele, 2022, pp. 455-456).

In May 2014, Kenya and China agreed to modernise the British-era railway system for USD 3.8 billion (Taylor, 2020, p. 33). The China Roads and Bridges Corporation (CRBC) secured the contract for the first phase, connecting Mombasa and Nairobi, with branch lines to cities like Malaba, Naivasha, and Kisumu, and extensions to neighbouring countries(Ngwenya & Lema, 2020, p 45; Taylor, 2020). The Mombasa-Nairobi line was completed in 2017 despite procurement irregularities (Wissenbach & Wang, 2017). The second phase to the Rift Valley finished in 2019 for USD 1.5 billion(Elmendorp, 2019) (Elmendorp, 2019). However, the final phase remained incomplete due to Kenya's failure to secure further funding from China. Reports indicate that the Chinese government postponed funding for the Naivasha-Kisumu SGR line pending a comprehensive commercial viability study of the entire SGR project (Concrete Trends, 2019). The first and second phases of the SGR, totalling USD 5.3 billion, significantly increased Kenya's debt to China from USD 756 million in 2014 to USD 6.47 billion in 2019 (O. M. Otele et al., 2022). This rising debt highlighted concerns about developing countries' participation in the BRI, especially after Sri Lanka ceded control of a strategic port to settle its debt with China (Gopaldas, 2018). A genuinely equitable relationship cannot be realised if one party endures suffering. This understanding became apparent to Kenya's political establishment when the debt of approximately USD 6 billion associated with the SGR contract was disclosed(Africa Defense

Forum, 2023). As a result, the SGR project emerged as a crucial test of Kenya's capacity to reassess its arrangement with China.

The terms of the SGR Contract

Contracts between African governments and China often lack transparency, and the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) agreement was no exception. The terms of the SGR deal were kept confidential, known only to President Kenyatta and his close associates. Malito & Kiuwa (2022, p. 166) noted that the SGR became one of the most contested BRI projects, with various actors across different levels of governance disputing aspects of its policy implementations and outcomes. A significant turning point came with a 2018 letter from Auditor General Edward Ouko, which raised concerns about the terms of the SGR contract. In his letter, Ouko revealed that the Kenyan government had entered into a problematic agreement with China's EXIM Bank for the construction of the Mombasa-Nairobi line. The leaked letter provoked considerable controversy among Kenyan lawmakers and concerned citizens, who criticised the SGR deal and demanded greater transparency. In 2020, Kenyan lawmakers proposed that the government renegotiate the SGR loan agreements with China (Yusuf, 2020). Subsequently, in 2022, activists Wanjiru Gikonyo and Khelef Khalifa successfully petitioned the High Court, seeking access to the contracts, agreements, and feasibility studies related to the construction and operation of the SGR (Olander, 2022). However, the Kenyatta administration consistently disregarded court directives, drawing criticism for its lack of transparency regarding the SGR deal. The government maintained that its actions were constrained by a non-disclosure agreement (Muyanga, 2022). Clause 17.7 of the contract stipulated confidentiality requirements, obligating the Kenyan government to keep all terms and conditions of the agreement confidential. The contract explicitly prohibited the borrower from sharing any details of the agreement with external parties without written consent from the lender, the Export-Import Bank of China. Buyer Credit Loan Agreement (Buyer Credit Loan Agreement, 2014)

The government contended that disclosing the details of the agreement would breach the bilateral pact, potentially jeopardising diplomatic relations between Kenya and China (Mureithi, 2022). During his campaign, former Deputy President William Ruto pledged to reveal the specifics of the agreement if elected president (Hourel & Miriri, 2022). Following his victory in the disputed elections, Ruto honoured this pledge by making a partial disclosure of the SGR contract available to the public. This limited disclosure, atypical of African agreements with China, revealed the unfavourable terms that Kenya had accepted in the contract (Dahir, 2022). The SGR deal corroborated the perspective that African leaders are complicit in accepting disadvantageous agreements for their countries (Adogo, 2022). The Exim-Import Bank of China imposed stringent conditions for the loan, including a requirement that goods, technologies, and services financed by the railway's operations be predominantly sourced from China. This condition undermined Kenya's industrialisation efforts by excluding local manufacturers and suppliers from the procurement process. Additionally, the contract stipulated that all commodities and services procured under the SGR project would be exempt from taxation. If legal stipulations required taxes or duties, the Kenya Railway Authority, as the end user, would bear these costs (Preferential Buyer Credit Loan Agreement, 2014, p. 13). This blanket tax exemption prevented Kenya from generating potential revenue from the importation of Chinese goods, deviating from standard business practices. Mulaku & Sabala (2024, p. 13) contend that the funding for the SGR represents a form of neo-colonialism, as Chinese financial support influenced Kenya's decision to grant tax incentives designed to maximise profits for Chinese investors.

Furthermore, the contract stipulated that disputes arising from the agreement must be resolved through binding arbitration overseen by the China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (CIETAC) in Beijing. This choice likely reflects China's perceived distrust of the Kenyan judicial system, which is widely considered compromised by corrupt practices. Additionally, Kenya was required to remit a management fee of USD 4 million within 30 days of formalising the agreement, with both the management and commitment fees slated for repayment at a rate of 0.25 per cent. Kenya was also obligated to independently procure approximately 15 per cent of the funds, to be paid to the contractor, CRBC, before the initial disbursement of the loan (Preferential Buyer Credit Loan Agreement, 2014, pp. 6–7). Unsurprisingly, the SGR contract was crafted to prioritise Chinese interests, illustrating the Kenyan government's inability to secure an agreement that adequately addresses its national interests. Furthermore, the contract required Kenya to maintain a minimum balance of USD 175 million in an escrow account, thereby ensuring the lender's confidence in Kenya's ability to fulfil its loan repayment obligations (Kipkemoi, 2022). Clause 6.12 of the agreement stipulated that the Kenyan government or relevant authorities implement preferential policies, regulations, or approvals for the railway development fund (RDF) (Preferential Buyer Credit Loan Agreement, 2014, p. 17). This measure aimed to safeguard the lender's interests and ensure that, in the event of loan repayment failure, the RDF would be used as the primary resource to settle any outstanding obligations (Kipkemoi, 2022). The asymmetrical nature of the contract is evident in Clause 8.3, which prohibits the borrower from assigning or transferring any rights or obligations to a third party without the lender's written consent, while allowing the lender to transfer its rights and obligations without informing the borrower in case of default (Kipkemoi, 2022; Preferential Buyer Credit Loan Agreement, 2014, p. 19). The SGR agreement thus positioned Kenya unfavourably. Former Transport Cabinet Secretary Michael Kamau admitted to the Parliamentary Public Investment Committee that procurement laws were ignored during negotiations with China, leading to the acceptance of imposed terms. The procurement process bypassed competitive bidding, as required by the Public Procurement and Disposal Act, favouring CRBC (Taylor, 2020, p. 33). The selective disclosure of the SGR deal did not confirm the use of a strategic asset, debunking claims that the Mombasa port was pledged as collateral.

Mulaku & Sabala, (2024) argue that funding and developing mega infrastructure projects is a modern manifestation of neo-colonialism. Evidence of this can be seen in Clause 8.3 of the SGR agreement, which restricts the borrower from assigning or transferring any rights or obligations without the lender's written consent. In contrast, the lender retains the exclusive authority to assign or transfer its rights and obligations without informing the borrower in the event of a default (Kipkemoi, 2022; Preferential Buyer Credit Loan Agreement, 2014, P. 19). The SGR agreement thus placed Kenya in a burdensome and unfavourable position. Former Transport Cabinet Secretary Michael Kamau admitted to the Parliamentary Public Investment Committee that procurement laws were ignored during negotiations with China, compelling Kenya to accept the imposed terms. Taylor, (2020. p. 33) confirms this view, noting that the procurement process bypassed competitive bidding as required by the Public Procurement and Disposal Act, thereby favouring CRBC in securing the tender. Initial reports suggesting that the Mombasa port was used as collateral are contradicted by the disclosed information, which shows that the SGR contract did not include the port as collateral. However, the terms of the SGR agreement highlight the need for Kenya to revise its contractual framework in future negotiations through the proposed renegotiation process.

Kenya's Approach to Renegotiating SGR's Terms

In 2020, the Kenyan Parliament urged the National Treasury and government to reassess the SGR loan conditions. Kimani Ichung'wa, former chairman of the Parliamentary Budget Committee, admitted that the investment decisions were detrimental to the country and advocated for renegotiation of the debt with China to prevent a severe financial crisis (Anyanzwa, 2020).

According to Ichung'wa –

“It is very easy to resolve this issue of loan repayment by just sitting down with the Chinese and telling them we made a mistake. We owe you all this money, but you are also demanding so much from us in terms of repayment. This is a debt. Look, our economy is beaten, and we are not able to pay. We are not saying the debt is not there, but we want to renegotiate what we owe you and the terms of payment.” (Anyanzwa, 2020).

Ichung'wa's proposal suggested a simplistic approach of directly asking China to amend the contract terms. However, the Chinese view such financial matters with great seriousness, requiring careful negotiation for favourable results. The Kenyan authorities should have considered this from the outset. By August 2022, as Kenyatta's presidency ended, it was clear that no renegotiation strategy had been prepared for the Chinese, leaving the debt issue to the incoming administration. The August 2022 election acted as a referendum on Kenyatta's debt-financed infrastructure legacy. Candidates Raila Odinga and William Ruto offered contrasting debt management strategies. Odinga pledged to renegotiate Kenya's debt with China, proposing a high-level negotiating team to enhance the likelihood of favourable terms, recognising the importance of a robust negotiation strategy given China's expertise (AidData, 2024). In contrast, Ruto's campaign adopted an anti-China stance, blaming the rising debt on loans from China acquired during Kenyatta's administration, of which Ruto was a part. He pledged to disclose Chinese contracts and renegotiate the loans (Voice of America, 2022) but did not outline a concrete plan for these negotiations (AidData, 2024). After taking office, Ruto's position on China softened; he attended the BRI forum in 2023 and sought an additional USD 1 billion from China to finance stalled projects, despite the public debt reaching USD 70 billion for the 2022/2023 fiscal year (Clynch, 2023; The East African, 2023). This highlights the fact that renegotiating the SGR deal is a complex process that cannot be resolved merely by declaring the agreement a mistake, as Ichung'wa suggested. The Kenyan government should have developed a detailed strategy with clear objectives for addressing the debt issue, but such a plan has yet to be presented to China for consideration.

Lessons from Kenya's Experience on African Deals with China

A key lesson for Kenya and other African countries is that China strategically engages in Africa to secure advantageous outcomes and maximise their return on investment, rather than acting out of altruism. De Kluiver (2023) supports this perspective, arguing that the Chinese lending model differs from Western models in its emphasis on profit maximisation. This approach often results in loan agreements that impose significant strain on weaker economies. While China's "win-win" narrative clearly articulates its objectives, Africa's goals in these engagements remain ambiguous and poorly defined. African leaders must recognise this reality and negotiate agreements that advance African interests in their interactions with China. What lessons can other African nations derive from Kenya's SGR loan agreement? The SGR, a flagship project of Kenya's Vision 2030, was conceived by Kenyans, not the Chinese, highlighting that it was driven by Kenyan interests. Rather, it was Kenya's political elite who leveraged Chinese investment and

development financing to advance domestic political agendas, thereby fuelling their own greed. In their analysis, Mulaku & Sabala (2024, pp. 13-14) confirm that the inclusion of influential local figures in China's client-patron networks, characterised by corruption and personal gain, was evident in the development, implementation, and maintenance of the SGR. Similarly, Wang, (2023, p. 61) contends that Kenyatta's promotion of the SGR was politically motivated. Kenyatta pledged to develop a modern rail network in return for electoral support from Jimmy Wanjigi, the principal financier of his 2013 campaign. After winning the election, Kenyatta made the SGR a flagship project, managing it directly from the presidency and bypassing formal institutions. Kenyatta exercised complete control over the project, excluding even the parliament from any involvement. This approach mirrors the exclusion strategy utilised by former Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak with the 2016 loans from China (Abadi, 2022). Challenges related to the SGR were addressed through informal networks to expedite solutions (Wang, 2023). This action entirely excluded the parliament from fulfilling its oversight role, which is essential for holding the executive accountable for its actions and ensuring the implementation of policies following legal and budgetary provisions. Kenyan institutions are weak and entrenched in neo-patrimonial tendencies, contributing to the stagnation of the country's development.

The Kenyan judiciary remains constrained by the executive branch of government. However, the judicial decision in June 2020, which determined that the SGR deal violated Kenyan procurement laws, represents a positive step towards ensuring greater compliance and transparency in future infrastructure agreements. Key institutions, such as parliament, must rigorously scrutinise government borrowing and spending to prevent the country from veering onto an unsustainable economic path. The SGR deal significantly contributed to Kenya's national debt, which the government subsequently sought to offset through increased taxation on citizens. Therefore, parliament must fulfil its oversight role, ensuring that laws serve the interests of the populace rather than being co-opted by an executive focused on re-election.

Improved transparency in infrastructure projects is essential. The lack of transparency further complicated the situation, as the SGR deal was conducted in secrecy, with only the presidency having access to critical information, thereby disadvantaging the public. The exclusionary approach contravened Article 10(2) of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, which mandates public participation as a fundamental governance principle in project management. (Alden & Otele, 2022) argue that transparency necessitates the scrutiny of projects through interactions with both state and non-state actors. (Soule, 2022) emphasises that a critical lesson in negotiating successful infrastructure deals with China is the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the process. This practice contributed to Benin's successful negotiations, as Beninese negotiators did not accept the contract from their Chinese counterparts without a thorough review. Instead, they conducted a comprehensive multistakeholder evaluation (Soulé, 2022, p.12). In contrast to Kenya's approach, where Kenyatta's centralised control undermined key ministries and institutions, Benin adopted a more inclusive strategy. This indicates that the Kenyan government negotiated the SGR deal from a position of weakness. In Benin's case, the Ministry of Environment, Habitat, and Urbanism, as the lead coordinator, engaged other relevant ministries to ensure the contract aligned with Beninese laws. This collaborative approach, which involved multiple rounds of negotiations, enabled Beninese officials to present a united front and effectively press for necessary modifications from their Chinese counterparts (Soulé, 2022, p. 12).

African countries often engage with China in isolation, revealing a critical deficiency in knowledge sharing. While each country has varying levels of engagement with China, sharing knowledge is essential. Allegations of debt-trap diplomacy, which originated with Sri Lanka's Hambantota port and later extended to Africa, highlighted these concerns. Claims were made that China might

seize strategic assets in Zambia due to potential debt defaults and that Kenya had used Mombasa port as collateral for the SGR. Although these allegations were unfounded, they underscore the significant debt challenges African governments face when dealing with China. Countries like Angola and Ethiopia, with substantial debt to China, illustrate the importance of learning from each other's experiences in managing Chinese loans. Knowledge sharing is crucial for negotiating more favourable terms with China and avoiding similar pitfalls. For instance, under the leadership of former President John Magufuli, demonstrated that rejecting detrimental agreements, Tanzania demonstrated that African countries could reject agreements that are detrimental to their national interests, embodying the principle that it is preferable to forgo a deal than to accept a detrimental one. Outside the continent, countries such as Malaysia have successfully renegotiated their infrastructure deals with China. This illustrates that, although renegotiating deals with China is possible, the success experienced by one country does not guarantee similar results for others. Therefore, it is essential for the AU and subregional organisations, such as the East African Community (EAC), to establish mechanisms for knowledge sharing. Such mechanisms would enable member states to exchange strategies, thereby strengthening their negotiating positions and achieving more favourable agreements with China.

Mega projects often extend beyond national borders, impacting and involving neighbouring countries. The SGR project, intended to reach across the EAC region, exemplifies this regional scope, with plans to extend to Tanzania and Uganda. However, the lack of coordination among EAC members is evident, as each country developed its own SGR plans and approached China (other investors) unilaterally for funding. This fragmented approach underscores a substantial deficiency in regional cooperation within Africa. While China initially financed parts of these projects, such as in Kenya, other countries encountered challenges. In Uganda, Chinese financing was insufficient, leading the country to seek alternative funds from partners like Turkey. Similarly, Tanzania faced delays due to extended negotiations with China. Kenya, meanwhile, continues to pursue Chinese funding for its stalled SGR projects. Presenting the SGR as a regional initiative, rather than as separate national projects, could have strengthened bargaining leverage and potentially secured more favourable terms from China. The project's economic and financial viability would be greatly enhanced by integrating the EAC countries, thus maximising regional benefits and the overall impact of the railway line.

Kenya and other African governments should prioritise capacity building by establishing teams of technical experts dedicated to negotiating contracts with the Chinese. Emerging literature is beginning to elucidate the practices and strategies employed by the Chinese government in lending to foreign governments. For instance, a study by the Centre for Global Development outlines the nature of these contracts and how they are drafted to safeguard Chinese interests (Gelpern et al., 2021). This information is valuable for African governments, enabling them to better prepare their technical negotiation teams for future engagements with Chinese counterparts. Several African countries, including Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, and Zambia, have found themselves in positions of weakness, necessitating the renegotiation of loan terms with China due to financial distress. However, they often approach this situation with a nonchalant attitude, lacking a well-defined strategy for engaging their Chinese counterparts. This approach grants the Chinese an advantage, enabling them to control the negotiation process, as evidenced by the Sicomines deal in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Chinese typically avoid negative publicity, and the terms of reference for the renegotiations of the Sicomines deal have been kept confidential (Livingstone, 2024). Renegotiating unfavourable deals necessitates transparency and must be supported by a comprehensive debt repayment strategy, which is crucial for Kenya and other African countries indebted to China. Unfortunately, such strategic planning is frequently lacking. The Chinese are known for their rigorous negotiation tactics, and mere initiation of dialogue is

insufficient as a strategy. This is evidenced by Malaysia's experience with renegotiations. Former Prime Minister Najib Razak faced criticism for securing unfavourable deals with China, leading to accusations of "selling Malaysia to China." After the Pakatan Harapan coalition won the 2018 Malaysian elections on an anti-China platform, it became clear that renegotiating with China was complex. Indeed, Daim Zainuddin, the head of Malaysia's Council of Eminent Persons advisory body who led the renegotiations with China, admitted that it was "the longest, most complicated, and most challenging deal." There was no option to completely back out of the deal, as the blanket cancellation of Chinese-funded projects was impractical due to a termination penalty of approximately USD 5.2 billion. Although Malaysia did not achieve all its objectives, it successfully reduced contract costs to USD 10.3 billion and negotiated an increase in the participation of local Malaysian partners from 30 percent to 40 percent (Bowie, 2019). This case illustrates the necessity of a well-formulated strategy when renegotiating loan agreements with China. It underscores the challenges inherent in such renegotiations and highlights the critical importance of thorough and intense preparations.

Conclusion

The SGR case highlights the detrimental impact of poor decision-making processes in African countries, thereby debunking the narrative that China is engaging in debt-trap diplomacy. It reveals that the SGR project was driven by political motivations rather than genuine developmental needs. Key oversight institutions were excluded from the deal, and President Kenyatta employed exclusionary strategies to keep the loan agreement's details confidential, leading to the massive accumulation of debt to China. Controversy and debate were ignited by a leaked letter from the Auditor General's office, exposing the SGR deal as favouring Chinese interests over Kenya's. This analysis underscores that future loan agreements of such magnitude must be approached differently, ensuring transparency and the inclusion of oversight institutions to safeguard national interests. African governments must adopt a strategic and informed approach when negotiating infrastructure development loans with China to secure advantageous outcomes. Recognising that China seeks to maximise its return on investment rather than acting altruistically, African countries must prioritise their own interests in these agreements. The experience of Kenya's SGR loan, driven by political elite interests and characterised by a lack of parliamentary involvement, underscores the need for greater transparency and compliance with governance principles. Learning from the Kenyan judiciary's decision to enforce procurement laws and the Malaysian experience with renegotiations, African governments should enhance transparency in infrastructure projects, share knowledge regionally, and establish technical expert teams dedicated to negotiating with China. Additionally, developing a comprehensive debt repayment strategy is essential for managing and renegotiating unfavourable deals.

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Women Voices in Inter-Party Debates during the 2021 Ethiopian General Elections

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Date Received: 13 June 2022

Date Accepted: 31 May 2025

Abstract

In Ethiopia, multiparty elections are being organised every five years. For the 2021 general election, 47 parties were registered and more than 9,300 candidates ran for seats, of which, 1,982 were women candidates. This study explored women candidates' participation in election debates during the 2021 Ethiopian general elections. Using qualitative approach and content analysis technique, 35 television debates streamed in six stations were watched and analysed. Moreover, media legal documents and election reports are reviewed in gender lens. The findings revealed that the Ethiopia mainstream media cover men and women politicians differently during election campaign. The frequency of parties' appearance in television debates and their gender representation are found to vary depending on the issues discussed and the media style of coverage. Female politicians were primarily being featured under the theme of gender, health, and education debates. Moreover, women candidates' role in the election debates was limited in introducing and summarising their party policies while their men counterparts took the modest air time to present the details of the policy alternatives and to criticise the existing policies.

Keywords: women candidates, election debates, Ethiopia, In-equal representation, Media

Introduction

The 2021 Ethiopia election was held, between June and September 2021, under extremely difficult circumstances. Ethiopia was facing a multitude of challenges from within and outside, threatening its very existence. The Covid-19 pandemic forced to postpone the country's general election for a year. Inter-communal conflicts and armed clashes made it impossible to hold elections in various parts of the country. Relations between the federal government and the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) deteriorated into a full-scale armed conflict after November 2020. The conflict caused a devastating humanitarian crisis in the country. Some opposition parties would boycott the elections claiming that there was not a level playing field on which to compete (Ayele, 2022).

Even under normal circumstances, elections in Ethiopia have historically faced numerous challenges due to a mix of political, social, logistical, and security-related factors. Ethiopia's federal system, based on ethnic lines, has led to heightened ethnic nationalism and rivalries, complicating political consensus. Armed conflicts in regions create unsafe conditions for voters and election officials. Ethiopia's challenging geography and underdeveloped infrastructure make it difficult to distribute election materials and ensure voting access in remote regions. Poor infrastructure, lack of resources, and security concerns has often caused postponements or cancellations in certain areas. There are concerns about the impartiality of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE) have been raised by opposition groups and civil society organisations.

Disputes over electoral frameworks and their implementation can lead to disagreements and lack of clarity in processes. The government has been accused of restricting access to information, including shutting down the internet, which hampers voters' ability to make informed decisions. Allegations of vote rigging, intimidation, and ballot tampering undermine public trust (the International Republican Institute and National Democratic Institute report (Kidanie and Hailu, 2024; NRI-NDI, 2021). Women and marginalised groups often face significant barriers to participating as voters and candidates. State and private media are often seen as biased towards specific parties, ethnic groups, or gender. Despite increased support of women's equal participation in development, women records poor participation in politics and decision making positions (Anifowose, 2004; Waylen, 2017).

Van der Pasand Aldering (2020) stated that gender bias regarding the quantity and kind of media attention politicians obtain is a significant issue, given that contemporary politics is heavily influenced by media and voters depend almost entirely on the media as their source of political knowledge. Negative reporting from the media can damage the electoral prospects of female candidates and jeopardise the political careers of incumbent women politicians. In addition to impacting the career opportunities for women in politics and thus directly contributing to their underrepresentation in this field. The portrayals of male and female politicians in the media are likely to reinforce the perception that politics. This, consequently, can diminish the political aspirations of young women and deter political elites from choosing women, resulting in ongoing underrepresentation of women in the future.

There is insufficient study on gender, media and elections focused on Ethiopia. Most of the researchers conducted so far are on the portrayal of women in Ethiopian print media, movies, advertising (Gebremichael, 2008; Jemaneh, 2014; Gebreselassie, 2006; Tiruneh and Ladsaria, 2019; Zeleke, 2004). When election periods are accompanied by a serious set of obstacles, as occurred during the 2021 Ethiopia election, it ignites an interest to examine how media platform entertained women candidates during the election campaign. The portrayal of women in Media in general and during election camping in particular is an important area to study because of the unequal representation that women receive.

Research questions that guided the study on which this paper is based were:

- What is the policy focus of the 2021 Ethiopia election debates?
- How many parties and women candidates are participated in the election debates?
- How is the gender proportion of the media debate participants and debate moderators?
- What are the contents covered during the election debates?
- What roles played by women candidates in the debate sessions?

A qualitative research approach and content analysis was chosen as a method of inquiry for this study. Thirty-Five debates that were streamed on television, from 19th April to 14th June 2021, were watched and analysed. Debates streamed in Televisions are chosen for analysis hence it is the dominant sources of information during election campaigns in Ethiopia. In countries with high illiteracy rates, radio and television still play important role in promoting women's political participation (Olivola and Todourov, 2010). The selected 35 debates were analysed based on different content categories such as: the policy focus of the debate; the number of parties participating in the debate; the gender proportion of the debate participants and debate facilitators; the content coverage of the debates and the role of the female candidates in the debate sessions.

This paper is organised into the following sections. First, historical context of women representation in Ethiopia politics is presented. Second, media portray of women politicians during election campaign is discussed followed by theoretical foundations of female political candidates and media coverage. Thirdly, Ethiopian election, Media laws, and gender representation are presented followed by the nature of political parties in the 2021 Ethiopian general election. Then, policy issues for the 2021 Ethiopian general election debates are explained followed by role of women representatives in the debates, and challenges of women related to media use for campaigning. Finally, conclusions and way forwards are discussed.

The Media Context in Ethiopia

According to the Ethiopian Media Authority (2022), in Ethiopia there are 20 public media, 38 commercial broadcasters, 56 community broadcasters and 3 subscription media that have started transmission and are ready to transmit. Therefore, there are a highly increasing number of channels as well as media advancements in Ethiopia. For the 2021 general election campaign, free air time distribution was made for 23 Television Stations, 21 Radio Broadcasting Corporations, and five Newspapers. For this study, a total of 35 television debates streamed in six televisions are reviewed (web links of the debates are included at the end of the paper). The debates are streamed by five privately owned Televisions: AHADU, ASHAM TV, Ethiopian Satellite Television and Radio (ESAT tv), Fana Broad Casting TV (FBC), and WALTA TV; and one state owned medium-Ethiopian Broad Casting (EBC) Television. In Ethiopia, media via Television and Radio stations has a history of being controlled by state rule. Since its establishment in 1962, Ethiopia Television's [ETV] operations and content has been regulated by government. In 2014, the channel changed its name from ETV to Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC). Fana Broad Casting TV[FBC] is a private shareholder television owned by the four coalitions of the former ruling party called the EPRDF, now Prosperity Party. Ethiopian Satellite [ESAT] television is founded and powered by collective opponents of the then EPRDF regime, mainly the Diaspora community. WALTA TV is an Ethiopian television network was launched on 2017 and is owned and operated by Walta Media and Communication Corporate S.C. Ethiopian Satellite Television and Radio (ESAT tv) was established in 2010 by a group of exiled journalists. ASHAM and AHADU are commercial televisions owned by investors with their own new style and formats with explicit content. These televisions were purposively selected as they had streamed at least five debates in election out of the eight policy agendas approved by the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE).

Historical Context of Women Representation in Ethiopia Politics

In Ethiopia, since the monarchical period, the political and decision-making role of women at the higher post has been impressive (Kebede, 2020). There were many queens and empresses during the monarchical feudal system. During the Italian occupation (1935-1941), women fought Italy with patriotism. Ethiopian women's role began to expand into public space, during and in the aftermaths of the Italian invasion, as some women formed an association in 1933 and started providing training on treating war victims (Eresso, 2021). Women's right to vote was granted in 1955 and the first woman joined the Ethiopian parliament in 1957.

In the 1960s and 70s, the legacy of women's active political participation has continued during the famous Students' Movement, in the Workers Party of Ethiopia, Women's Associations, and as a combatant in different liberation fronts. Ethiopia entered the era of party politics at the eve of the revolutionary upheaval of 1974. After 1991, prominent women politicians, in favour or against the government, have come to the political arena (Ethiopia Today, 2019). Elections have been restarted to be organised every five years since 1995, when nominal multiparty elections

were introduced. From 1991 to 2021 the share of women in parliament grew from two per cent to 38.8 per cent. The first woman speaker to the House of People Representative was elected in 1995 (Hailu, 2017; Richards, 2020). When Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took power in 2018, he appointed women to half the cabinet positions. Women have been appointed in top ministerial positions including as President of the country, Chief of Justice, Chair of the National Election board (Africa News.Com, 2018; Breuning and Okundaye, 2021). Despite the progress Ethiopia has achieved in increasing women political participation, women are still underrepresented in federal and regional parliaments and decision making positions (Hailu, 2017; Bekana, 2020).

Media Portray of Women Politicians during Election Campaign

One of the contributing factors for the low participation of Ethiopian women in politics could be the media representation of women politicians in general and women's candidate performance during the period of election campaign. The first-ever televised political debate was between Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy in 1960, which forever changed the nature of political campaigns (Mehltretter Drury and Herbeck, 2016). Since then, the media have an essential role as a primary source of information for voters about politics and elections.

Elections are a period of intense media scrutiny and voters often will rely on the news to forge their opinion and vote (Llanos and Nina, 2011; Macharia, 2020). Campaigning always precedes elections and there is always a keen interest in politics and representatives of political movements during election times. Politicians with higher media coverage are more visible to voters. The amount and type of campaign coverage can influence voters' perceptions of politicians (Lühiste and Banducci, 2016).

According to Macharia (2020), women only make 24 per cent of the persons read, seen or viewed in the news until 2015. Bystrom (2004) studied nearly 600 articles, and found 6 per cent of newspaper articles mentioning female candidate appearance, sex, and marital status, while only one per cent mentioned that of male candidates. Conroy, Oliver, Breckenridge-Jackson, & Heldman (2015) found that of 67 openly sexist remarks they noted in newspaper articles, 94 per cent were directed at female candidates. Women candidates may also receive coverage focusing more on their personal qualities, their responsibilities as wives and mothers, or their opinions about "female issues" than on their political positions.

Unfair media coverage can hurt the electoral chances of women candidates and threaten the political longevity of sitting women politicians (Atkeson and Krebs, 2008). According to Van der Pas and Aaldering (2020, p. 115), media images of men and women politicians affect the career prospects of women in politics and contribute to underrepresentation of women in politics by strengthening the association between politics and the masculine realm. This, in turn, can depress political ambitions of young women and discourage political elites from selecting women, leading to continued underrepresentation of women in the future.

Gender bias in the amount and type of media coverage towards politicians is an important topic for debate since present-day politics strongly fall under media influence. Voters heavily rely on the media as their source of political information. In Ethiopia, we have only limited insight into the dynamics of media coverage during election campaign in general and how women politicians are treated in particular. This study thus explores how women politicians were participating in the media campaigns during the 2021 general election. This study therefore reviewed gender perspective of election debate; examined media legal documents and their gender sensitiveness during elections; analysed the policy focuses of the 2021 Ethiopian election debates; the number

of parties and their gender proportion of participation in the debates; the content coverage of the debates, and the role of the women candidates in the debates.

Theoretical Foundations of Female Political Candidates and Media Coverage

There are contradictory findings regarding gender and the visibility of politicians (Brooks, 2013; Wagner, Trimble, Sampert, & Gerrits, 2017). There are scholars who argue women politicians receive more attention to their appearance and personal life, more negative viability coverage, and, to some extent, stereotypical issue and trait coverage (Van der Pas and Aaldering, 2020). Others argue women were previously disadvantaged but are now appearing on an equal footing with men (Fernandez-Garcia, 2016; Ward, 2016). There are authors who argue that women politicians receive less media attention than their male counterparts (Humphrecht and Esser, 2017; Laverly, 2013; Verge and Pastor, 2018).

Overall, there are roughly four views regarding differences between male and female politicians in campaign coverage: the volume of coverage or visibility, politicians' issues, politicians' traits, and politicians' viability (Atkeson & Krebs, 2008). To the 'glass ceiling' analogy, women's underrepresentation in political news coverage is characterised as 'paper ceiling' (Shor, Van De Rijt, Miltsov, Kulkarni, and Skiena, 2015, p. 964). Agenda-setting theory argues that the volume of media attention influences voters' perceptions of politicians. The lack of press attention is a 'potential roadblock for women candidates because citizens are unlikely to vote for candidates with whom they are unfamiliar' (Kahn, 1994, p. 171).

Arguments also lead to different views as to why media pay different amounts of attention to men and women politicians: the news value of rarity; networks; and social attitudes. First, news values are the criteria journalists use to determine what to cover. Second, established networks could be a mechanism that drives gender differences in Media's visibility (Hooghe, Jacobs, & Claes, 2015; Vos, 2013). Political journalism is a majority-male profession and journalists may prefer for same-gender contacts, resulting in men politicians being more visible in the Media (Aalberg and Strömbäck, 2011). Third, male politicians could receive more media attention as a result of societal stereotypes. In general, women are stereotypically associated with private life and men with public life (O'Neill, Savigny, & Cann, 2016). Media Bias Theory argues that the press "plays an integral role in the campaign by framing, shaping, ignoring or presenting the candidates to the public" (Falk, 2010, p.2). If the media frame stories on male and female candidates differently, the electorate may internalise the bias inherent in these messages (Lavery, 2013).

In general, studies so far have stressed how important appearing in the media is for political actors. The higher visibility and viability of a party and candidate leads to increases in vote intentions for that party/candidate (Van der Meer, et al., 2020). Unbalanced and unfair media coverage of gender during elections is expected to impact the public's understanding and influence gender balance in the result of electoral competitions. This study, therefore, considers the two aspects: the visibility of female politicians in campaign coverage and the issues in relation to which the media features them.

Ethiopian Election, Media Laws, and Gender Representation

In Ethiopia, accredited media representatives only are allowed to report the election events. The media are selected based on the Code of Conduct for the Mass Media and Journalists on the Manner of Reporting about Elections Regulation Number 6/2010. To receive accreditation, journalists are required to sign and abide by a code of conduct that binds them to the principle

of fair, balanced and unbiased reporting. Upon receiving a certificate of candidacy from NEBE, political parties and individual candidates are given the right to conduct election campaigns by sending written notification to their respective administrations or municipalities. However, campaigning is prohibited at any time before the start of the official campaign period and during the four days leading up to the election.

For the 2021 general election, pre-recorded debates were aired on various television stations and radio covering various issues, including the federal system, the Constitution, and economic and social matters. In the past, there was only a single television station, the government-owned Ethiopian Television, and the ruling party had enjoyed unrestricted access to it while opposition parties could only use time allocated to them by the Broadcasting Authority. Things have changed in this respect since there are now more than a dozen television stations, either privately owned or operated by state governments.

According to NRI-NDI (2021), for the 2021 election campaign and political debates, 1,414 hours of free airtime to the 46 parties and 143 individual candidates in 57 state-run and commercial media, in accordance with a formula established by law. According to the Media Proclamation No. 1238/2021, the allocation of free airtime takes four factors into consideration: the number of seats political parties have in the HoPR and regional councils; the number of candidates/political parties present for the election; the number of women and PWD candidates standing; and equal allotment of airtime for all participating political parties. To make a fair distribution, 25% of the total air time was distributed to all parties, five per cent consideration for parties which have seat on regional and national council, 40per cent of the air time was distributed based on the parties' number of candidates for the election, 20per cent of the air time was distributed based on the number of female representatives in the parties, and 10per cent of the air time was allocated based on the number of persons with disability representatives in the party (FBC, 2021; NEBE, 2021).

The measures taken by NEBE to regulate the air time distribution and fair utilisation for the sixth general election campaign could be taken as one of the development in the history of Ethiopian elections. However, evidence elsewhere shows that even when airtime is carefully regulated, women may face systematic and informal discrimination manifested in their inability to get on the air at all (Gilardi and Wüest, 2017). Though election laws and media laws create a framework for the role of the media in elections, in practice, media regulations may indirectly disadvantage women (O'Neill, Savigny, & Cann, 2016; Van der Pas and Aaldering, 2020). To tackle this challenge, some countries even provide extra airtime as an incentive for political parties to nominate and support women candidates (UNDP, 2018). However, while balancing the air time distribution and even allocating extra air time for women participants is an appreciative move, the quality of coverage is still more important (Braden, 2014). Below, we present an analysis to see how women were substantively represented in the Ethiopian election debates in using the 20per cent of the air time which as distributed to political parties based on the number of female representatives they have.

The Nature of Political Parties in the 2021 Ethiopian General Election

From 47 parties registered to run for seats in the national and regional councils, only 11 parties appeared in political debates that were streamed in six televisions stations: AHADU, ASHAM, EBC, ESAT, FBC, and WALTA televisions. Each of these television stations has streamed five to eight political debates. The frequency of parties' appearance in the debates varies widely between the national and regional parties and within the national parties as well. From the national parties, the ruling party, Prosperity Party [PP], claims to adopt combination ideology of Ethiopian

Table 1. Summary of Television Debates held for the 2021 Ethiopia General Election Source: Researcher analysis of debates streamed in six Televisions: AHADU, ASHAM TV, ESAT tv, FBC, WALTA TV; and EBC from 19th April to 14th June 2021 (Details available on p 14).

Issues for Public Debate	Television Streams	Gender Proportion in the Debates	Parties participated in the Set of Debates	Female debate participants at Minister position
Rule of law and democratic institutions,	AHADU, EBC, ESAT, FBC, WALTA, ASHAM	23 males, 3 Females	National Parties All Ethiopian Unity Party [AEUP], Balderas Party, ENAT party, Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party [ECSJP], Ethiopian National Unity Party [ENUP], Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party[EPRP], Ethiopian Social Democratic Party [ESDP], Freedom and Equality Party [FEP], Hibir Ethiopia Democratic Party [HEDP], New Generation Party[NGP], and Prosperity Party [PP].	Dr. Hirut Kassaw, Minister in Charge of Culture and Tourism from property Party Dr. Ergego Tesfaye, Minister in charge of Ethiopian Labour and Social Protection Affairs
Constitution, Federalism, And Diversity Language, Culture and Tourism	EBC, ESAT, FBC, WALTA	33 Males, 1 Female	Regional Parties Afar People Party [APP], National Movement of Amhara party [NMAP], Benshanguel People Liberation Front [BPLF], Boro Democratic Party [BDP], Kucha People Democratic Front [KPDPF], Oromo People Liberation Front [OPLF], Raya Rayuma Democratic Party [RRDP], and Wolayta People Democratic Front [WPDF]	Dr. Liya Kebede, Minister in Charge of Health
External Relations and National Security	EBC, FBC, WALTA	15 Males, 2 Females		Dr. Fitsum Assefa, Minister in charge of Planning and Development Commission
Industry, development and investment	EBC, ESAT, WALTA	13 Males, 1 Female		
Urbanization and infrastructure development	FBC, WALTA	4 Males, 2 Females		
Agriculture, food security, and rural development	AHADU, EBC, ESAT, FBC, and WALTA	22 Males, 3Female		
Health, education, economic policies	AHADU, EBC,ESAT, FBC, WALTA,	34 Males, 6 Females		
Women and Youth policy	ASHAM, EBC, ESAT, FBC, WALTA	11 Males, 13 Females		
Disability and inclusion in action, and human rights violations	ASHAM, AHADU, ESAT, and FBC	7 Males, 1 Female		

nationalism, Liberalism, and Federalism, whereas the Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party [ECSJP], claims to adopt a mix of Ethiopian nationalism and Liberalism ideology.

Prosperity party has appeared in all the eight debates which were streamed in the three mainstream media: EBC, FBC, and WALTA television stations. Other parties such as All Ethiopian Unity Party [AEUP], Balderas Party, ENAT party, Ethiopian National Unity Party [ENUP], Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party [EPRP], Ethiopian Social Democratic Party [ESDP], Freedom and Equality Party [FEP], Hibir Ethiopia Democratic Party [HEDP], and New Generation Party [NGP] have been participating in the debates with different level of engagement. These parties predominantly align with the ideologies of social democracy and ethnic federalism.

Policy Issues for the 2021 Ethiopian General Election Debates

The political parties running for the 6th Ethiopian election have agreed to hold a debate in eight major policy areas. A debate on "Rule of law and democratic institutions in Ethiopia" was streamed in five television stations (AHADU, 2021; EBC, 2021; ESAT, 2021; FBC, 2021; WALTA, 2021). ASHAM (2021) streamed additional debates on "human rights protection and freedom of speech" in collaboration with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission [EHRC] and the Centre for Advancement of Rights and Democracy (CARD). Seven national and one regional political party took part in these debates. Twenty six representatives of political parties took part in the debate, of which, only three were females from ECSJP and FEP Parties. In addition, most of the debate moderators were males, except the two streamed in EBC and ASHAM. Groetsch (2022) argues that the difference between male and female moderators in political party debates during election campaigns can impact the debate based on the gender difference in communication style, question framing, societal expectations, and public perceptions. For instance, male moderators might frequently emphasis on topics related to gender equality to female candidates but not for male candidates in equal tone. Whereas, male moderators give more time to challenge male candidates on topics like economics, military, or foreign policy, which often perceived as core political subjects. According to Trucotte and Paul (2015), women moderators can impact how often women's issues are discussed, as they are more likely to ask questions involving women's issues than men moderators.

The issue of "constitution, federalism, and diversity" was discussed in four television stations (EBC, 2021; ESAT, 2021; FBC, 2021; WALTA, 2021). Ten parties participated here. Thirty one party representatives participated - all, including the debate facilitators, were men. The issue of "federalism and constitution" is very sensitive and the central pivot of the country's current political ideology, but it appeared the debates totally neglected the inclusion of female politicians. In relation, "language, culture and tourism" was debated on FBC television. Two national and one regional parties (PP, NMA, and FEP) took part. Three candidates participated, one of which was female; Dr. Hirut Kassaw, the then Minister in Charge of Culture and Tourism. Though tourism is considered as one of the five developmental agendas of the government in its ten years strategic plan, it appeared in one debate only.

The issue of "external relations and national security" was another point on the debate agenda. Eight parties participated in the debate. The programmes were streamed in three media (EBC, 2021; FBC, 2021; WALTA, 2021). A total of 17 party representatives took part in the debate, only two of which were females from PP and ECSJP. All the debates were facilitated by male moderators.

A debate on "industry, development, and investment" was streamed by three television broadcasters (EBC, 2021; ESAT, 2021; WALTA, 2021). Six parties took part in this debate, with ten party candidates, all males. While the debate streamed in EBC facilitated by male, the debate in ESAT

was facilitated by a female journalist. In relation to this, ESAT televised an additional debate on “*social justice and industry*” in collaboration with the Ethiopian Workers Association Confederation and Ethiopian Labour Rights Watch (ELRW). In this debate, Dr. Ergego Tesfay, a woman, and the then Minister in charge of Ethiopian Labour and Social Protection Affairs participated.

The debate on “urbanisation and infrastructure development” was streamed by two television stations (FBC, 2021; WALTA, 2021). Five parties took part in the debate. Of the six candidates participating, two were females from Prosperity Party. All the facilitators were men moderators.

The debate on “agriculture, food security, and rural development” streamed in five television stations (AHADU, 2021; EBC, 2021; ESAT, 2021; FBC, 2021; WALTA, 2021). Nine parties and 25 candidates took part in the debate, three of which were females from PP, ECSJP, and ESDP. Debates on EBC, AHADU, and ESAT were facilitated by female moderators.

Socioeconomic policies under the theme of “health, education, economic issues” were discussed in four television stations (AHADU, 2021; EBC, 2021; ESAT, 2021; FBC, 2021; WALTA, 2021). Eleven parties and forty candidates took part in the debate, six of which were females who represented the PP and FEP parties. Women representatives, Dr. Liya Kebede, Minister in Charge of Health and Dr. Fitsum Assefa, Minister in charge of Planning and Development Commission took part in the debates of health and economy, respectively.

A debate on “Women and Youth” streamed in five television stations (ASHAM, 2021; EBC, 2021; ESAT, 2021; FBC, 2021; WALTA, 2021). FBC in collaboration with Ethiopian Women Rights Commission and Sweden Embassy streamed an additional debate on the issue of “gender equality.” Eight parties participated in the debate. In addition, ASHAM television in collaboration with CARD and Ethiopian Women Associations Coalition, televised a debate on “Women and Politics: Saying of Women Candidates.” In these programme four ethnic-based regional parties with ethnic nationalism ideology participated. A total of 24 party representatives took part in debates of “Women and Youth”, thirteen of which were females. Only two debates streamed by FBC and ASHAM televisions were moderated by females.

In addition, disability and inclusion in action, issues of internal displacement and human rights violations were also streamed (AHADU, 2021; ASHAM, 2021; ESAT, 2021; FBC, 2021). These debates were supported by the Ethiopian Human Right Organisation, Democracy and Human Rights Development Centre, and Ethiopian Centre of Disability Development. Four national parties and four regional ethnic-based parties took part here. All the party representatives were males except one female representative. Two debates were moderated by female journalists.

The Code of Conduct for the Mass Media and Journalists on the Manner of Reporting about Elections Regulation Number 6/2010, Article 14 states “Every media shall give voter education that includes programme in minority languages and programme targeted for groups that traditionally may have been excluded from the political process, such as women and people with disabilities.” However, only ESAT television was committed in using sign language translators to most of the debates.

In terms of number, health, education, economic, and gender issues have better engagement of women politicians as compared to the other policy areas. Media debate observant elsewhere also reported that certain political issues such as child and elderly care, unemployment, welfare, and education are coined as “female issues” while “male issues” focus on financial issues, foreign policy, defence force, economics and finance, agriculture and crime (Braden, 2014; Gilardi, Fabrizio; Wüest, and Bruno, 2017).

Role of Women Representatives in the Debates

The purpose of election debates is to help political parties present the policy alternatives so that the public can make an informed decision. The election debates have also an additional purpose of strengthening the culture of peaceful political dialogue, which has been a struggle for Ethiopia so far. Most of the debates for the 6th general election were held in three rounds. In round one, each party representative had proportional time to introduce their party and policy alternatives. In round two, debaters were given modest time to present the details of their policy alternatives and to criticise the weakness of the existing government policies and strategies. The third round was to summarise their debate and respond to questions raised from other party representatives and the participants.

In the entire set of debates, female party representatives took different roles. In the first round, which was allocated to introduce their party's policy views, only the Ethiopian Citizens for Social Justice Party was represented by females at least once; the other parties were either represented by males only, or shared the given time with their female party representative in all the debates. The same pattern was observed in the second and third debate rounds. Those parties which were represented by females only had the chance to take the stage alone, whereas much of the air time was taken by male candidates for those parties which were represented by both male and female candidates.

Both male and female candidates were challenged to capture their party policy and present its relevance to address the policy gaps in Ethiopia. It was really difficult to detect role differentiation between female and male debaters since many of them relayed on reading a pre-prepared document. Most of the debates were held in the television stations, away from the public, due to COVID-19 restrictions, which was another constraint to challenge the political candidates regarding their policy alternatives.

Another thing observed from the debates was how politicians in government offices, whether they are men or women, received more media coverage during the daily news than other parties' members. However, even from those in power, female politicians who are not in the first row of ministers, or top candidates at the national level, have received little chance in the debates. For instance, Dr. Liya Kebede, Minister in Charge of Health, Dr. Fitsum Assefa, Minister in charge of Planning and Development Commission, Dr. Hirut Kassa Minister in Charge of Culture and Tourism, Dr. Ergoge Tesfay Minister in Charge of Labour and Social Affairs from Prosperity party took part in the debates of their respective policy issues. However, other women politicians in the government structure below the minister position virtually did not appear at all in the debates.

Elsewhere, reports showed that women politicians are more often discussed in terms of their gender, their family life, and their physical appearance, but not in terms of their political personality. In Ethiopia election campaign, the physical appearance and dressing style of female candidates weren't the subject of media coverage. However, this doesn't mean parties don't take into consideration the background of females when they chose candidates for election. Hence, Ethiopian politics is heavily dominated by group identity; systematic filtrations are made based on family, ethnic, religion and other backgrounds when candidates are chosen for election.

Challenges-Related to Media Use for Campaigning

Although significant improvements in access to freedoms of assembly and expression were noted during the 2021 election, the overall environment compromised widespread complaints about intimidation and an unlevel playing field, which disproportionately affected women and

individuals from other marginalised groups both as candidates and voters. Opposition parties reported repeated instances of detention of candidates, physical attacks on members, vandalised party offices, and destruction of campaign materials, and detention of candidates in contradiction to legal provisions that candidates be protected from arrest or detention during the campaign period. As the campaign season began, candidates of two opposition parties, the NAMA and EZEMA, were assassinated (Borkena, 2022). The NAMA candidate Berihun Asfaw was running for Benishangul-Gumuz state council, while Girma Moges was EZEMA's candidate for a parliamentary seat. Each political party alleged that the assassinations were politically motivated (Ayele, 2022).

Moreover the extremely volatile security situation due to the war between the federal and its regional allies' forces and the armed TPLF group in the northern Ethiopia could be one potential factor for the decline of women candidates' representation for the 2021 election. According to the International Republican Institute and National Democratic Institute (NRI-NDI) report (2021), the insecurity due to violence have specific and disproportionately negative effects on the participation of women and other marginalised populations and pose grave concerns about potential human and political rights violations in and outside the election context.

The other challenge for properly using the media for debate is the campaign financing issue. The Electoral Proclamation regulates the sources of political parties' income and assets and includes limited provisions to guarantee transparency and political party or campaign finance. Receiving funding from foreign institutions, but not individuals, is prohibited. Political parties are required to keep records of their annual financial audits for at least ten years. However, as representatives of major opposition parties, including EZEMA, NAMA, ENAT, and individual candidates highlighted, there is a skewed campaign playing field. The ruling party has more than the normal advantages of incumbency, in part due to the country's political history. They noted lopsided support of the business community, citing the example of a fundraising event organised by PP at the Millennium Hall on March 15, at which the Prime Minister and most cabinet members, and a wide range of business persons were in attendance whilst the party raised over ETB 1.5 billion (USD 34 million). Opposition parties also alleged that the business community could not support them openly, fearing retribution. Most parties complained about the ruling PP's misuse of state resources and abuse of office for campaigning purposes from the local to the federal level.

In relation, women's participation as candidates in election media debates, financial issue can be one influential factor. Female candidates often face challenges in fundraising due to biases or fewer established networks compared to their male counterparts. This can reduce their ability to compete equally in debates and campaigns. Limited funding may restrict female candidates' ability to secure media coverage, making it harder to build recognition and establish a platform leading up to debates. Participation in debates may often involve travel and accommodation expenses, which can strain campaign budgets for less-funded female candidates. Addressing these challenges involves advocating for equitable funding mechanisms, empowering women-led fundraising networks, and creating fairer debate and media participation rules.

Conclusion

This article provides insights into media coverage of female politicians in the 2021 Ethiopia general election debates. The findings of this study lead to the conclusion that the Ethiopia mainstream media cover men and women politicians differently during election campaign. The frequency of parties' appearance in television debates and their gender representation are found to vary depending on the issues discussed and the media style of coverage. Female politicians were primarily being featured in relation to policy issues under the theme of gender, health,

and education, issues. Moreover, women candidates' role in the election debates was limited in introducing and summarising their party policies while their men counterparts took the modest air time to present the details of the policy alternatives and to criticise the existing policies.

In sum, the effect of this gender bias in media coverage could be one of the detrimental factors for women politicians. A lot could be done to revisit the role of media during election campaign from a gender perspective. Advancing women's political participation requires determined efforts from a wide range of stakeholders throughout the electoral cycle. Some of the measures to be taken could be integrating a gender-sensitive approach, looking into barriers that hinder women's participation in the election campaign, and empowering women to be prepared for election debates ahead. Developing a media-monitoring strategy could help to identify bias against women in the media and assess the quality and plurality of the election coverage. Further research should also focus on qualifying and quantifying experiences of women candidates, media reporters', and the public on issue-related to debate coverage. It is also necessary to raise the question of how the media generally treats women in different professions, not only politicians.

Funding details

This work is a part of Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR). The study was supported by a project: Strengthening of Law, Democratization and Media in Ethiopia (LA_DEM_MED) in collaboration with Orange Knowledge Program (OKP) at Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR).

Disclosure statement

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

Acknowledgements

We thank Wil Hout, Ph.D., Professor of Governance and International Political Economy International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Erasmus University Rotterdam; Henk van den Heuvel, Ph. D., Director CIS, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam; Kalewongel Minale, Ph.D., coordinator of the project "Strengthening of Law, Democratization and Media in Ethiopia (LA_DEM_MED) at Bahir Dar, Ethiopia, for their assistance and effective facilitation of the project.

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Social Media Regulation and Autocratisation in Nigeria under Buhari

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Date Received: 25 June 2022

Date Accepted: 31 May 2025

Abstract

The digital revolution has exponentially transformed all facets of life, including governance systems across states and citizens' engagement in contemporary contexts. It has occasioned seamless platforms for the expression of dissents and critique of governments in demand for good governance and accountability. Social media is empowering previously voiceless citizens with the freedom to express themselves and participate in public discourse. Unfortunately, the disposition of the government in regulating the new media space goes beyond gagging the press to repression. The state is gradually sinking into the swamp of authoritarianism characterized by numerous reactionary complexes. This paper, therefore, attempts a polemical analysis of shrinking civic space and freedom of expression manifesting through the social media regulation bill as a major indicator of autocratisation in Nigeria. It also sees excessive regulation of social media as a policy which could, when merged with a suppressed judiciary and weak legislature, result in authoritarian rule in Nigeria. Secondary data sources were utilized for the study, which argues that disobedience to court orders and the use of state institutions to suppress political opposition contribute to the erosion of democracy in Nigeria. The paper contends that, despite the widespread penetration and usage of the internet and social media in Nigeria, the Buhari administration has adopted authoritarian practices while maintaining a stance on fundamental rights and citizens' participation in public affairs. Freedom of expression, speech and media independence are greatly under siege.

Keywords: Gagging the Press; Judicial Independence; Repression; Rule of Law

Introduction

Advancements in information and communication technologies (ICTs) have occasioned a borderless world upon click of buttons using highly moderated technological innovations (Chiamogu, Obikeze, Chiamogu & Odikpo, 2021). Digitalisation and social networking in their spectres have heightened socio-cultural globalisation, especially in the spread of information, events and news regarding the social welfare of citizens and demands for accountability from

governments (Jimada, 2019; Olaniran & Williams, 2020). The spate of social media virality transmits both educative, informative, entertaining and menacing information in forms of audio-visuals and graphics to citizens and governments of developed and developing countries. Massively using new media via such social networking apps as Blogs, Instablogs, Facebook, Twitter(X), Instagram, Youtube, WhatsApp and Telegram among others have granted people relative vents for expression and association. Social media has ushered in a transformative era of instant and simultaneous communication, significantly awakening public consciousness in Nigeria, where people had long been confined to the limitations of heavily regulated traditional media. Studies have shown that social media sites are more politically diverse than face-to-face settings (Bakshy, Messing & Adamic, 2015) and as such offer spaces for marginalized groups to express their grievances (Bekafigo & McBride, 2013). This illustrates the pivotal role of social media in reshaping freedom of expression and media dynamics, profoundly influencing the quality and resilience of democracy across different societies.

The increasing tension between government attempts to regulate social media and the demand for freedom of expression in Nigeria poses a significant challenge to democratic values and the protection of individual rights. On one hand, the government argues that regulating social media is necessary to curb misinformation, hate speech and other forms of harmful content that could threaten national security and social harmony. On the other hand, critics argue that such regulations are often used to stifle dissent, limit public discourse and curtail the fundamental right to free speech. This ongoing conflict raises critical questions about the balance between security concerns and individual freedoms, especially in a country where social media has become a vital tool for political engagement, activism and communication.

The use of social media platforms for political expression has bolstered the study of socio-political communication and discussions (Velasquez & Rojas, 2017). Political expressions on social media thus enormously impact on socio-political behaviours in forms of electioneering campaigns, political mobilisation and electoral participation. The power of social media messages rests majorly on their ability to instantly and simultaneously reach a wide, diverse audience, possibly shaping their thinking and disposition as well as reaction to situations and events. While the public has overtime become accustomed to the regulation of conventional media like the Radio, Television and Print media establishments by government regulatory agencies, the idea of regulating social media; a space which many users consider to be the major avenue to air their unhindered views, is one that has generated a lot of mixed feelings, especially in countries where the press is under severe attacks as in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, discussions and attempts at social media restriction are not uncommon. Restriction of internet use and the social media in Nigeria dates to 2015, at the twilight of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's administration, when the Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention etc.) was adopted in May 2015 (Afoah, n.d). The Law, among other things, addresses threats to cyberspaces, including internet usage and safety regarding prevention, prohibition and combating cybercrimes. The push for internet and social media censorship gained momentum in 2019 when President Muhammadu Buhari withheld assent to the Digital Rights and Freedom Bill, a progressive initiative aimed at safeguarding Nigerians' fundamental rights and online safety. The bill, which sought to address critical issues such as data privacy, cybersecurity, freedom of online expression, equitable access to digital technologies and protection against unlawful surveillance, was rejected on the grounds that it encompassed too many complex subjects without adequately addressing any of them in depth (Ekwealor, 2019; Paul, 2019). The situation was accentuated with heightened spate of social media restrictions by African states such as Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya (Chiefe, 2019). Thus, seemingly indicating the direction of government policy about internet rights and freedom

of speech, paragraph 13 of the 59th Independence Anniversary of Nigeria Speech (Buhari, 2019) unequivocally stated that: “Our attention is increasingly being focused on cybercrimes and the abuse of technology through hate speech and other divisive materials being propagated on social media. Whilst we uphold the constitutional rights of our people to freedom of expression and association, where the purported exercise of these rights infringes on the rights of other citizens or threatens to undermine our national security, we will take firm and decisive action”.

From reporting the Ebola outbreak in 2014 through #EndSars in 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic to the unending Boko Haram insurgency, incessant attacks on police and other uniformed men formations across Southern Nigeria, farmers’-herders’ conflicts across geopolitical zones, successive governments and their agencies have been engrossed in management of social media contents which the governments considered hate speeches. The government considers calls and demands for accountability, responsibility and answerability from the government hate speeches, cyberbullying and radicalism by citizens and opposition involved in a campaign of calumny. Despite this growing body of work, studies often fail to connect the dots between social media regulation and the broader phenomenon of autocratisation, a process through which democratic spaces are systematically eroded. This study contributes to the literature by exploring the dialectics of shrinking civic space under Buhari’s administration, where the regulation of digital platforms serves as both a symptom and a driver of democratic backsliding.

By examining social media regulation as a lens to understand state-citizen relations, this study advances discussions on how governance frameworks interact with national security imperatives in a digital era. It situates Nigeria within a global discourse on internet rights while stressing the unique challenges posed by its political and social landscape. The findings provide insights into the balance between state control and citizens’ freedoms, emphasizing the urgent need for policies that safeguard both national security and democratic resilience.

Theoretical Framework of Analysis

Freedom of expression is fundamental and supposedly inalienable, but citizens of states with populist leaders who have authoritarian tendencies tend to censor socio-political communication and discussions. The belief in minimal state control of media and publications to allow greater press freedom is popular but always in limited supply in states whose quality of democracy is creeping into authoritarianism. States practising constitutional democracies guarantee citizens’ right to express and share their views freely. Medium of communication notwithstanding, Section 39 of the Nigerian Constitution bestows the right to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference to Nigerian citizens. The broad agreement that news media should be protected from government censorship rests on theories about the nature of human beings and their inherent rights (Graber, 2015). The underlying assumption is that all normal human beings are rational and have inalienable rights of self-determination, including choosing and monitoring their governments.

This paper adopted the authoritarian theory of mass communication as a framework of analysis to understand and appraise why state authorities fight dirty and draconian ways to control the media and socio-political communications. The authoritarian theory of mass communication is a normative theory where mass media is influenced and overpowered by state political authorities to forestall threats to national security and stability. This theory holds that the media must work in accordance with the wishes of the authorities but not under the direct control of the state (Bajracharya, 2018). It portends that the press and media shall not work independently from the state and that their works are susceptible to censorship. It is a theory explaining the functioning of the media and press under an authoritarian leadership where the media is subordinated to

the state authorities. Proponents of the theory (Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm all professors of communication) believe strongly that the distribution of state information might endanger national security and threaten state stability. They, therefore, maintain that the state is greater than individual rights and that the latter should be used to advance the state. In this instance, the press is a weapon of the powerful and is used to increase the power of the rulers. Discretion of political leadership, therefore, shapes power configuration and exercise of fundamental human rights. State authorities license, grant ambiguous rights, suppress media and harm journalists according to repressive measures. Invariably, this theory impairs the watchdog function and accountability demands of the media from the government. It grants garbs for censorship and regulation of socio-political communication and discussions such that information sharing and distribution on the social media are considered hate speech and punishable, thereby taking away the power to criticize the government, its work, decisions and policies from the media. Hence, the media is used as a weapon or an instrument to strengthen the power of the government against the citizens.

Social Media: Literature and Theory

Social media are digital media platforms used for creating awareness, sharing views and social interaction between individuals and groups. They are used for information dissemination, political and product/brand marketing, knowledge sharing and entertainment purposes. Social and online/broadcast media are social networking apps that serve as the major instruments for enhancing the flow of information and relationships between individuals, organizations and governments (Prodanova & Looy, 2018). It consists of computer-based technologies for easy communication, interaction and collaboration (Mohammed, 2020). Social media are digitally mediated communication software that enables users to create, share and view content in publicly networked one-to-one, one-to-many, and/or many-to-many communications (Sinclair & Vogus, 2011; Hopkins, 2017).

What is more, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61) define social media as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user generated contents.” This implies that interaction and instantaneity are basic features of social media. Web 2.0, as used in this context, defines the instantaneous interaction in social media usage. It explains why social media have become phenomenal in shaping political media and socio-political communications across societies in both developed and developing countries. Different social media apps and platforms include WhatsApp messenger, LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter(X), YouTube, Pinterest, Snapchat, Academia, Tik Tok, Wechat, MySpace, etc. As such, Biagi (2013) opined that social media is ‘a two-way digital system’ of communication, education, entertainment and information dissemination. Sharing a similar position with the foregoing conceptualizations of social media, Carr and Hayes (2015, p.50) succinctly maintained that social media are “internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated contents and the perception of interaction with others”. In other words, an interactive system enables users to give feedback.

Social Media and Political Participation

Men the world over, at all points in time, wish to have the freedom to do what they want to do. Freedom instigates the quest in man to be a free moral and political agent, which is inherent in man (Cohen-Almagor, 2017; Dierksmeier, 2019). According to Okoro and Odii (2013, p.76),

central to man's desire for freedom is "to be free to air his views and have access to information on activities, programmes and decisions of those who have the mandate to govern him". Of all kinds of freedom, D'Arcy (2017) posits that freedom of the press and expression which guarantee the right to 'freely' seek, obtain and air information concerning the leadership activities taking place in the state without fear or favour, are the most important ones in a democratic state. Unfortunately, these rights are under siege by elected leaders in Nigeria, who have made explicit attempts to silence critical media voices. Successive governments have issued strong and severe restrictions on press freedom, including the rising use of social media (Ndinojuo & Udoudo, 2018).

The conventional media in Nigeria, comprising journalists, reporters and media houses who engage in the business of news reporting, opinion sharing and information distribution are monitored, regulated and even controlled by the government and its agencies. The government has always considered the media a threat to national security because the information it publishes could be as lethal as informative and educative (Mohammed, 2020). The advent and skyrocketed use of social media has occasioned citizens' journalism, where trained and untrained persons now generate and distribute content seamlessly, spontaneously and simultaneously without moderation. Citizens now speak truth to power using social media and demand accountability while painting lucid pictures of government injustices in the public domain. Social media has increasingly become a key platform for political expression, civic engagement, and the promotion of accountability. The role of social media in facilitating political participation can be seen through its ability to enable individuals to express their political views, mobilise for causes, and demand accountability from governments (Bakshy, Messing & Adamic, 2015). According to their study, the ability of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter (X), to allow users to share political opinions and engage in discussions has helped democratise political expression, making it more accessible to a wider audience. The use of social media in political participation is particularly valuable in contexts where traditional media may be controlled or censored, providing a space for alternative voices and narratives.

Social media regulation describes state intervention in the moderation, restriction and control of the use of social media platforms to guarantee national security and stability. It refers to any form of restriction and control of the operations of hi-tech (tele)communication giants and censorship of media contents on computer mediated software that hosts social networking and interactions. Social media regulations include the involvement of the government or its related agencies in the management and control of social media apps and platforms to ensure that they operate in line with a defined standard, norm or custom. Except for the Nigerian Cybercrime Act of 2015, there is no direct major structure and code for regulating social media in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Constitution supports internet and digital freedom within the framework of International Human Rights Law. This is in addition to Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act 2015 and the Criminal Code, 1990. The Cybercrime Act seeks to provide a regulatory framework for the prohibition, prevention, detection, prosecution and punishment of crimes related to computer systems and networks, electronic communications, data and computer programmes, intellectual property and privacy rights. The closest regulation that applies to misinformation and posting of harmful contents on social media is section 24(1a), which states that any person who knowingly or intentionally sends a message or other matter using a computer system or network that is grossly offensive, pornographic or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character or causes any such message or matter to be sent is guilty of an offence and is liable for prosecution. Subsection (1b) provides that any person who knowingly or intentionally spreads messages or other matter using a computer network system that h/she knows to be false to cause annoyance, inconvenience, danger, obstruction, insult, injury, criminal intimidation, enmity,

hatred, ill will or needless anxiety to another or causes such a message to be sent is guilty of the same offence and shall be liable on conviction to a fine or imprisonment for a term of not more than three years or to both such fine and imprisonment.

The initial attempt to regulate Digital Rights and social media in Nigeria was through the Frivolous Petitions (Prohibition) Bill 2015, which sought to be the instrument to regulate social media. It was introduced in 2016 during the 8th National Assembly but did not scale the hurdles. Similarly, President Muhammedu Buhari declined assent to the Digital Rights Bill 2016, a law that ought to provide for the protection of human rights online, to protect internet users in Nigeria from infringement of their fundamental freedoms and to guarantee the application of human rights for users of digital platforms and/or digital media and related matters (Busari, 2019).

The Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulation Bill 2019 is another attempt at regulating the social media landscape in Nigeria. The bill was designed to prevent the transmission of false statements or false declaration of facts with a view to counter the effects of such communications in Nigeria. It aimed at suppressing the financing, promotion and endorsement of false statements; hence it projected mechanisms of detection, control and safeguarding against misuse of online accounts with sanctions for defaulters. The bill seeks to address the issue of news and information commercialization by the press and more recently, owners and operators of online news media outlets such as social media pages, YouTube channels, websites, blogs and other social network platforms (Mohammed, 2020).

Digital Rights and Freedom in Nigeria

The regulation of social media in Nigeria has a complex history marked by a tension between protecting national security and ensuring citizens' digital rights and freedoms. The Cybercrime Law of 2015 was a significant step in the evolution of social media regulation in Nigeria. This law was primarily aimed at combating cybercrime and ensuring the safety of Nigerians in cyberspace. However, critics argue that the law has been used to stifle freedom of expression and restrict the rights of individuals to engage in political discourse online (Fasina & Gana, 2019). The law includes provisions for punishing cybercrimes such as identity theft, online harassment and the dissemination of false information, but it has also been criticised for its potential to curtail freedom of expression.

In response to growing concerns over digital rights, the Nigerian government introduced the Digital Rights and Freedom Bill of 2019. This bill sought to establish a legal framework that guarantees digital rights, such as freedom of expression and access to information, in the digital space. It also emphasized the protection of individuals' privacy and the right to use social media without fear of censorship or persecution. Despite its promise, the bill has not yet been fully enacted, and there remains a significant gap in protecting digital freedoms in Nigeria (Ogunyemi, 2020).

Government responses to calls for accountability and perceived threats to national security have been marked by increasing regulation and control of social media platforms. The Nigerian government has occasionally shut down social media sites, such as Twitter, as part of its efforts to prevent the spread of content deemed to undermine national security. These actions have led to tensions between the government and digital rights advocates, who argue that the restrictions limit the ability of Nigerians to freely express their political views and hold their government accountable.

Autocratization and Governance in Nigeria

Like many other concepts in political science, autocratization has received different definitions and interpretations from scholars. For Slovik (2012, p.20), autocracy describes “a regime that does not meet established criteria for democracy” while Brooker (2014, p.1) believes that it is a form of rule by other means than democracy. More comprehensively, Cassani and Tomini (2019, p.15) defined autocratization as “a process of regime change towards autocracy that makes the exercise of political power more arbitrary and repressive and that restricts the space for public contestation and political participation in the process of government selection”. For Luhrmann and Lindberg (2019), the concept of autocratization refers to a situation where there is a significant reduction in structural conditions for electoral democracy. It is sometimes used interchangeably with de-democratization, democratic backsliding, democratic breakdown and recession and setbacks to describe the declining state of democracy. Autocratization is thus a threat to democracy in both developed and developing countries. It, according to Pelke and Croissant (2021) refers to the decline in democratic qualities of any democratic regime that may result in the weakening or the breakdown of democracy as well as the recession of democratic characteristics in authoritarian regimes. Autocratization, therefore, is a process of regime change that describes the gradual decline in the quality of democracy of political regimes in such manners that institutions of governance and administration are susceptible to manipulations by the personality of political leadership. It, by implication, impairs due process of law, independence of the judiciary, press freedom and electoral participation.

In the context of Nigeria, the increasing trend of autocratisation has had significant implications for political freedoms and the media. The Nigerian government has frequently employed authoritarian policies to suppress dissent, particularly through the regulation of social media and the curtailment of press freedom. These actions have contributed to a shrinking political space, restricting the ability of opposition parties, civil society organisations and the public to express their views freely and openly (Sampson, 2018).

The impact of authoritarian policies on political freedoms and the media can be seen in the application of laws such as the Cybercrime Act of 2015 and the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) regulations, which have been used to silence critical voices and control political discourse. Journalists and media outlets that challenge the government’s narrative have faced harassment, arrests and shutdowns. For instance, journalists have been detained for publishing stories critical of the government’s handling of political issues, fostering a climate of fear and self-censorship within the media landscape (Ugwueze & Ogbodo, 2020).

Civic Space and Engagement in Nigeria

According to Agwuegbo (2021), civic space depicts “the political, legislative, social and economic environment that enables citizens to come together, share their interests and concerns and act individually and collectively to influence and shape policymaking”. It provides latitude for citizens to enjoy constitutionally guaranteed freedom and pursue individual and collective interests without let and restrictions. Intrinsically, civic space paves the way for citizens to demand for accountability because it guards against the arbitrary use of state apparatuses of force against citizens. A dynamic and plural civic space allows smooth operations of the civil society organizations to advocate for citizens’ rights and demand accountability from the government.

Furthermore, social media has played a pivotal role in facilitating civic engagement by allowing individuals to organise protests, share political information and hold public officials accountable. Bekafigo and McBride (2013) observed how social media has become a platform for marginalised

groups to voice their grievances and advocate for their rights, especially in societies where these groups might otherwise be excluded from mainstream political discourse. For example, social media has been a critical tool in amplifying the voices of minority ethnic and religious groups, women's rights activists and youth movements in Nigeria. These platforms provide a space for individuals who might lack access to traditional political channels to participate in the political process and raise awareness about issues of public concern.

On the other hand, the civic space shrinks or closes when the government and its agencies become less accountable and responsive to citizens' demands. Under this condition, institutional guarantees of democracy are rendered subservient and incapacitated. State actors introduce repressive measures to clampdown on demands for accountability and fundamental human rights, starting with restrictive legislations, indulging in the overbroad application of existing laws and deliberate use of negative rhetoric against the civil society (Ibezim-Ohaeri, 2017). A long period of military rule in Nigeria shattered procedures for civic engagement and claims to fundamental human rights. It engendered the culture of executive ascendancy resulting in super Presidentialism, and centralized federalism, which repressed peoples' freedom and muzzled the press through decrees that normalized arbitrary use of force against civic engagement, disallowed dissent and shadowy government. The Nigerian executive arm of government is thus a depository of powers and governmental powers derived from the president or head of state. Might and character of political leadership are the major desiderata of socio-political relations. The law is for ordinary Nigerians who live in deprivation and oppression. Civic space engagement in Nigeria has been a function of social media activism. It grants citizens veils of anonymity to freely express their views, and articulate and coalesce narratives that were barely possible with the print media that was fully regulated and censored. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and other Liberty Organizations are engaged in perennial civil struggles against the governments to guard the democratic spaces.

Social Media Regulation and Autocratization in Nigeria

Freedom of expression and independence of the media is constantly being regulated or strangled across the world. The press is under attack (Raman, 2020; Love, 2021). Democracy is declining worldwide; authoritarianism is gaining ground (Sloss, 2019). Granted that the world is still more democratic than it was in the 1970s and 80s, the level of democracy enjoyed by the average global citizen has continued to dwindle and compared to the levels around 1990. The world is now in a third wave of autocratization with the affected number of citizens growing from 415 million in 2016 to 2.6 billion people (V-Dem Democracy Report, 2021). According to the V-Dem Report, autocratization follows a typical pattern where the ruling government first attacks the media and civil society and polarizes the society by disrespecting opponents and spreading false information to undermine elections.

Successive Nigerian governments had through unpopular policies and acts of unresponsiveness attracted public outcry and criticisms that were expressed on social media platforms owing to the level of censorship meted out to the conventional media. The passage and signing of the Freedom of Information Act notwithstanding, the people of Nigeria have continued to live in a world of gagged press and regulated freedom of expression largely because the executive arm of successive governments have assumed enormous powers from centralized federalism that is giving rise to a very strong presidential democracy. The executive arm of the government at the centre depending upon the personality of political leadership is the epicentre of power division and rule of law in Nigeria (Kalu, 2018). The character of political leadership subsumed in the presidency shapes and determines the functioning of both the legislature and the judiciary.

Democracy preaches shadowy government, freedom of expression and independent press but the personality of leadership is a factor that propels quality of democracy where the institutional guarantees are unstable and wavy. Unfortunately, every leader does not tolerate opposition and criticism at the same level. Democratically elected leaders who share autocratic tendencies or have military training do not easily subscribe and observe democratic ethos. The press and freedom of expression have witnessed unrelenting attacks since the dawn of the Fourth Republic especially under Presidents Obasanjo and Buhari.

In Nigeria, the advent of the new media has revolutionized processes of social and political communications (Suntai & Targema, 2017). It expanded the frontiers of political participation and social mobilization while creating vistas for freedom of expression and widening democratic spaces. Social media and online broadcasting provided platforms for simultaneous and seamless interactions between the masses and the government. It increased the volume of information at the disposal of the masses. As internet penetration increases with greater broadband development and smartphone usage, more Nigerians access the internet and subscribe to social media sites. Currently, at a record 50% internet penetration, 187.9 million Nigerians have mobile connections with 33 million social media subscriptions. Social media has indeed revolutionized media and communication in Nigeria (Kemp, 2021). The most used social media platforms in Nigeria are WhatsApp with 93%, Facebook (86.2%), YouTube (81.6%) and Instagram (73.1%) (Gilbert, 2021). Virtually every aspect of our lives has joined social media because it is easier, seamless, instantaneous, interactive and cheaper. Social media has largely changed the pattern of social relations and civic engagement while offering sustainable opportunities for gathering and sharing of news items, communication with audiences and advocacy for change. Social media has provided platforms for citizens-state interaction in the public sphere. It provides higher levels of participation for younger people and an avenue for women who have not been very active and vocal with a voice to demand for accountability.

The Buhari administration has since inauguration in 2015 demonstrated intolerance to opposition and criticism by its persistent attempts at restricting the use of social media. The government believes that social media increases the spread of fake news, hate speeches, extremism, and organized protests leading to uncontrollable unrest (Bakare, 2020; Busari, 2019). Hence, it is determined to establish restrictive policies on the operation and use of social media in Nigeria. The government illegally uses the Cybercrimes Act of 2015 to criminalize online speeches and detain journalists, critics and online dissidents. The freedom of expression for citizens has been challenged with this law and citizens are experiencing the impact of undemocratic interpretations of sections of the law. Political office holders and powerful government officials have exploited the law to attack citizens who share critical views or general criticisms of their (government officials) actions on social media. The denial of assent to the Digital Rights and Freedom Bill 2016 and subsequent introduction of the Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulation Bill 2019 are clear indications of the government commitment to close the online civic space, limit press freedom and strangulate critical opposition. Many journalists, social media users and activists have been arrested, incarcerated and killed between 2016 and now under the Cybercrime Act for their online posts.

Obnoxiously and in flagrant drive to gag, muzzle and strangulate free speech, media freedom and close the online civic space without known legislations, the Buhari administration clamped down on the operations of Twitter, a microblogging and social networking site in Nigeria on 4th June, 2021. Eventually, the government started regulation of social media in Nigeria through sanctions wherein it accused Twitter of vicarious liability for destruction of government properties and wanton violence during the #EndSars protest. Clearly, Twitter like other social media apps

provide platforms for Nigerian online users to express their grievances, personal and collective views about government policies and programmes constitute veritable medium for the circulation and spreading of narratives that easily generate public sympathy against government injustices (Chiamogu et al, 2021). The suspension of the operations of Twitter was a calculated measure to forestall ongoing mobilization by #RevolutionNow group for the June 12 protest bad governance in Nigeria. The government ceased the opportunity of Twitter's deletion of President Buhari's tweet against the Igbos to execute a planned action designed to avoid a repeat of #EndSars Protest that would have gone out of proportion owing to widespread violent conflicts and resort to self-help by many citizens and groups who were fed up with the inabilities of the government to provide good governance in Nigeria.

Clearly, the incapacitation of the state started with the capture and domination, by the executive arm of the government, of legislative and judicial powers in such manners that the National Assembly became a rubber stamp that passes every action while the courts are lameducked into toothless bulldogs. Court decisions are obeyed when in line with government plans. The state is indeed in private hands and is being used for personal and group goals. Civil societies are shouting and threatening court actions that do not generate freedom at the wake of resultant autocracy. Nigerians are back to square one: widespread insecurity, chains of abject poverty, deprivation and gross violation of basic freedom are the rules.

Shrinking Civic Space and Democratic Erosion in Nigeria

The shrinking of civic space in Nigeria is a troubling sign of democratic erosion, where restrictions on freedom of expression, political participation and civil society activism have become more pronounced. According to Freedom House (2020), these restrictions are part of a broader trend of democratic backsliding, where governments tighten control over political opposition, independent media and civil society organisations. In Nigeria, this erosion has been particularly evident in the government's response to protests and calls for social change, such as the #EndSARS movement, which demanded an end to police brutality.

The Nigerian government has frequently responded to such movements by cracking down on protesters, blocking social media platforms and passing laws that limit the ability of individuals to freely express their views. These actions not only undermine democratic values but also signal a broader decline in the quality of governance and respect for human rights. The increase in restrictions on freedom of expression and political participation, coupled with growing state surveillance, indicates that Nigeria is on the path of democratic erosion, as the government's attempts to consolidate power limit the public's ability to hold the government accountable (Freedom House, 2020).

Conclusion

Massive internet and social media penetration and usage have overwhelmingly changed media communications in Nigeria. It, amongst other things, marked citizen journalism without moderation at the third wave of autocratization. Many democratically elected governments have become rather authoritarian while maintaining periodic conduct of elections that are devoid of rights and citizens participation in spiralling decline of democratic ethos. Freedom of expression, speech and media independence are greatly under siege. Governments, especially the present Muhammadu Buhari administration with dictatorial tendencies have repressed people's freedoms; going beyond simply shutting down dissent to killing civilians, journalists, and political opponents who dare express views not in conformity with those of the government. Without legislative instruments, sanctions are placed on social media users and operators to clampdown critical

opposition, dissent and close the civic space. The government is afraid of criticisms. The civil society organizations speak at their perils and high risk of attacks. Dissenting views are labelled hate speeches but hate actions and injustices from state authorities abound. The presidency has captured the state and is using the institutions of governance against the rule of law and the citizens. Judicial and legislative powers are suppressed to the points of being subservient to the executive organ. There are no safeguards because the institutional guarantees of democracy are collapsing. The executive arm of the government is fast becoming the repository of powers with the whims and caprices of the presidency turning the rules.

Invariably, suppression of the judiciary by blatant disobedience to court decisions does not promote democratic governance. The executive arm of the government has assumed enormous powers whose abuse is giving rise to calculated destruction of other arms and institutions of electoral democracy. The quality of Nigerian democracy is fast creeping into autocracy with unprecedented attacks on basic human rights of free speech and media freedom.

We therefore recommend that civil society organizations should prevail on President Muhammadu Buhari to assent to the Digital Rights and Internet Freedom Bill that was passed in 2016 to safeguard the online civic space. We also urge President Buhari to conform to the principle of federal character in resources distribution while allowing greater citizens' participation in public affairs.

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The DRC Membership of the East African Community

National Security Concerns and Benefits for Tanzania

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Date Received: 14 July 2022

Date Accepted: 8 May 2025

Abstract

On March 29, 2022, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was admitted to the East African Community as a new member. The country's civil wars and existing terrorist groups in its Eastern parts pose a major national security concern to Tanzania and the region. The paper analyzes the existing quantitative data that describes trade volume between the DRC and the EAC with a focus on Tanzania's benefit and national security concerns of the DRC's membership. It analyzes the existing literature and Armed Conflict Location and Data (ACLED) tool to identify national security threats to Tanzania and the bloc at large. It finds, among others, that DRC's membership is likely to have a positive effect on the EAC trade, as the bloc is expected to be a cheaper source for DRC's imports compared to the rest of the world. In turn, the DRC is likely to export even more primary commodities to the region, but some EAC countries may benefit more than others in this. It also points to security dynamics.

Keywords: DRC, East African Community, Trade, Regional Integration, National Security, Terrorism, Conflict, Refugees.

Introduction

The Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) admission to the East African Community (EAC) is a continued road map and vision for the Pan-Africanism ideology advocated by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere (First President of Tanzania and Pioneer of Pan-Africanism). He championed a gradual approach to regional integration as opposed to Kwame Nkrumah's universalist approach to opting for a federation of African states. Mwalimu Nyerere upheld and lobbied for the creation of an East African Federation. This was a functionalist approach of gradual integration based on need and international cooperation in matters relating to the economy (SIHMA, 2017).

Mwalimu Nyerere was to argue that the United States of Africa could not be attained in a single step; that it was too huge a step to take all at once; and that, just as African independence had been a process, so too would African unification be a process. In this perspective, the DRC's membership in the East African Community (EAC) is not only vital for the regional bloc but also

a dream come true for one of its founding fathers, the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, who aspired to African regional integration. According to the Theory of Economic Integration by Balassa (1961), discusses political and ideological aspects of the integration process. Balassa's five stages of economic integration constituted a free trade area, a customs union, common market, economic union, and total economic integration. Balassa's vision of total economic integration coincides with an ultimate federation or confederation. With respect to the EAC, the bloc has currently surpassed two stages, and in 2010, the bloc launched its common market for goods, labour, and capital within the region, to create a common currency and, subsequently, a full political federation. In 2013, a protocol was signed outlining their plans to launch a monetary union within 10 years. Recently, a committee was established to start the process of drafting a regional constitution.

Regardless of the huge socio-economic potential that comes with DRC membership in the regional bloc, we cannot ignore the political instability concerns and spillover effects that come with it. According to Cambridge dictionary, spill over is defined as the situation to reach or influence a large area or spread. Such spillover effects take into account weak governance systems and poor infrastructure development in the country which has been impacted by decades of civil war that hurdle DRC from maximizing its full economic potential. Spillover effect can be linked with the Buzan and Wæver (2003) theory of Regional Security Complex that refers to the situation in which the security issues of states are inter-connected to each other in a way that is not possible to separate them reasonably. They further argue that the theory seeks to explain why states have more security interaction among neighbours than among states located in different areas (geographical proximity). In other words, adjacency causes threats to travel more easily. Therefore, the internal conflicts in the DRC have had spillover consequences in Tanzania, affecting crime rates in bordering districts as well as the environment in refugee camps in the Kigoma region. This includes impacts such as deforestation; de-vegetation; erosion; destruction, degradation, and pollution of water sources and catchment areas; illegal poaching and fishing; and overgrazing as a result of the refugee influx (Rutinwa and Kamanga, 2003).

According to OCHA (2019), the United Republic of Tanzania has hosted 84,347 refugees and asylum-seekers from the DRC, as of 31 December 2018, representing 25.8 percent of the total refugee population in the country. Congolese from South Kivu have mainly been fleeing to the United Republic of Tanzania, usually transiting through Burundi to escape attacks in their villages (UNHCR,2018). This is due to over 120 armed groups reported to exist in the eastern region of the DRC, which the government has been unable to deal with (Saddam, 2019). Moreover, DRC's public health sector is also overwhelmed by Ebola and Measles outbreaks (Saddam, 2019) which is another national security concern for Tanzania and the bloc at large. Hence, addressing these national security threats that may become even more critical with the free movement of people between the two countries is also paramount.

Consequently, Tanzania is looking forward to benefiting from the new EAC member, however, it should not overlook that DRC is also looking for mutual benefits and is working towards that. DRC's richness in natural resources such as land and minerals, supported by structural reforms undertaken by the current government, demonstrates the fact that the country is also looking for mutual benefits from its EAC partners. Hence, for Tanzania to benefit from DRC's membership, the authorities of the two countries need to work together to ensure a smooth business environment for both Tanzanians and Congolese businesses. In addition, the EAC has to help build the capacity of fragile local and central government systems in DRC to understand the regional bloc as well as influence local law reforms to fast-track regional development without leaving any member behind.

It is against this backdrop that the purpose of this paper looks into the existing quantitative data provided by the International Trade Centre's tool known as Trade Map to examine trade flows between DRC's and other members of the EAC, particularly Tanzania, to describe the possible benefits but also analyze existing literature and the Armed Conflict Location and Data (ACLED) dashboard tool to identify national security challenges to Tanzania and the regional community at large. It illuminates the situation in the DRC to better understand the national security implications and to chart a course for Tanzania and the regional bloc as a whole in terms of trade, economic, and security challenges.

The Problem

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has recently joined the East African Community (EAC), bringing with it the immense socio-economic possibilities that can increase due to the growth of trade volume and unrestricted movement of people. While DRC's membership in the bloc has expanded the market to reach over 300 million people as well as brought in a huge natural resource base to the community, it also comes with a national security price that can be paid by other partner states, particularly Tanzania in this context. This takes into account political instability and other national security concerns such as terrorism, refugee influx, public health crises, and environmental threats that can come as spillover effects to Tanzania and the bloc at large. Moreover, the Congolese population has been subjected to rampant rape and sexual violence, major human rights violations, and great poverty as a result of poor governance and the presence of various armed groups (Center for Preventive Action, 2022). As a result of the removal of border restrictions as part of the regional economic integration process, all of these difficulties constitute a threat not only to DRC but also to neighbouring Tanzania and the bloc as a whole.

The Theory of Economic Integration

Balassa (1961) defines economic integration, identifies its stages, discusses political and ideological aspects of the integration process, and specifies what he means by "economic welfare." Balassa's five stages of economic integration constituted a free trade area, a customs union, a common market, an economic union, and total economic integration. Balassa's vision of total economic integration coincides with an ultimate federation or confederation.

The simple meaning of integration refers to bringing parts into a whole, while in economic literature the term "economic" does not have a clear distinctive meaning. Several scholars have included social integration in the concept, others include different forms of international cooperation under this heading, and another advanced argument is that the basic existence of trade relations between independent national economies is a sign of integration. Some scholars have proposed defining economic integration as a process and interaction between states that is designed to eliminate discrimination between economic components belonging to different national states. Concerning the definition given, the theory of economic integration deals with the economic effects of integration in its various patterns and with the setbacks that are associated with disparities in national, fiscal, and other policies.

Balassa explains that the theory of economic integration can be regarded as a part of international economics, but it also enlarges the field of international trade theory by exploring the impact of a fusion of national markets on growth and examining the need for the coordination of economic policies in a union. Finally, the theory of economic integration should incorporate elements of location theory too. The integration of adjacent countries amounts to the removal of artificial barriers that obstruct continuous economic activity through national frontiers, and the ensuing

relocation of production and regional agglomerative and deglomerative tendencies cannot be adequately discussed without making use of the tools of locational analysis.

The East Africa Community is a regional economic community of eight member states, comprising Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Somalia and Uganda, with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania (Parliament of Kenya, 2023; EAC,2024). EAC is our area of focus and is regarded as one of the most successful economic blocs due to its advancement in the stages of economic integration as elaborated by Balassa. EAC has surpassed two stages, and in 2010, the bloc launched its common market for goods, labor, and capital within the region, to create a common currency and, subsequently, a full political federation. In 2013, a protocol was signed outlining their plans for launching a monetary union within 10 years. Recently, a committee was established to start the process of drafting a regional constitution.

On March 29, 2022, the Democratic Republic of Congo joined the East Africa Community. This will in turn facilitate more trade within the EAC. This also means that DRC will be able to enjoy and access the bloc's Customs Union and Common Market and in the near future, a monetary union and ultimately a political federation.

The following part elaborates on the trade volume and economic advantages between the EAC and DRC.

Trade Volume and Economic Advantages Associated with the Democratic Republic of Congo's Membership in the East African Community (EAC)

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has formally joined the East African Community (EAC) after the signing of the Treaty of the Accession of the DRC into the EAC (March 22, 2022) in Nairobi, Kenya. This brings a new chapter to the bloc as well as continued efforts to realize the promise of the EAC that includes free movement of people, goods, and services across the community that has boosted trade and strengthened people-to-people ties thereby enabling East Africans to harness the comparative strength of each member state for the benefit of all and to confront and solve problems together.

“The accession of DRC as a member state of the EAC will, even more, elevate these gains and strengthen our economic muscles and competitiveness in the continent and globally,” said the Chairperson of the Summit (Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya) after DRC formally joined the bloc (EAC, 2022). This means that the DRC will now be part and parcel of the Customs Union and Common Market, which are the signature pillars of the community and the foundation upon which social, political, trade, investment, and economic interests stand.

In the words of Kenya's Permanent Secretary EAC, Kevit Desai, “DRC's membership in the EAC is a game-changer for the bloc's trade performance given its natural resources base and a huge consumer market of nearly 90 million people, almost half the population of the EAC,” (AllAfrica, 2022). According to the International Monetary Fund (2022), DRC's Real GDP in 2022 is projected to be 6.4 percent. In addition, the World Bank (2020) estimated the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to be around \$48.72 billion.

In terms of infrastructure, the country has 5 ports (Banana, Moanda, Boma, Matadi, and Ango-Ango) as opposed to the two available for EAC (Mombasa and Dar-es-Salaam ports). Relatedly, a recent report by PWC (2018) shows that ports are the gateway for 80% of the volume of the worldwide merchandise trade and 70% of its value because they facilitate a faster and cheaper way of handling cargo both coming and en-route to the region. Hence, with EAC support, these

would be developed to boost the region's trade with the rest of the world while attracting FDI into the region.

Noteworthy, DRC is the world's biggest producer of cobalt, a major component in the manufacture of rechargeable batteries for electric vehicles, and Africa's main copper producer. It is also a major producer of gold, diamonds, uranium, coltan, oil, and other precious metals, making it one of the most resource-rich countries in the world (The East African, 2022). The African Business Magazine (2009) indicated that the total mineral wealth of DRC was estimated at USD 24 trillion equivalent to the GDP of Europe and the United States. These resources, coupled with appropriate transport infrastructure, can boost the EAC's industrialization agenda through reduced transactional costs for labor from lower-to higher-productivity activities (Cilliers, 2018). Hence, this would lead to economic transformation in the East African economies, which is key to achieving economy-wide productivity improvements, job creation, and sustained progress in growth and poverty reduction (WTO, 2018). Moreover, not only does DRC share borders with four of the six countries, but it also shares the EAC's official language, Kiswahili, with about 50% of the population fluent in the language (Kambale, 2004). While Swahili will simplify trade relations between DRC and other EAC partners, it may also facilitate the smooth movement of rebel or terrorist groups operating in the country who take advantage of its instability to smuggle natural resources unnoticed. Considering their similar accents to other tribes in neighboring regions in Western parts of Tanzania it might make it difficult to scrutinize them hence failing to prevent the scourge of illegal resources acquisition and smuggling which can impact DRC's economic prosperity as well as that of its neighbors who share direct trade ties with the country.

Despite the low EAC intra-regional trade accounting for 20 percent of its total trade, the bloc is considered the most successful among all the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa; with the highest Regional Integration Index and intra-regional trade (African Union, 2020). Moreover, in the recent African Integration Report(2021), dubbed "Putting Free Movement of Persons at the Centre of Continental Integration," EAC scored above 75% in trade integration, the implementation of free movement of persons scored about 96%, and in monetary integration, while the report shows that the Regional Economic Communities are struggling, SADC and EAC were noted to make remarkable progress (African Union, 2021).

According to the African Development Bank report (2019), the EAC is approaching the highest stage of integration, having ratified the protocol for a monetary union as compared to other RECs such as IGAD, COMESA, and SADC. Additionally, EAC partner states have had relatively good economic growth performance over the last two decades in comparison with the world and sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). On average, the EAC region grew by around 5.6 percent between 2000 and 2016 (UNCTAD, 2018). Relatedly, real GDP per capita in the region grew faster (2.6 percent) than the SSA average (2 percent) during the same period. Arguably, these advantages motivate DRC's interest in the EAC trade bloc (UNCTAD, 2018).

Exports from the East African Community (EAC) to the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Mugume and Nattabi (2021) pointed out that all EAC member states are net exporters to DRC, with Rwanda and Uganda being the largest trade partners, while Burundi has the lowest export values. Notably, EAC's exports have more than doubled from USD 419 million to USD 855 million between 2010 and 2018. Relatedly, imports from DRC in the same period equally increased albeit by a lesser 28 percent.

According to the Trade Map (2019), Uganda and Tanzania were the top EAC exporters to DRC in 2010, with USD 183 million and USD 156 million, respectively. Rwanda has outperformed

both of them, with trade increasing by 120 percent to USD 337 million in 2018. Mugume and Nattabi (2021) noted that Rwanda's primary export destination is the Democratic Republic of Congo, which accounts for 75 percent of the country's exports. Burundi's export trade to DRC, on the other hand, has been shrinking in comparison to other EAC member nations, owing to an underdeveloped manufacturing sector and the aftermath of civil upheaval in the country in 2015, which could stymie commerce and production. As a result, trends in export data indicate that the DRC's accession will likely result in increased export trade flows to the EAC bloc. To put it another way, Rwanda and Uganda's trade effects and export trade to DRC are expected to be the largest among EAC countries. However, with respect to Rwanda and DRC's diplomatic frictions, if they are not resolved, the trade volume between the two countries could shrink rapidly this year.

Trade Volume Between Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Notably, in 2022, Tanzania exported \$329 million to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (OEC,2022). The principal exports from Tanzania to the Democratic Republic of the Congo included Magnesium Carbonate (\$56.2 million), Refined Petroleum (\$50.2 million), and Flavored Water (\$22.6 million) (OEC,2022). Over the past five years, Tanzania's exports to the Democratic Republic of the Congo have risen at an annualized rate of 17.1%, increasing from \$150 million in 2017 to \$329 million in 2022 (OEC,2022). Conversely, in 2022, the Democratic Republic of the Congo exported \$1.17 billion to Tanzania (OEC,2022). The primary exports from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Tanzania included Refined Copper (\$1.17 billion), Documents of title (bonds, etc.) and unused stamps (\$1.16 million), and Interchangeable Tool Parts (\$911,000) (OEC,2022). In the last five years, the Democratic Republic of the Congo's exports to Tanzania have risen at an annualized rate of 28.8%, increasing from \$331 million in 2017 to \$1.17 billion in 2022 (OEC,2022). The trade flow between the two neighbors highlights how such exchanges contribute to the economies of both countries. Nonetheless, if peace and security in the DRC are not established, the amount of trade between the two countries may diminish, jeopardizing the economic security of both. This acknowledges the presence of rebel groups that jeopardize the security of the DRC and its neighboring countries, notably Tanzania, alongside terrorist organizations operating within the country at large.

The implications of trade liberalization between the EAC and the DRC on trade

Mugume and Nattabi (2021) highlight that the sum of trade creation, price changes, and diversion impacts is used to calculate the trade consequences of trade liberalization. While the trade creation and trade diversion effects show how free trade affects quantity, the pricing effect shows how increasing world prices enhance export value. Rwanda and Uganda will benefit the most from DRC's membership in the EAC's trade effect, with export trade estimated to expand by USD 81.2 million and USD 60.4 million, respectively. This could be because the two countries have a geographical advantage over Kenya and Tanzania, lowering the cost of doing business with the DRC. Furthermore, unlike other EAC nations, trade between Rwanda and the DRC is enabled by powerful traders' associations that benefit economies of scale, according to Cuts International (2015). On the other hand, Tanzania's exports will increase by \$50.2 million, Kenya's by \$42.5 million, and Burundi's by \$6.2 million (Cuts International, 2015). Accordingly, TanTrade (n.d) indicates that trade between Tanzania and the DRC has favored Tanzania between 2017 and 2021. Tanzania's exports were valued at USD 154.2 million annually, while its imports amount to USD 2.592 million. According to TanTrade (n.d), Tanzania's annual exports were valued at USD 154.2 million, while imports amounted to USD 2.592 million. The principal exports include of construction materials (cement, iron, and steel), tobacco, beverages, fertilizers, glass and glassware, soap, and cereals, while the primary imports include oil seeds and oleaginous fruits,

wood, cotton, printed literature, and pharmaceutical items (TanTrade, n.d.). In terms of trade creation, Rwanda's trade with DRC will expand by USD 42.6 million, representing a 13% share of current export trade, while Uganda's trade creation will equal USD 28.8 million, representing a 14% increase in exports to the DRC (Cuts International, 2015).

It is important to note that the DRC had a limited restriction on the EAC market prior to its membership in the bloc. The above statistics regarding exports from the East African Community (EAC) to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the implications of trade liberalization between the EAC and the DRC on trade clearly predict that there will be more trade and commerce that will be diverted to the rest of the world economies. It's worth mentioning that EAC will see a positive trade effect of USD 240.7 million, which translates to a 28 percent increase in EAC export trade with DRC. The GDP structure, particular member country trade flows, and the level of pre-FTA trade tariffs between the EAC and DRC all contribute to the extent of trade consequences of trade liberalization. Therefore, the recent addition of DRC to EAC shows bright and positive prospects towards more integration through the enlarged market as well as increased trade and commerce among the member states. In a nutshell, increasing trade flows to the EAC can also translate to an increase in trade flows between Tanzania and the DRC as far as this study is concerned, if all setbacks, including security threats, are addressed.

Regional Security Complex Theory

This is a theory proposed for the first time by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003), which explains the regional security complex (RSC) as a group of states whose primary national security concerns are so closely intertwined together that they cannot be extracted or addressed independently of each other. The basic idea of the theory is that international security could be clustered in different geographically shaped regions. In practice, evidence shows that security issues, and consequently threats, are more likely to occur within a specific region. In a definite region, the security of every actor is interrelated with the security of other actors. Security interdependence, in general, is stronger within a region and diminishes when distance increases.

With respect to the DRC and its recent membership in the EAC bloc, it implies that the security challenges in the DRC are now part and parcel of the bloc. Therefore, they need to be addressed as a bloc to actualize the EAC dream. The DRC since the attainment of independence has been severely hampered by humanitarian, human rights, and security challenges. Massive abuses by militia groups and the military forces have been occurring frequently. This has in turn rendered millions and created a serious refugee crisis in neighboring countries, such as Tanzania. Tanzania for instance has been actively engaging in the peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO) in DRC for a good number of years as well as hosting a number of refugees in the Kigoma region (North-Western Tanzania).

The recent ongoing rising tensions between Rwanda and the DRC clearly demonstrate the need for an immediate response and an end to the internal security issues posed by the militia groups in the DRC. On June 13, 2022, the M23 rebels captured the town of Bunagana, an important town for cross-border trade between the DRC and Uganda. The DRC has long allegedly accused Rwanda of supporting the M23. The accusations have surged again in recent weeks. Many of the M23 rebels are ethnic Tutsis, like Rwanda's President Paul Kagame. Rwanda has also retaliated by claiming that the DRC military forces injured several civilians in cross-border shelling. As a result, the chairman of the EAC, President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya, has called for the deployment of the recently formed East African Standby Force. "The East African Regional Force shall be deployed to the Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu provinces immediately to stabilize the zone and

enforce peace in support of the DRC security forces and close coordination with MONUSCO (UN peacekeeping force),” said President Kenyatta.

Truth be told, if the ongoing security concerns are not addressed promptly, there is a possibility that the crisis could spread to neighboring countries (spillover effect). A stable DRC is a prerequisite for effective cooperation with the other EAC member states. It also has to be noted that the economic prosperity of the bloc depends highly on a secure and politically stable bloc.

The next part of the paper elaborates on the contemporary DRC issues and their national security implications for neighboring Tanzania.

The Democratic Republic of Congo: State of Affairs and National Security Implications for Tanzania

Political climate factor

According to the World Bank (2022), Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, the son of long-serving opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, was elected president in December 2018. In the first peaceful transfer of power in the DRC’s history, he succeeded Joseph Kabila, who had led the country for 18 years.

The World Bank (2022) further highlights that following President Félix Tshisekedi’s establishment of a new political alliance known as the “Sacred Union,” the former Prime Minister and the head of the Senate stepped down in January and February 2021. On February 15, a week after he was sworn in as Head of the African Union, President Tshisekedi appointed a new Prime Minister, Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde Kyenge, who had served as CEO of Gecamines, the state-owned mining company, since 2019. A new government was put in place last April to support the program of the President of the Republic and prepare for the next general elections scheduled for 2023.

Though the current regime is trying to make a couple of reforms to improve the political climate of the DRC, Human Rights Watch (2018) indicated that the country faces a worsening humanitarian, human rights, and security crisis. Subsequently, Tanzania’s deliberate interventions to leverage its long-standing traditional relationship with DRC to help the country reform its fragile governance systems are paramount. This will prevent itself from being a host to an influx of political refugees that can lead to insecurity within its borders as well as regional instability in the Great Lakes region and the EAC at large.

Socio-economic factors

The DRC is rich in natural resources, including cobalt and copper, as well as hydropower potential, arable land, vast biodiversity, and the world’s second-largest rainforest (World Bank). However, the wealthy of this country continue to benefit the few while millions of others continue to suffer from poverty and unending civil wars. As a result, this paper diagnoses it among those countries suffering from the resource curse where its abundant natural resources yield less economic growth and prosperity for the majority of Congolese citizens.

This fact is cemented by the World Bank (2022), which argues that the DRC has the world’s third-largest population of poor people, which is still prevalent and pervasive and is growing as a result of COVID-19’s effects. The World Bank (2022) further notes that in 2018, it was estimated that 73% of the Congolese population, equaling 60 million people, lived on less than \$1.90 a day (the

international poverty rate). As such, almost 14% — or one out of six people living in extreme poverty in SSA — live in DRC.

Consequently, with half of the population living in abject poverty, free movement of people that is not based on trade and services could put a strain on Tanzania's already-scarce labor market, particularly when illegal migrant labor is involved. As a consequence, those illegal migrants from DRC who might lack employment opportunities in Tanzania are likely to engage in criminal activities and affect the country's security status.

The World Bank (2022) indicates that after a pandemic-induced slow down to 1.7 percent in 2020, economic growth rebounded to 5.7 percent in 2021 on strength in the mining sector and a recovery in the non-mining sectors. The mining sector was a key driver of growth, with copper and cobalt production rising by 12.0 percent and 7.6 percent, respectively. Non-mining sectors (particularly agriculture and services) recovered, growing by 3.9 percent in 2021 despite economic restrictions due to COVID-19. However, the World Bank (2022) notes that the economy of the DRC remains subject to commodity price changes and the growth performance of its major trading partners, which could be disrupted by Russia-Ukraine geopolitical conflicts and a pandemic recurrence. With Tanzania also facing similar challenges resulting from the Russia-Ukraine Crisis as well as the COVID-19 repercussions, food insecurity might pose a threat to both Tanzania and DRC as the deficit might force the country not to sell surplus food crops to its neighbor through its grain storage facility in Lubumbashi.

The Ebola virus epidemic, on the other hand, poses a new threat to Tanzania's national interests because of the relationship between public health and national security. Although the Ebola virus epidemic was proclaimed eradicated on November 18, 2020, it continues to pose a threat to Tanzanians residing near the DRC border. In this case, improving public health facilities in the north-western regions to be able to urgently respond to the Ebola crisis is critical for the safety of Tanzanians and national security at large.

Civil wars and refugees' influx factor

Although the intensity of the armed conflict that has plagued the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for the past two decades has gradually decreased, the situation of violence and instability in the east of the country, which began with Laurent Desiré Kabila's 1996 coup d'état against Mobutu Sese Seko and culminated in his surrender of power in 1997, persists (Rufanges and Aspa, 2016). As a result, regardless of the country's being rich in terms of natural resources, instability has prevented it from prospering socially and economically, which presents a major concern to Tanzania and other EAC members hoping to further benefit from DRC's membership.

According to UNHCR (2018), 82,000 refugees and asylum seekers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) live in the Nyarugusu camp in the Kigoma region. In some cases, some of them have combatant experience, which poses a national security concern in Tanzania's north-western areas.

Even though there are few findings on the impact of refugees on security in Tanzania, one study found that crime rates increased dramatically, particularly for murder, robbery, and the possession of illegal firearms (Lwehabura et al., 1995). Despite officials' claims that refugees were to blame for an increase in crime, Whitaker (2002) discovered that crimes were also committed by Tanzanians and, in some cases, with Tanzanians; "refugees and locals would sometimes cooperate to rob local communities, and armed banditry was a problem before the arrival of the refugees." Rutinwa (2003) investigates the rate of criminal cases involving refugees from 2000

to 2001. He discovered that in Kigoma, the rate of criminal cases involving refugees was much higher. Nonetheless, according to Rutinwa (2003), when the population ratio of refugees to locals is considered, refugees do not commit more crimes than the overall population. However, such a parallel should not deter potential stakeholders in the DRC and Tanzania from taking steps to prevent refugees from becoming involved in criminal activities in their host communities.

In fact, eliminating rebel groups in Eastern DRC and restoring normalcy to allow civilians to participate fully in socioeconomic activities without fear of assault will help to address Tanzania's national security concerns caused by civil wars and refugee influx. As a result, the cooperation between the two countries will be based on economic and trade relations rather than peacebuilding efforts, which consume a lot of financial and human resources.

Terrorism factor

In recent years, terrorist groups have been expanding their reach to establish more influence in more territories across Africa. In fact, their easy target has been fragile states where governance structures are incapable of creating resilience to the advancement of their objectives. This has also been supported by the United States Institute of Peace (2019), which emphasized that fragile states provide the best conditions for extremist attempts at state-building and hence for showing the soundness of extremist ideological agendas.

Moreover, as indicated by the US National Strategy for Counterterrorism, "these groups stoke and exploit weak governance, conflict, instability, and longstanding political and religious grievances to pursue their goal," (United States Institute of Peace, 2019). In this setting, the DRC, like many other unstable African countries, is becoming a new haven for terrorist groups seeking to expand their reach. As a matter of fact, the DRC is already experiencing a series of terrorist attacks in some of its provinces.

In that regard, ISIS claimed responsibility for its first two strikes in eastern DRC in April and June 2019 (Meyer, 2019). The attacks were carried out by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a long-standing rebel group located within the nation (Meyer, 2019). Despite being founded to combat discrimination against Muslims by the Ugandan government, the ADF has instead exploited the local grievances of civilians in eastern DRC, a region ravaged by constant violence fuelled by competition for natural resources, an Ebola outbreak, and a lack of government provisions (Meyer, 2019).

As indicated by the US State Department (2021), ISIS-DRC, also known as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and Madina at Tauheed Wau Mujahedeen, among other names, is responsible for many attacks across North Kivu and Ituri Provinces in eastern DRC. Under the leadership of Seka Musa Baluku, ISIS-DRC has been notorious in this region for its brutal violence against Congolese citizens and regional military forces, with attacks killing over 849 civilians in 2020 alone, according to a United Nations report on the ADF.

In addition, the Institute of Security Studies (2016) pointed out that terrorist groups are increasingly becoming part of the criminal networks that grab and smuggle minerals in the DRC. The institute further highlighted that in 2013, civil society groups in North Kivu discovered the existence of al-Shabaab mercenaries in Bunagana, near the Ugandan border. Their presence in this area is a spillover from an al-Qaeda-affiliated group based in southern Somalia.

Therefore, it is against this background that the EAC members particularly Tanzania in this context need to take deliberate measures to first, ensure that the spillover effects of the groups

operating in DRC do not affect the country, secondly, prevent its borders from being a smuggling route for illegal resources that can facilitate terrorism financing in DRC but also in its borders. In this context, the need for immediate and radical actions to enhance natural resource governance in the DRC and the broader region, as advocated by the Institute of Security Studies (2016), is critical going forward.

The DRC Membership Discussion

As highlighted in Table 1 below, the data on the Trade Map tool indicates the substantial amount of trade activity from 2010 to 2018, which includes both imports and exports between DRC and the EAC partner states, particularly Tanzania. However, this trade volume was recorded during the time when the DRC was yet to be a member of the EAC. In this context, as a result of stages of economic integration as highlighted by Balassa's Theory of Economic Integration, which include free trade area, customs union, common market, economic union, and total economic integration, will likely accelerate the trade benefits between the DRC and partner states in the bloc. With respect to Tanzania, it was the third exporter to the DRC between 2010 and 2018. This clearly projects that DRC's membership in the bloc will increase trade volume and foster economic growth.

Figure 1: Formal trade between EAC and DRC for the period 2010–2018 ('000' USD)

Country	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<i>Panel A: Exports</i>									
Uganda	183,992	182,441	240,881	268,175	181,680	152,561	176,921	189,606	204,309
Kenya	61,352	198,443	218,294	214,063	239,380	211,063	197,480	182,612	149,800
Tanzania	156,081	128,102	187,353	237,559	281,493	198,290	157,428	114,323	144,926
Burundi	269	10,434	141	12,079	28,400	28,272	27,471	26,648	18,904
Rwanda	18,137	44,620	109,300	114,991	153,607	193,631	202,979	280,789	337,443
Total	419,831	564,040	755,969	846,867	884,560	783,817	762,279	793,978	855,382
<i>Panel B: Imports</i>									
Uganda	7,278	6,354	12,223	6,751	5,917	3,641	2,532	4,870	34,492
Kenya	6,770	28,958	10,470	6,521	2,954	1,304	2,053	4,881	12,723
Tanzania	134	403	906	110	825	628	338	967	559
Burundi	5,330	6,342	3,854	3,712	50	3,849	987	3,923	2,785
Rwanda	30,918	16,675	10,414	9,300	10,722	11,010	9,105	12,716	14,290
Total	50,430	58,732	37,867	26,394	20,468	20,432	15,015	27,357	64,849

Source: Trade Map (2019)

Source: Trade Map (2019).

At the moment the EAC accounts for around 20 percent of its total intra - regional trade which is believed to be low. Despite the fact that this percentage is deemed to be low, it is the most performing Regional Economic Community in Africa as per the Regional Integration Index and Intra-regional Trade (African Union, 2020). The incorporation of DRC as a new member to the bloc will therefore increase the percentage of the intra-regional trade given its vast endowment of natural resources such as cobalt as well as huge consumer market of an estimated 90 million people. This will in turn lead to the economic transformation in the East African economies, which is key to achieving economy-wide productivity improvements, job creation, and sustained progress in growth and poverty reduction.

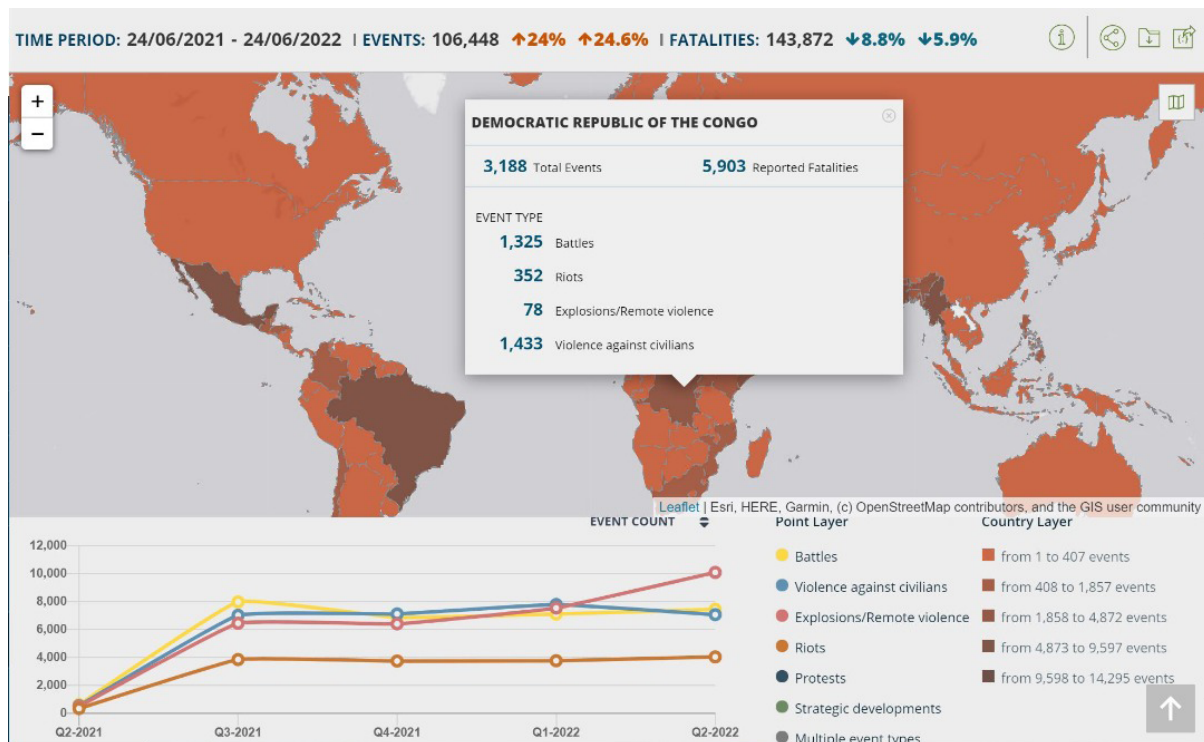


Figure 2: The Democratic Republic of Congo: Conflict event dataset

Source: ACLED (2022)

As far as national security issues are concerned figure 2 above indicates a series of violence activities that not only pose concerns to DRC but also to other members of the bloc particularly Tanzania which has been a leading host to refugees but also in engaging in peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions through MONUSCO. Moreover, the existence of terror groups such as ISIS-DRC, which has conducted a series of terrorist attacks in North Kivu and Ituri provinces in Eastern DRC, is likely to take advantage of the lapse in border security facilitated by the free movement of people to further seek to expand their operations towards Tanzania's territory and other neighboring member states.

On top of that, such security instability in DRC makes it even harder for public health professionals to contain and address the eruption of infectious diseases such as the Ebola virus epidemic, Measles, COVID-19 pandemic, and the like, which can easily spread to neighboring Tanzania and other member states. In this context, the spillover effect of insecurity in the DRC is likely to jeopardize the national security of Tanzania considering the nexus between public health and the effect of conflicts.

It is also worth mentioning the active participation of the Tanzania Peoples Defence Force (TPDF) in the ongoing peacekeeping mission in the DRC. For instance, in 2013, Tanzania Battalion (TANZBATT) participated in the fighting against the M23 rebel group, which was destabilizing peace in the Eastern DRC. As a consequence, the rampant attacks by the M23 rebel group threatened the security of Tanzania and the entire Great Lakes Region, considering the resembling traditional ties between the people of Kigoma (Western Tanzania) and North and South Kivu (Eastern DRC).

Therefore, the above analysis with respect to Regional Security Complex Theory clearly demonstrates that insecurity in one member of the region means insecurity for the others. In this case, DRC's ongoing insecurity is inseparable from Tanzania's national security and the entire EAC bloc.

Conclusion

Overall, DRC's membership is likely to have a positive effect on the bloc's exports, mainly driven by trade creation, as the EAC is poised to be a cheaper source for DRC's imports compared to the rest of the world. This is due to factors such as distance, time, and the elimination of trade barriers. Nonetheless, these exports are largely dominated by primary goods rather than high-value manufactured products. However, experts have warned that DRC's history of political unrest is a key aspect the EAC should address to yield significant mutual benefits. For the past two decades, the country has been plagued by war, manifesting human rights violations, organized crime, and corruption. It is apparent that over one hundred armed groups operate in the DRC and continue to terrorize some communities and control weakly governed areas. The United Nations estimates of internally displaced persons and refugees stand at 4.5 million and 800,000, respectively. This unending conflict in the DRC could be a turning point if serious measures are taken to improve the security situation in the country. This should include creating strong peace and security institutions that will be capable of forecasting threats (early warning systems) and proposing different ways of curbing security concerns both at the domestic and regional levels. In addition to that, the provision of extensive military and counterterrorism training for the Congolese security apparatus is crucial in minimizing spillover effects to neighboring countries, especially Tanzania. Such measures will be a critical component in building a sustainable security community in the region.

Furthermore, utilizing existing joint forces or a standing army to deal with security issues in the DRC and the EAC at large will complement current efforts by the international community on the peacekeeping operations led by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

Lastly, Tanzania and the East African Community as a whole will need to work closely and tirelessly with the DRC to facilitate the process of developing a proper strategy to address terrorism threats and, most importantly, avoid spillover effects to other members of the regional economic community (REC). This should entail strong cooperation on border management and control between Tanzanian and DRC authorities, as well as intelligence exchange on prospective terrorist suspects to prevent strikes on both countries and the EAC at large.

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The African Union Role in Peacebuilding

Prospects and Challenges

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Date Received: 19 February 2022

Date Accepted: 1 June 2025

Abstract

Peacebuilding is an approach to a complete lay down of interconnected efforts that sustain peace. It aims to transform beliefs, attitudes and behaviours to change the short- and long-term dynamics between individuals and groups toward a more stable and peaceful coexistence. However, the role of African Union (AU) in peacebuilding in Africa is basically situated in building a strong democratic institutions that would promote democratic principle in its member states; stopping unconstitutional change of government; promote constitutional governance; developing a strong peace and security council (PSC) with the task of maintain peace and security and the adoption of norms or principle that would permit intervention into the member state internal affairs. Whatever the situation of the continent is, the fact is that AU role in peacebuilding on the continent has gained little attention due to the numerous challenges that the Union is facing. As such most conflicts remain unresolved, while most member states still received the threat of unconstitutional changes. This article seeks to examine the AU role in peacebuilding on the continent.

Keywords: Africa, conflict, constitutional governance, democratic principle, intervention, peacebuilding

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to examine the role of the African Union (AU) in peacebuilding in Africa. The frequent reoccurring of violent intra-state conflicts in many African states has become the unfortunate reality that continues to overpower modern post-conflict reconstruction efforts. Since the inception of the AU in 2002 to date, the organisation has endeavoured to maintain regional peace, security and stability on the continent. The overwhelming new spirit of *Pan Africanism* and *Africa Renaissance* portray by some African enthusiastic leaders such as Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and many others was a remarkable search for an *African solutions to African problems* to achieve the quest for *Pax Africana* (Murithi and Ndinga-Muvumba, 2008:1-2). As such the AU has made tremendous efforts in the advancement of peacebuilding initiative in the contemporary Africa, especially in the area of peace, security and stable and the promotion of democratic governance.

Although the AU has made remarkable efforts in maintaining sustainable peace and stability and the promotion of democratic governance; the Union is faced with enormous challenges (Powell, 2005). These challenges are stemmed from the continental colonial legacy, poor leadership, corruption, weak democratic institutions, marginalisation, patronage politics, underdevelopment,

electoral malpractice and many others (Solimano, 2005). The above variables are some of the root causes that trigger conflicts in Africa. It is worthy to note that Africa is a continent that was caught in the webbed of colonialism with its authoritarian rule of the coloniser. Though blessed with abundant natural resources the continent has remain underdeveloped; plague with many intra-state conflicts and still continue to be an exploitative avenue for imperialist countries for the extraction of raw materials for more than a century now. The extensive period of colonial bureaucrats on the African continent actually subjected the continent under economic exploitation, political, social and cultural invasion for their own benefit (Gbenenye, 2015:3).

Before the destruction of political, social and cultural setting of African people by the colonial empires; pre-colonial African polities were well organised under the leadership of Kings or Queens or Chiefs. Quashigah denotes that the core of “African governance system in pre-colonial Africa was basically in the hands of the Kings, Queens or Chiefs. The leadership of these Kings, Queens or Chiefs was at the pleasure of the people, for a King without his subjects is considered as no King” (Quashigah, 1999:44).

Therefore, the interaction or relationship between the set leader and the people was based on mutual respect and accountability. The Kings were up large to respect and honour his people and vice versa; as opposed to colonial rule which was based on authoritarian or dictatorial approach (Quashigah, 1999:46). In situations where the King is applying authoritarian or dictatorial or tyranny, the people may abandon him and settled in a new place and appoint a new leader to govern them. In some cases the King may be assassinated and pave away for a new King to be appointed by the King makers. An example is King Shaka of Zulu land after his tremendous effort in gain land for his people by expanding his Kingdom by conquering other Kingdoms; he was assassinated by his half-brothers Dingaan and Mhlangana because of his atrocious act against his own people (Morris, 1997:40-108).

Consequently, the authoritarian colonial rule in Africa was either by indirect rule or by the divide and rule orchestrated on the continent by the colonial empires for their selfish interest (Ocheni and Nwankwo, 2012:53; Verweijen and Van Bockhaven, 2020). In contrast, the pre-colonial Africa governance, power was solely in the hands of the people as compared to the colonial authority where power was in the hands of the colonial authorities (Verweijen and Van Bockhaven, 2020). The aftermath of this untold suffering meted on the African population by the colonial authoritarian regime pave the way for the rise of Pan-Africanism, struggle for independence and self-reliance, and the formation of the organisation of African Unity (OAU). The essence for the creation of the OAU was to: promote the unity and solidarity of the African states; coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the people of Africa; defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity independence states; eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; and to promote international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations (UN) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (Charter of the OAU, 1963).

Despite the formation OAU as the umbrella organisation to solve the Africa economic and security challenges to achieve quest for *Pax Africana*. The organisation failed to provides *Africa solutions to Africa problems*, most especially in the domain of economic development, and the maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa after independence. The organisational failure to peacebuilding is stemmed from its core doctrines of non-interference in the internal affairs of member state, the respect for sovereignty and the territorial integrity (OAU Charter, 1963). The prevailing of numerous intra-state conflicts, most notably the 1994 Rwanda genocide necessitated the transformation of the OAU to AU in the 21st century with the aim of maintain peace and security, promote democratic governance, silencing the gun and above economic prosperity among member states.

This article focuses on the AU role in peacebuilding on the continent with the intention of exploring the prospects and challenges in peacebuilding process in Africa. It further argues that the transformation of OAU to AU was to find *African solutions to African problems*. This article has subsections, with next section providing a greater understanding of the theoretical foundation and the historical background of peacebuilding. Followed suit is the exploration of AU role in peacebuilding. Thereafter, an examination of the prospects of AU in peacebuilding and the challenges plaguing the AU in carrying out the task of peacebuilding in Africa; and finally the conclusion summarises of the main argument of this work.

Conceptualisation of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding commences with the hypothesis that conflict resolution procedures used in families and business disputes are enthusiastically transferable to multifarious, protracted and violent ethno-national and religious conflicts (Steinberg, 2013). However, it is also said that peace is the absent of war which is *negative peace*. On the other hand *positive peace* means a peace that promote reconciliation and coexistence on the basis of human rights, social, economic and political justice. In short peacebuilding refers to processes which aim at strengthening society's capacity to achieve positive peace (Murithi, 2006). However, it can be pointed out that to attain positive peace there must be a change in societal structures that are responsible for conflict (Jeong, 2000:23). Henderson contends that the imitative of security premise have led to a growing understanding of "contemporary security" definitions where non-military matters are given similar weight to their military counterparts (Henderson, 2005:4). Adams argues that the key components of building lasting peace mainly depend on the security and protection of the population under gross human right violation and the contemporary security concept provides an in depth to emerging peace theories (Adams, 2008:16).

As propounded by Immanuel Kant in his essay title *Perpetual Peace* in 1795 notes that lasting peace would occur only when states had civil constitutions that would lead to strong democratic institutions which establishing republics (Ray, 1998:28). Doyle view that for "Kant a republic was a regime that respected private property and established a legal equality among citizens as subjects on the basis of representative government with a separation of powers" (Doyle, 1983:226). President Woodrow Wilson of America was another famous statesman who thought of lasting peace in the aftermath of the First World War (WWI) that lead to the formation of the League of Nations that fails to prevent the Second World War in 1939 (Knutsen, 1992:196-197). Henry Kissinger acknowledges President Wilson philosophy of absolute peace which has dominated the American thought on international politics. Kissinger contends that,

Woodrow Wilson was the embodiment of the tradition of American exceptionalism, and originated what would become the dominant intellectual school of American foreign policy... The idea that peace depends above all on promoting democratic institutions has remained a staple of American thought to the present day. Conventional, American wisdom has consistently maintained that democracies do not make war against each other. (Kissinger, 1994:33-34).

Consequently, the submission made by the then UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in a report title *The Agenda for Peace* to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in 1992 pave the way for the contemporary term, peacebuilding to enter the political science lingo. Off course, the report noted four important key areas of building lasting peace which include preventive diplomacy, and peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding that can help and restore last peace in conflict or war zones (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). He argues that there is growing need for intergovernmental organisations such as the UN, AU, ECOWAS, SADC and many others

to provide humanitarian intervention in areas of conflict or war. He further opined that “the UN needed to stand ready to assist in peacebuilding in its differing contexts: rebuilding the institutions and infrastructures of nations torn by civil conflict and strife” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992).

The four major areas for maintaining sustainable or durable peace as outlined in *An Agenda for Peace* was defined as follows: *Preventive diplomacy* is an “action to prevent conflicts from arising escalating into a full-blown conflict between parties. Peacemaking is an action to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through peaceful means as stated in Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Peacekeeping is the deployment of UN presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving UN military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well. Post-conflict peacebuilding is an action to identify and support structures which would tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict” (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). The concept of peacebuilding refers to efforts in the medium to long-term process of rebuilding war-affected communities both political, security, social and economic dimension of a society emerging from a conflict (Murithi, 2006).

Historical background of a conflict illustrated that sustainable peace is attain through processes which begins with preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping operations and finally peacebuilding (Lund 1996:38). The central goal for peacebuilding is to reduce the need for conflict by addressing the problems and damages within a state. The most important task of peacebuilding is mainly on reconstruction of the state and its internal functions (Adams, 2008:18). For any intergovernmental organisations to carry out a successful peacebuilding, the organisation must be fully prepared to covers all the multiple domains in the process.

It is important to point out that a successful peacebuilding is a complex process that is truly interdisciplinary and covers multiple domains including direct security, economic, development, social rehabilitation and political reform (Jeong, 2005:27). Peacebuilding process must be complementary, requiring agencies and actors to have some form of coherent structure or plan. Peacebuilding is not purely about physical reconstruction of the damaged state only, and it however, also needs to cover social reconciliation, forgiveness and healing (Assefa, 2001:336).

In international conflict peacebuilding process actually echoed the applicability of theories of victimhood, forgiveness and reconciliation and all these take the bottom-up approach rather than the elitist top-down approach (Steinberg, 2013:43-45). Coning viewed that for peace consolidation to be self-sustainable it has to be the result of a home-grow, bottom-up and context-specific process and above all forgiveness and reconciliation (Coning, 2013).

According to Hermann (2004:40) “the most salient term that conflict-resolution experts have recently elaborated... is that of *reconciliation*... as the panacea that can rescue us from the shortcoming of the theories and practical blueprints for getting from war to peace”. For instance, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission actually demonstrated the transition of apartheid South Africa. In the process of peacebuilding individuals on all sides of the conflict were given “the chance to express their regret at failing to prevent human rights violations and to demonstrate their commitment to reconciliation... Guilt for wrongdoing needs to be translated into positive commitment in building a better society- the healthiest and the most productive form of atonement (South African Ministry of Justice, 1995). In peacebuilding reconciliation is noted to be a “cluster of cognitive and emotional processes through which individuals, groups, societies and states come to accept relationships of cooperation, concession and peace in situations of former conflict” (Azar et al., 1999).

Pre-colonial Africa has indigenous traditional settings for peacebuilding which lead Africans to healing and reconciliation that has further created the basis for re-establishing social solidarity (Zartman, 2000). For instance, the post-conflict peacebuilding process in Mozambique actually used the traditional healing and reconciliation practice to enable warring parties, most especially child soldiers to be integrated into their communities (Murithi, 2006). In Rwanda, the government is currently making use of the traditional justice and reconciliation system called *gacaca* to judge the perpetrators of the Rwanda 1994 genocide (Murithi, 2006).

The post-colonial Africa transcends from colonial dictatorial regimes to another form of politics branded as neo-patrimonialism and clientelism, the impact of Cold War, the peripheral nature of African states in the world economy and encumbered debt burden retarded the promises of economic development and political emancipation for the population of Africa by the liberation leaders (Kabia, 2015:106). The concept of patrimonialism and clientelism actually gave way for a complete concentration of power in the hands of the president and his closest allies. Owing to this the national legislature role of many African independent states were reduced to a rubber-stamp decrees and wishes of the President; sharing of the national cake was in the hands of few elites, whereas marginalisation of some group was the talk of the day (Kabia, 2015:107-108). The consequences of patrimonialism and clientelism in post-colonial Africa led to rise of different forms of intra-state conflicts which hindered Africa's economic development. This increasing number of conflicts during and after the post-colonial and the post-Cold War eras actually necessitated the process of peacebuilding on the continent.

It is due to this security concerns that the members Organisation of Africa Unity (OAU) pledged to settle all conflicts among themselves by peaceful means and, to this end decided to establish a Commission of mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration with the responsibility of peacebuilding intervention on the continent. The composition and conditions of operation by this Commission shall be characterised by a separate Protocol to be approved by the Assembly of Heads of state and government (OAU Charter, 1963: Article 19). Although, the Commission was task with the responsibility to maintain peace, security and stability in peaceful method; however, the Commission responsibility was hindered by the OAU principles of "non-interference in the domestic matters of member states and the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state and for its inalienable right to independent existence" (OAU Charter, 1963: Article 3 (2 and 3)).

Consequently, Kabia contends that conflict response and peacebuilding intervention in member state internal affairs was placed in the hands of sub-regional organisation such as the *Economic Community of West African State* (ECOWAS) to take responsibility for addressing the security and political problems that arose in that sub-region. He further argues that in the face of this unprecedented human right violations and international disengagement from Africa conflicts, sub-regional economic body like ECOWAS was forced to devise *ad hoc* security mechanisms for keeping a lid on these conflicts (Kabia, 2015:113). For instance, amidst the conflict in Liberia and Sierra Leone, ECOWAS designed a Peace Plan which called for the establishment and deployment of ECOMOG intervention force in Liberia in 1990 and Sierra Leone in 1997 (Aning, 1994; Agbo, Lenshire and Boye, 2018).

The end of the Cold War in 1989 and 1990 saw Africa going down the bloodiest path as the dark end of dictatorial regime started smelling the effect of democratisation through the rebirth of multipartism in Africa. This era saw an uprising that led to conflict in Africa and the overthrow of dictatorial regimes (Mutua, 1995:505-506). Lewis asserts that the change in the political sphere in Africa actually brings an untold suffering to the population of Africa as many African countries encountered civil war and ethno-religious conflicts to root out tyranny. For example,

the overthrow of Somalia President Said Barre in 1990 led the fall of Somalia state (Lewis, 2008:71-78).

Furthermore, the 1994 Rwanda genocide coincided with the first democratic elections in South Africa mark the beginning of a new era in the history of Africa as Nelson Mandela was elected as the pioneer democratic president in South Africa. Examining the Rwanda case and the slow nature of the international organisations such as the United Nations (UN) and OAU to intervene in situation of cross human rights abuse, crime against humanity and genocide; he expressed his disappointment to all the African leaders and international organisation for been mute in the eyes of impunity in Rwanda and other African states. Mandela contends that:

It became clear that African need not expect others to come to its rescue and that it should stand for itself more than ever before. At the OAU summit in July 1994 in Tunis, President Nelson Mandela of South Africa expressed the disappointment of the people of the continent in the international community and urged member states to build an African means for responding to the peace and security challenges of the continent: Rwanda stands out as a stern and severe rebuke to all of us for failing to address Africa's security problems. As a result of that, terrible slaughter of the innocent has taken place and is taking place in front of our very eyes. We know it is a matter of fact that we must have it in ourselves as Africans to changes all this. We must, in action assert our will to do so (Cited in Dersso, 2012:20).

President Nelson Mandela raise an awareness that the continent need to take it responsibility to protect its population in case of gross human right violation; and be committed in building strong peace and security mechanisms to prevent, manage and resolve conflict that affect the continent. In order to deal with numerous human rights abuses perpetuated by the dictatorial regimes in Africa, the time has come for sub-regional, regional and international organisations to shift from this old philosophy of 'state security' to the new dimension of 'human security' to safe guard lives and properties (Hutchful, 2008:63). The move from the traditional state-centric security of the OAU to human security met with changes in leadership in the 90s in many African leaders who thought that it was important for them to revisit purpose of Pan-Africanism. Hence, this necessitated the transition of the OAU to the Africa Union (AU) in what we called "*New Pan-Africanism or African Renaissance*".

The Transition of OAU to AU

The new journey of African renaissance first began with the transformation of the OAU and its principal doctrine non-interference to AU and its contemporary doctrine of non-indifference began first by identifying some of the major challenges that affect the continent. These challenges includes security hazard, bad governance, inequality and underdevelopment (Tieku, 2008:2); secondly, the drafting of the Abuja treaty of 1991 which stands as the official aid to the African Economic Communities (AECs), as the building blocks for the realisation of the African Union (Okhonmina, 2009:86); and thirdly, AU blueprint as a regional organisation was intended to achieve a more faster economic integration, social development and the maintenance of peace and security on the African continent (Eghweree, 2014:223).

The OAU ordinary session that was held in Sirte, Libya in 1999 by the Heads of state and government issued a declaration known as the Sirte declaration paving the way for the establishment of the African Union (AU Handbook, 2014). The dream for the new continental organisation was to lay a solid foundation that would lead to finding *African solutions to African problems*. For the leaders to complete the process of establishing the AU before the official launching of the organisation three summits were held: first the Lome Summit of 2000 that adopted the AU Constitutive Act; second

the Lusaka summit of 2001 that drawn the roadmap for the implementation of the African Union; and lastly the Durban Summit of 2002 that marked the launching of the AU which was attended by the Heads of state and government (AU Hand Book, 2014:10).

AU Role in Peacebuilding in Africa

The development of new norms, institutions and the promotion of democratic governance by African leaders and policy makers in the 21st century is evidence that, the new continental organisation is setting a pathway for economic growth and continental integration. Since the creation of the AU in 2002, the Union has calved out a wide array of treaties, protocols and norms linking to issues of peace, security and stability, gender balance, democratic governance, trade, education, and economic development (Karbo and Murithi, 2018:1). In this light, Murithi points out that AU has set out new norms and institutions that will tackle human security problems such as conflicts and other difficult humanitarian conditions and health situations namely: *Human Immuno Virus (HIV)* and *Acquire Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)*, malaria, tuberculosis and even environmental hazards (Murithi, 2009:94). Powell denotes that the adoption of the Constitutive Act of the AU and the institution of the *Protocol relating to establishing its Peace and Security Council* has up large the Union to set up an African security mechanism that is competent in peacebuilding intervention (Powell, 2005:1)

The modus operandi of the African leaders' transition of the OAU to AU shows their great aspiration and commitment in the maintenance of peace, security and stability on the continent (Mwanasali, 2008:41). In the summit that was held by the Heads of state and government of the OAU/AU in July, 11th 2000 in Lome Togo to adopt the Constitutive Act of the AU, the African leaders actually recognised "the fact that the scourge of conflicts constitutes a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent and it is necessary to promote peace, security and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of our economic development and integration agenda" (AU Constitutive Act, 2000).

As a means to express their Pan-African solidarity to member state that are in conflict, these leaders adopted the new doctrine of non-indifference as opposed to the old doctrine of non-interference in the member state internal affairs (Mwanasali, 2008:41). This new doctrine of non-indifference is guided by Article 4 (h and j) of *AU Constitutive Act (AUCA)*. The normative guidance of the AU doctrine of non-indifference holds that the Union has the legal right to intervene in a member state pursuant to a "decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstance, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity; and the right of member states to request intervention from the Union in order to restore peace and security" (AU Constitutive Act, 2000). This normative concept of non-indifference provides the operational modalities and institutional authorisation for the AU to take preventive measures in areas affected with conflict in Africa (Mwanasali, 2008:42-43).

The AU doctrine of non-indifference was coined by African Union Commission Chairperson Alpha Oumar Konare. He put forward that the doctrine of non-indifference would be used as the legal instrument to justify the Union intervention in the member state internal affairs in case of gross human rights violation to protect civilians from the hands of tyranny (Konare, 2007). The called to African leaders was to take high responsibility in preventing and resolving conflict in Africa; it was also another way of informing the leaders that they cannot be indifference while atrocities are been committed on the continent by dictatorial regime. Konare also contends that "the primary responsibility for ensuring peace in Africa belongs to Africans themselves. Africans must shoulder that responsibility. Our partners must let Africans run their own affairs. Africa is no longer a private hunting ground or anyone's backyard; it is no longer a part of the Great

game; and it is no longer anyone's sphere of influence. Those are the few simple rules that would allow the continent to shoulder its responsibility and to demonstrate inter-African solidarity" (Konare, 2007).

Subsequently, the strengthening of the *Regional Economic Communities* (RECs) and *Regional Mechanisms* (RMs) by the Abuja treaty was an approach made by African policy makers to collaborate and harmonise with AU peace and security machinery to respond to conflict and peacebuilding intervention on the continent. It is worthy to note here that for effective implementation of the doctrine of non-indifference, the AU peace security mechanism would collaborate, harmonise, co-ordinate and co-operate with the RMs in order to promote and maintain peace, security and stability on the continent as stipulated in Article 7(j) of the PSC Protocol (AU PSC Protocol, 2002). It is also indicated in the AU Constitutive Act Article 3(l) that the Union shall coordinate and harmonise the principles that would guide the existing and future RECs for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union (AU Constitutive Act, 2000).

The approval of the *Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security of the African Union* was a mechanism created by the organisation to provide effective peacebuilding initiative on the continent. The creation of AU PSC witnessed the replacement of the old dysfunctional OAU central organ of the *Mechanism of Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution*. The PSC was a Union institution that was put in place to implement the doctrine of non-indifference to attain the quest for *Pax African* and to make sure to enforce the norms and principle as agreed to by member states of the African Union (Mwanasali, 2008:42). The AU PSC is viewed as the Union standing organ for conflict prevention, management and resolution. In this regard, the PSC is a collective security mechanism and early warning deal with the capability to facilitate effective and efficient rejoinder towards conflict situation in Africa. Its main central duties are to conduct early warning and preventive diplomacy; facilitate peace-making, peacekeeping and further recommend intervention in member state to promote peace security and stability. The PSC also support the initiative of peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction as well as humanitarian action and disaster management (AU Hand Book, 2014:29).

Powell notes that the AU contemporary security system is permitted to work within the scaffold of the developing structure of the AU; and the security system is up large to carry out the functions relating to conflict prevention, management and Resolution (Powell, 2005:9). Article 3 of the PSC Protocol underlined the purpose of the PSC as follows: the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa; to prevent conflicts and even undertake the responsibility of peace-making and peace building functions for the resolution of conflicts; promote and implement peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction activities to consolidate peace and prevent the resurgence of violence; co-ordinate and harmonise continental efforts in the prevention and combating of international terrorism in all its aspects; develop a common defense policy for the Union; and promote and encourage democratic practice, good governance and the rule of law, protection human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the sanctity of human life and international humanitarian law, as part of efforts for preventing conflicts (AU PSC Protocol, 2002).

For effective and efficient response to peace-making, peacekeeping, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction, the AU PSC Protocol has set forth with accuracy the *African Peace and Security Architecture* (APSA) which is made up of the *Panel of the Wise* (*Eminent African Personality* (EAP)); the *Continental Early Warning System* (CEWS); *African Standby Force* (ASF) with a military committee (that offers advice on deployment and security requirements); and an AU peace fund (Karbo and Murithi, 2018:6). The materialisation of APSA is the commitment shown by African leaders to institute operational machineries to accomplish decision related to peace and security

in accordance with the power bestowed in Article 5(2) of the AU Constitutive Act (African Union Assessment Report, 2010:19).

Peace and Democracy are the fundamental elements for sustainable human growth and development. The lack of sustainable peace and democracy in some Africa countries is as a result of the patrimonial and client politics, corruption, marginalisation, inequality that exists in many African states. The high quest for the promotion of democratic governance and human development in African states has been the preoccupation of the African Union (AU). For AU to achieve its purpose of promoting democratic governance, the Union has put in place normative framework and institutional mechanisms to speed up democratic governance in Africa. According to the *International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance* (IIDEA), the normative scaffold and institutional mechanisms are very important in strengthening democratic governance in member states, sub-regional and continental levels (International IDEA, 2016a:1).

The AU Constitutive Act is the central document for the promotion of democratic governance as defined in its objectives and principles. Article 3(g and h) of the Act denotes that the Union shall “promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance; and protect human and peoples’ rights in accordance with the *African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights* (ACHPR) and other relevant human rights instruments”. The Act further notes in Article 4(m and p) that the Union should urge member states to respect democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law and good governance; and condemn the unconstitutional changes of government (AU Constitutive Act, 2000).

According to *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance* (ACDEG) democratic governance is the process of promoting good governance through a transparent and accountable administration with strong political institutions that is cemented in the tradition of democracy and peace under a favourable situation with the participation of civil society organisations under the framework of the law; and the inclusion of the civic education and educational program; respect of the rule of law and human rights as stipulated in ACHPR and other important international instruments (ACDEG, 2007). In reality the definition of democratic governance should include elements such as freedom of speech, association and of the press; transparent, free and fair electoral processes; and the separation of power.

On the other hand, the World Bank views good governance as “the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development” and state institutions should be liable for accountability and the fight against corruption (World Bank, 1991). Whereas the UNDP policy document also views good governance as “the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels of the government”. It comprises mechanism, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences (UNDP, 1997). Therefore, Qudrat-I Elahi argues that democratic governance “is a political system that incorporates into the nation of governance, not only efficient processes, but also principles and institutions that secure the civic rights and freedoms of all people, including the poorest of the poor and the marginalised groups” (Qudrat-I Elahi, 2009:1169).

Consequently, the promotion of democratic governance in the national, sub-regional and continental levels by the AU ensue good governance and peace which are the prerequisites of economic growth and human development. The elements of good governance range from the respect of the rule of law and human rights protection; competence administrators; legitimate government; administrative responsibility, accountability and transparency; effective decision making, implementation and service delivery (UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration,

2006). The AU attainment of good governance required a visionary leadership that is equipped with integrity, innovation, prudence, people centeredness, honesty, efficiency and effectiveness. More so, this visionary “leadership can set out visions, provide selfless and capable leadership to turn the fortunes of the continent around” (Rylander, 2010).

Though AU has place high commitment in the promotion of democratic governance, some African leaders have indulged in the national constitutional amendment in their various states to scrap out the presidential term limit to extend their mandate in power. For example, the Cameroon 1996 constitution was manipulated by President Paul Biya regime in 2008 in changing the presidential term office to prolong his staying in power. Leaders such as Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, Omar Bongo of Gabon, Idriss Deby of Chad and Perrier Nkurunziza of Burundi have manipulated their national constitution to prolong their staying in power and the AU just went mute despite all the normative framework that are outline in the AU documents to promote democratic governance (Tieku, 2008:7).

The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) was established by the AU as a continental organ of the OAU/AU to eradicate poverty and create a roadmap for sustainable growth and development to individuals and African states, and more so to partake in the world politics and economy on equal basis (NEPAD, 2002:1). Landsberg contends that the “commitment to new developmental paradigm by Africa leaders indicate a strong relationship between development on the one hand, and governance, democratisation, and peace and security on the other. The paradigm espoused by NEPAD puts the challenge of poverty alleviation, and addressing underdevelopment at the core of a new Pan-Africanism in Africa” (Landsberg, 2008:208). NEPAD Declaration has herald the commitment of the heads of state and government of the member states of the AU to articulate decision making processes in pursuit for the following purposes; the promotion of democracy and good political governance; economic and corporate governance; socio-economic development; and African Peer Review Mechanism (NEPAD, 2002:3).

The three elements for governance as stressed in the NEPAD document are: economic and corporate governance; political governance; and peace and security as the prerequisite for economic and human development. NEPAD is observed as an AU organ to portray the African states moral contract among the G8 while attempting to promote democratic governance by undergoing political reforms and free market economic principles, whereas the G8 will support Africa states to hold firm to good governance, human rights, poverty alleviation and economic growth and human development (Akopari, 2004:246). In this regard, African leaders pledged to commit themselves to the promotion of democratic governance and its central principles. Their refurbished determination is to implement the following principles; the respect for the rule of law; the equality of all citizens before the law and the liberty of the individual; individual and collective freedoms, including the right to form and join political parties and trade unions, in conformity with the constitution; equal opportunity for all; the inalienable right of the individual to participate by means of free, credible and democratic political processes in periodically electing their leaders for a fixed term of office; and adherence to the separation of powers, including the protection of the independence of the judiciary and of effective parliaments (NEPAD, 2002:3-4).

NEPAD ideology of democratic governance is highly driven and influence by the philosophy of African renaissance. As cited by Landsberg “African renaissance was essentially a political, social and economic vision for continental renewal. As a vision, African renaissance sought to establish genuine and stable democracies in Africa, in which systems of governance will flourish because they derive their authority and legitimacy from the will of the people” (Cited in Landsberg, 2008:209). NEPAD, just like the “African renaissance, is based on the philosophy that Africa’s

social, economic and political challenges can be addressed by continental initiatives, backed by external assistance” (Landsberg, 2008:209).

NEPAD potency in the promotion of democratic governance has energised the civil society organisation in African to participate in African politics, states and governments in order to intensify the practice of democratic processes, good governance and the respect of human rights; and this will help to foster economic and human development on the continent. NEPAD was instituted as a developmental catalyst for African states and the people of Africa. Sen points out that “development requires the removal of major sources of poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or over activity of repressive states” (Amartya, 1999:3). NEPAD has been the umbrella organ of the AU to promote democratic governance and economic and human development on the continent. It is worthy to say that the coordination between the AU and NEPAD on democratic governance has lead to the creation of *African Peer Review Mechanism* (APRM) to promote democratic governance in Africa.

The APRM was created in 2003 as the AU structure with its central responsibility been to facilitate the voluntary evaluation and monitoring of the level of governance in the AU member states as stipulated in the *Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance* (DDPECG) and the *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance* (ACDEG) (NEPAD, 2003). Mangu contends that APRM is under the authority of the Committee of Participating Heads of State and Government; most of the tasks of APRM are in the hands of the *Independent Panel of Eminent Persons* (IPEP) (Mangu, 2014:63).

According to Akokpari the creation of the APRM was for member states of the AU to hold on to the principle of good governance as enshrined in NEPAD and other AU documents. ARPM is mandated to overseas the facilitation, implementation and the monitoring of good governance as affixed of signatures to multilateral accords such as the *African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights* (ACHPR); the *African Charter for Popular Participation in Development* (ACPPD); *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Child* (ACRWC); *Declaration and Plan of Action for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights* (DPAPPHR) and other relevant international instruments. As a matter of fact the ARPM has chanted a new way forward for the promotion of democratic governance against ethno-religious politics that existed on the continent. In this regard, the APRM has open up for the creation of an Independent Panel of Eminent Persons (IPEP) whose task is to review and assess governance situation in Africa (Akokpari, 2004:253).

Heyns and Killander underscore that the APRM process of review and assessment is made up of five stages: stage one which is the “preparatory stage is both at the level of the APRM Secretariat and the national level. This stage provided for the study of the political, economic, and corporate governance and development environment in the country to be review; stage two is the review team visit to the participating country to carry out the widest possible range of consultations with the government, officials, political parties, parliamentarian, and representative of civil society organisation and not forgotten the media, academia, trade unions, business and professional bodies; stage three is the drafting of the country review report on the basis of the briefing material prepared by the African Peer Review (APR) Secretariat and the information gathered in stage two; stage four begins with the submission of the final country review report, plus the final programme of action to the APR forum through the Secretariat and the Panel; and stage five which the final stage of the APRM is the formal, and public tabling of the report in key sub-regional and regional structures such as the *Pan-African Parliament* (PAP), the *African Commission, the Peace and Security Council*, and the economic, Social and cultural Council of the AU within six upon conclusion of the report by the APR Forum” (Heyns and Killander, 2006:298–30).

The 14th ordinary session of the heads of state and government of the AU held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in February 2010, the Assembly mandated the Union to established a Pan-African Governance architecture which was later ward created as an African Governance Architecture (AGA), with the sole aim of enhancing the coordination among AU organs and institutions with the commitment to promote democratic governance and human rights in Africa (Karbo and Murithi, 2018:6). The AU Department of Political Affairs in collaboration with the AU Commission has been mandated to promote and support democratic governance, respect for human rights and humanitarian issues. However, the Department has shown it commitment in the prevention of election associated crisis. It further support and advance democratic governance, the rule of law, the respect for human rights, accountability, transparency, and guarantee the implementation of the AGA (International IDEA, 2016a:2).

The importance of establishing this organ was for the member states of the AU to continuously hold on to it primary “responsibility of building and consolidating governance based on the recognition that a strong and effective AGA requires solid, functioning and accountable national structures” (AU, African Governance Platform, 2013:7). Therefore, the creation of the AGA by AU within the *Secretariat of the Department of Political Affairs* is observe as “the central coordinating mechanism for monitoring compliance and implementation of agreed standards as embodied in the *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance*” (Karbo and Murithi, 2018:7). AGA is generally observed as the prospective political and institutional framework for the promotion of democratic governance in Africa.

Prospects and Challenges

The prospects of the AU is to put lasting end to post-electoral conflicts, end unconstitutional changes of government, maintained peace, security and stability and to restore constitutional and political democratic governance on the continent, although faced with numerous challenges. In executing all these, the AU has put forward progressive agenda that commit the organisation to intervene in conflict situations in Africa. For AU to carry out its mandate of ending post-electoral conflicts, maintenance of peace and security and to end the unconstitutional changes of government on the continent, the Union adopted normative principles that would pave the way for AU to intervene in conflict affected areas in Africa (Mathew, 2018:22). Secondly, the Union also established the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) that would help to implement the normative principles in peacebuilding intervention in conflict situations on the continent (Mathew, 2018:23)

According to Mwanasali the applicability of AU normative principles and the adoption of the *Protocol relating to the establishment of Peace and Security Council (PSC)* is commitment made by leaders of member states of the Union to focused on developing an agenda for post-conflict reconstruction and development in post-conflict polities in order to uphold peacebuilding and to advanced economic development through reconstruction; whereas fused peace to prevent relapse to conflict (Mwanasali, 2008:50). It is important to note here that it is the responsibility of African leaders and their governments to ensure the safety of populations and the continent by strengthening institutional capabilities as well as establishing a favourable environment for a peaceful management and resolution of conflict (Mwanasali, 2008:50).

In the area of unconstitutional changes of government the Constitutive Act of the AU in its Article 4(p) condemns and rejects unconstitutional changes of governments on the continent. More so, the Union may apply political and economic sanction or suspension to member states that carry out unconstitutional changes of government (Constitutive Act, 2000: article 30). In situation of such action the AU would use its peace and security machineries to implement its doctrine of

non-indifference to restore the state to constitutional order and political democratic governance with the respect of the human rights and the rule of law.

Challenges

In international law sovereignty stands as an international norm to defend independence of a particular state. The Charter of the OAU in its Article 3 (2 and 3) stipulated that no state had the right to interfere in the internal affairs of a member state; and the defend of sovereignty and territorial integrity at independence (OAU Charter, 1963); whereas the AU Constitutive Act make this clear in Article 3(b) declared that the Union shall defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity and independence of the its member state. Article 4 (g) of the Constitutive Act also declared non-interference in the internal affairs of a member state; but Article 4(h) mandated the Union to intervene in a member state pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crime against humanity (AU Constitutive Act, 2002). Sovereignty according to Makinda and Okumu is defined into three ways: the first been the “juridical sovereignty which indicated states recognition through international polity”; the second type is the “empirical sovereignty which is based on the understanding that states have the right and ability to control the people, resources and all activities within their borders”; and the third type is the “popular sovereignty which is based on the normative claim that all human beings ought to receive the same basic rights and a state’s authority is earned through respecting and protecting these rights” (Makinda and Okumu, 2008).

The ongoing challenge face by the AU today is due to the fact that some African leaders are still keeping behind their mind the juridical sovereignty of Africa states at independence while cause impunity on the masses on the continent. Whereas the AU through it Article 4(h) has shifted from the juridical sovereignty to popular sovereignty which respect and protect human rights and property in situation of anarchy in a member state of the African Union (Farmer, 2012:94-95). This indicated that the AU has shifted from protective sovereignty of state security to the sovereignty of human security. As Bellamy denotes that the concept of human security has brought about contemporary change in state-centric identities and interest to the responsibility to protect the population from human rights violations (Bellamy, 2013:343; Farmer, 2012:95). Notwithstanding the new dimension been taken by the AU PSC to responds to cases of gross human rights abuses; some AU heads state are still adamant to respect human rights and promote democratic governance. Leaders such as Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and Paul Biya of Cameroon are still holding firm to sovereignty doctrine and territorial integrity because they are indulge in crime against humanity and genocide in their various countries. For example the quietness of AU towards the recent conflict in the two English speaking regions of Cameroon indicated that AU is still respecting Cameroon sovereignty and territorial integrity while innocent civilians are been slaughter and villages and town been burnt by the Cameroon military. It is also important to note that the presidents of these two countries and many others have changed the national constitution term limit to prolong their stay in power for ever; and AU quietness to apply sanction on these leaders for violating the democratic principles which the AU stands to promote in Africa is a challenge to the Union.

In a workshop report organised by the international Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IIDEA) in 2016; it was noted that most African states are still grappling with matters connecting to the role of military in the governance processes which is tantamount to the rule of law. As such, the rule of law which is one of the pillars of democratic governance will face a negative setback in the promotion of states, sub-regional and continental democratic governance. Mishika and Mebenga who were among the panel speakers point out that “the rule of law is

sometime impacted upon by ethnic relations and in the use of religion by different political actors. While on the other hand the state itself faces a crisis of legitimacy as it often fails to deal with the challenges of poverty and the effective service delivery” (IIDEA, 2016b:14). The lack of rule of law can be stemmed from an unstable or weak judicial system which is highly dominated by the executive arm of the government (IIDEA, 2016b:14). The dominance of the executive over the judiciary in many African states is because most if not all of the judges on the judicial bench is politically appointed by the executive rather than appointment on meritocracy. It is important to note that states that respect the rule of law as the procedural requirements of democratic governance actually preserved the independence of the judiciary and the freedom of the media. However, in situation where the executive power is dominance as oppose to the judiciary, the judicial independence is lost because of the political pressure and intimidation from the executive (IIDEA, 2016b:15). Most African states are liable to conflicts because of the lack of the rule of law. Any country that does not respect the rule of law would eventually result to anarchy.

The *Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU)* in Article 21 establishes the peace fund for the AU to finance its peace and security mission on the continent (AU PSC Protocol, 2002). The Peace fund is used by the AU PSC to sponsor operational activities such as the preventive diplomacy and mediation, institutional capacity and peace support missions. In the summit of the Heads of state and government held in Kigali Rwanda, in July 2016, the AU High Representative of the Peace Fund, Donald Kaberuka, presented his report on the finance of the AU and the Peace fund. It was against the pitfall of membership contributions that the Assembly took a decision that 0.2 percent levy will be imposed on any goods imported into the continent which could be amounted to US\$325 million in 2017 and with an increase to about US\$400 million in 2020 (Apuuli, 2018:161). However, many AU member states are still reluctant to contribute their own fair share of the peace fund and this has caused the Union very vulnerable in the hands of outsiders to finance and control the activities of the AU PSC. Apuuli argues that the failure of AU member states to contribute their own share of AU peace fund has cause the Union to over dependent on its partners to support financially and this has affected the implementation of ‘African solution to African problems’ (Apuuli, 2018:170).

Conclusion

The paradigm shift OAU and its norms and institutions which have failed to maintain peace and security and to restore constitutional and political democratic governance to. The OAU, its norms and institutions were transformed to AU to develop new norms and institution that would resolve the scourge of conflict that has destroyed lives and properties for many years; and to promote democratic governance. The prospects of the AU to maintain peace and security on the continent lies in the implementation of its doctrine of non-indifference by the AU PSC mechanisms that would bring about peacebuilding intervention in areas of conflicts that are a barrier to African development. In the promotion of democratic governance the Union has put placed norms in the Constitutive Act, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, African Charter on Peoples’ and Human Rights to promote democratic governance at the level of the member states, sub-regional and regional level. The NEPAD was established by the Union to promote democratic governance, economic growth and human development in Africa. Whereas the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was created to monitor and evaluates the level of democratic governance at the level of the member states, sub-region and regional level. Notwithstanding the prospects of norms and institutional building in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts; and to promote democratic governance; the Union is still faced with enormous challenges to completely bring about peace, security and stability and to promote democratic governance in Africa.

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French Operation Barkhane

A Litmus Test of AU–EU Security Cooperation

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Date Received: 9 June 2023

Date Accepted: 8 May 2025

Abstract

The establishment of French Operation Barkhane is pivotal in addressing counterterrorism and the restoration of stability within the Sahel region. This military initiative represents a collective intervention that encompasses both France and the G5 Sahel states, operating through four military bases under French command. Various scholarly analyses perceive this operation as a deviation from France's traditional military policy in Africa; however, its conduct is indicative of a continued reinforcement of French imperial interests on the continent. This study aligns with existing literature, positing that Operation Barkhane is fundamentally a military intervention shaped by the dynamics of FrancAfrique policy, which appears to marginalize the EU–AU Peace and Security framework. The French military operation failed to

Keywords: Operation Barkhane, France, G5 Sahel, AU–EU Peace and Security Partnership, African Peace and Security Agenda (APSA)

Introduction

The historical trajectory of relations between Africa and the European Union (EU) yields significant insights into contemporaneous geopolitical frameworks. Notably, the enduring ties between EU member states and the African Union (AU) predate the inception of both institutions, tracing back to the colonial era. The modern partnership that emerged between the EU and African nations proliferated following the Cairo Summit in 2000, which established a structured political dialogue, further solidified by subsequent EU–AU summits (Pirozzi, 2010; Resti, 2021). This pivotal harbinger catalysed the promulgation of the 2005 EU Strategy for Africa, which delineated the parameters of EU engagement with the continent. A salient component of the Cairo Summit was the establishment of partnerships aimed at fostering political relations, economic growth, and developmental integration through trade.

In light of escalating terrorism and unchecked irregular migration patterns from Africa to Europe, peace and security considerations emerged as critical focal points within this partnership. Recognising the intrinsic link between peace, security, and sustainable development, the EU and AU instituted the Joint Africa–EU Strategy (JAES) in December 2007. A pivotal aspect of the JAES is its emphasis on peace and security, coupled with good governance (Tywuschik and Sherriff, 2009; Pirozzi, 2010; Resti, 2021). The African Union–European Union (AU–EU) partnership underscores the critical role of good governance in enhancing the security of African states. The European Union posits that the promotion of good governance and the fortification of democratic values are essential frameworks for establishing sustainable security in the African context.

The JAES was conceived as a response to evolving geopolitical landscapes, globalisation, and integration processes within both Africa and Europe (Tywuschik and Sherriff, 2009). The European Union Council (2018:2) emphasised the necessity of collaborative endeavours to achieve peace and security through preventive measures, conflict resolution, and counter-terrorism initiatives, asserting that these components are vital for sustainable peace and development across both unions. In contrast to the Cairo Plan of Action, which centred on five thematic areas such as economic integration and human rights, the JAES prioritises the elevation of Africa-EU political partnership to address shared concerns, encompassing peace and security, migration, human rights, multilateralism, development, and environmental sustainability.

Within the realm of EU-AU peace and security, the partnership is strategically designed to support the AU in its objectives of conflict prevention and peace promotion across the continent. This assistance entails training and funding for the African Peace and Security Agenda (APSA) through the African Peace Facility (APF), established by the EU (Pichon, 2020; Pichon and Fardel, 2020; Venturi, 2021). The European Development Fund (EDF) has been mobilised to underpin various initiatives, including the African Union Mission in Somalia, efforts against terrorism in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions, conflict prevention in Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, ceasefire monitoring in South Sudan, and oversight of human rights violations in Burundi. The security collaboration between the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) is anticipated to be implemented through the interaction of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Peace Facility (APF). This partnership operates on the principle that African nations, through the AU, are responsible for their own security, while the EU offers support for the AU's security initiatives. According to the agreement, the EU is not permitted to deploy military forces to any African nation or intervene militarily in any conflicts on the continent.

Despite these collaborative efforts, France, as one of the principal EU members, continues to uphold its long-standing military and security cooperation with its former colonies in Africa. A range of bilateral accords has governed this military and security cooperation since the independence of these nations. This partnership is premised on two particular types of bilateral agreements: technical military accords and defence accords, which mandate France's capacity for military intervention in its former colonies when deemed necessary (Charbonneau, 2008; Siradag, 2014; Vallin, 2005). Under this principle, France initiated a military intervention in Mali in 2013 following the emergence of terrorist threats to Malian sovereignty. This operation, known as Operation Serval, evolved in 2014 into Operation Barkhane, encompassing the five former French colonies collectively known as the G5 Sahel. The operation is legitimized within the context of counterterrorism efforts in the Sahel region and represents a collaborative endeavour between France and the G5 states, which include Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.

The intervention undertaken by France through Operation Barkhane contravenes the established agreements between the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) regarding the autonomy of the AU in managing security challenges within Africa. The military engagement and subsequent deployment of French forces in the G5 Sahel states fundamentally undermine the principles enshrined in the AU-EU security framework, which delineate the EU's role as one of support rather than direct intervention. This study posits that Operation Barkhane serves as a strategic instrument employed by France to reinforce its Francafrique policy, thereby disregarding the foundational principle of non-interference that underpins the EU-AU security relations agreement.

France and the G5 Sahel: A Review of Security Relations and Military Interventions

France's security relations with its former African colonies are characterised by a framework of military accords and interventions that have evolved since the post-colonial era. These bilateral agreements, particularly those established in 1973, have facilitated France's direct involvement in the domestic affairs of several African states, most notably Mali (Siradag, 2014; Vallin, 2005; Stoicescu, 2020). The foundations of these relations were instrumental in prompting French military intervention in Mali in 2013, subsequent to a government request aimed at countering terrorist incursions and restoring political stability (Griffin, 2016; Shurkin, 2021). This intervention materialized in the form of Operation Serval, which mobilized approximately 4,000 French troops, supported by an additional 2,000 Chadian forces, in conjunction with the Malian army (Griffin, 2016; Shurkin, 2021; Roca, n.d.). The French Armed Forces Headquarters (2020) articulated that Operation Serval was conceived to thwart a jihadist offensive threatening Bamako, dismantle the burgeoning industrial organization of terrorism in Northern Mali, and transition the stabilization mission to Malian authorities and UN forces (specifically MINUSMA).

As the operational landscape expanded to encompass the Sahel region, the increased activities of various terrorist organisations necessitated a broader strategic approach. Consequently, in a bid to enhance regional counter-terrorism efforts, France merged its existing military operations—Operation Epervier in Chad, initiated in 1986, and Operation Serval in Mali—into the newly formed Operation Barkhane on August 1, 2014 (Griffin, 2016; Touchard, 2017; French Armed Forces Headquarters, 2020; Stoicescu, 2020; Shurkin, 2021). Operation Barkhane emerged as a multilateral military initiative designed to combat the expansion of terrorism across the Sahel-Saharan region, with a primary focus on assisting the G5 Sahel armed forces in countering terrorist movements (Stoicescu, 2020; French Armed Forces Headquarters, 2020; Shurkin, 2021; Roca, n.d.). Unlike earlier unilateral interventions, Operation Barkhane underscores a collaborative framework involving France and all member states of the G5 Sahel—namely, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger—validated by the support of the United Nations, African Union, and European Union.

The G5 Sahel represents an institutional mechanism established in 2014 by the leaders of the five member states, aiming to coordinate regional cooperation in addressing shared challenges. This collaboration focuses on harmonising strategies and policies related to defence, security, governance, infrastructure, and resilience within the Sahel region (Sahel and West Africa Club, 2018). Since its inception, the G5 Sahel has cultivated both bilateral and multilateral partnerships with international entities, including France, Germany, the United Nations, and the European Union, facilitating financial support for joint military and security initiatives. Establishing the G5 Sahel Joint Force in 2017 further embodies the region's commitment to collective security, reinforcing the necessity of cooperative approaches in tackling the multifaceted challenges posed by terrorism (Pichon and Fardel, 2020; Venturi, 2021).

The European Union's Involvement in the G5 Sahel: An Overview

The European Union (EU) serves as a prominent international actor in supporting the G5 Sahel countries, which comprise Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. Through a multifaceted approach, the EU provides significant funding for counter-terrorism operations and training initiatives aimed at bolstering the armed forces of G5 Sahel member states. The EU's support focuses not only on enhancing security measures but also on promoting political development and addressing humanitarian challenges within the Sahel region. According to the European Commission (2016), the EU collaborates with these countries on shared concerns including security, migration, terrorism, and long-term developmental goals.

At the state level, the EU employs its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) framework to implement three regional missions: EUCAP Sahel Niger, EUTM Mali, and EUCAP Sahel Mali. These missions are integral to enhancing the capacities of the armed forces within the G5 Sahel nations in matters of security and counter-terrorism (EU Commission, 2016; Venturi, 2017; Pichon, 2020).

The EUCAP Sahel Niger mission, established in 2012, seeks to aid Niger in combatting terrorism and organised crime. This mission provides essential advisory and training services to improve the capabilities of Nigerien security institutions, including the police, gendarmerie, and national guard. As specified by the EU Commission (2016), the civilian mission consists of 131 international experts alongside 71 local staff, all based in Agadez, the mission's headquarters. Funded by the EU, this initiative had a budget of EUR311 million from July 2017 to July 2018, reflecting its commitment to strengthening internal security mechanisms in Niger, including strategic policy support for the government.

Another critical mission, EUCAP Sahel Mali, inaugurated in 2015, is dedicated to assisting the Malian government in the reform of its internal security forces. This mission aims to enhance the provision of security and justice for the Malian population. Operating from its headquarters in Bamako, the mission comprises 100 European experts and 40 Malian personnel, tasked with advising the national police, national gendarmerie, and the National Guard in implementing security reforms advocated by the new Malian government (EU External Action, 2018).

The last of the CSDP initiatives is the EU Training Mission in Mali, which commenced in 2013. This military training mission has undergone several mandates since its inception, addressing the evolving security landscape in Mali. As outlined by EU External Action (2019), the mission, now in its fourth mandate, focuses on training and advising the Malian armed forces while also supporting the G5 Sahel Joint Forces. The mission, which included 620 personnel from various EU and non-EU member states by 2019, has recently expanded its mandate for an additional four years, increasing staff numbers to approximately 1,200 and broadening its scope to include training for national armed forces across all G5 Sahel nations (Pichon, 2020).

Beyond these missions, the EU has developed comprehensive Sahel strategies, initiating its first strategy addressing the region's security and development needs in 2011 and then updating it in 2015. The "Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel," initially focused on Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, was later expanded to include Burkina Faso and Chad. This strategy outlines four key areas of action: development, good governance, conflict resolution; politics and diplomacy; security and the rule of law; and countering violent extremism (Venturi, 2017). The subsequent "Sahel Regional Action Plan (RAP) 2015-2020," updated in 2016, reaffirms these priorities while adding emphasis on preventing radicalisation, enhancing youth opportunities, managing migration, and tackling illicit trafficking and organised crime.

In summary, the EU's engagement with the G5 Sahel countries illustrates its commitment to fostering security and stability in a region grappling with multifaceted challenges. Through strategic missions and comprehensive action plans, the EU continues to play a crucial role in shaping the security landscape of the Sahel region.

Operation Barkhane: France's Geopolitical Interests in the Sahel

Operation Barkhane represents a strategic extension of France's geopolitical interests across five former colonies in the Sahel region, specifically within the framework of the G5 Sahel countries. This military initiative serves as a vehicle for France to uphold its enduring economic, political,

cultural, and military ties with these nations. The establishment of Operation Barkhane can thus be interpreted as a manifestation of French military intervention aimed at consolidating its hegemony over its former colonies. As articulated by Pujari (2020), French actions in the G5 Sahel reflect a continuum that seeks to contain militancy that poses a threat to its national interests. In alignment with other French military operations on the African continent, these interventions function as conduits through which France can maintain its presence and safeguard its interests, ultimately enhancing its global standing (Chafer, 2005; Rosech, 2015).

The complexity of France's military collaborations with its robust African allies within the G5 Sahel complicates the narrative. Medessoukou (2018) contends that the French government ought to prioritize regional security rather than utilizing counter-terrorism as a pretext to advance its national agenda. The joint operations undertaken are ostensibly designed to fortify French interests in the region, with the French military's historical role as a long-standing ally of G5 Sahel nations further entrenching its position. This is an indication that French military intervention in the G5 Sahel countries is directed towards realisation of its *francafrique* policy on the continent.

Although Operation Barkhane is legitimized by the European Union, it remains under the command of French forces directed by the French Ministry of Defence. The purported partnership between the French military and the armed forces of the G5 Countries belies a predominantly French-driven decision-making process. This apparent asymmetry is underscored by a statement attributed to the French President, as noted by Toumi (2020): "I cannot ask our soldiers to take risks to fight against terrorism... and on the other hand have public opinions of these same countries believing in untruths." Such a declaration reveals the unilaterality of operational commands, highlighting the limited role of the EU in this context.

Moreover, the exclusion of other Sahelian states from Operation Barkhane, despite the broader geographic reality of the Sahel, underscores the bilateral security and military relations that France has cultivated with the G5 countries. This operation operates outside the established frameworks of the European Union and African Union (AU) regarding peace and security. While the AU's Agenda for Peace and Security in Africa (APSA) formally recognizes eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and two Regional Peace Mechanisms, the G5 Sahel does not fall within this categorization. According to the African Union Commission (2015), the recognized RECs and RPMs under the APSA framework include ECOWAS, ECCAS, SADC, COMESA, EAC, IGAD, CEN-SAD, and UMA, along with the East African Standby Force (EASF) and the North Africa Regional Capability (NARC). Each organization has established structures, such as Early Warning Systems (EWS), that collaborate with the AU to promote stability and peace.

It is noteworthy that all members of the G5 Sahel are also part of CEN-SAD, thus theoretically linking France's security engagements to established AU frameworks. Yet, similar to EU-supported AU initiatives in Somalia, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic, Operation Barkhane operates independently of AU oversight. The dynamics of collaboration between France and the G5 Sahel countries—premised on colonial historical ties—reflect the enduring nature of Franco-African relations that have evolved since the era of decolonization. This intricate web of relationships is often encapsulated in the term "*francafrique*" (Chafer, 2005; Bergamaschi and Diawara, 2014; Korkmaz, 2019).

The evident absence of AU or recognized RECs in the operationalization and establishment of French military bases reflects a broader pattern attributed to neo-colonial tendencies in France's interactions with its former colonies in Sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, Operation Barkhane

underscores the complexities of contemporary security relations that remain deeply intertwined with historical legacies.

Conclusion

This article has contended that the French military operation Barkhane exemplifies a bilateral initiative predicated on France's military and security agreements with its former African colonies. Endorsed by the United Nations and the European Union, Barkhane represents yet another manifestation of French military intervention within its former colonial territories. Amid numerous missions executed in the Sahel region by the EU, UN, and African Union (AU), France unilaterally instituted Operation Barkhane in collaboration with the G5 Sahel countries—nations historically influenced by French colonial policy—thereby establishing the operation as an extension of the longstanding framework known as Francafrique. This term encapsulates the multifaceted and often contentious dynamics of France–Africa relations, driven by France's ambition to enhance its global standing through influence over African states.

While it is not posited that Operation Barkhane entirely diverges from France's traditional pattern of military interventions across the African continent, this analysis emphasizes that the operation undermines the established frameworks of the AU's Peace and Security Architecture. Furthermore, it contravenes the principles underpinning the EU–AU peace and security partnership, particularly by failing to engage the G5 Sahel countries through the recognized Regional Economic Community (REC), the Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD), to which all five nations belong. The AU security framework, grounded in the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), acknowledges eight RECs and two Regional Mechanisms (RPMs), notably excluding the G5 Sahel.

Consequently, this study asserts that Operation Barkhane signifies an ongoing pattern of French unilateral military intervention aimed at safeguarding its interests within Africa. This reality raises significant questions regarding France's commitment to the AU's principle advocating for African solutions to African problems. Moreover, such interventions are at odds with the EU–AU peace and security partnership framework, which espouses the tenets of capacity building and the empowerment of African–led operations across the continent.

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Africa Regional Unification

In the Eyes of Indigenous Thinkers, Adebayo Adedeji and Raúl Prebisch

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Date Received: 15 October 2022

Date Accepted: 31 May 2025

Abstract

Adebayo Adedeji and Prebisch are revered as generational thinkers and exemplars of regional economic integration in Africa and Latin America. Both have addressed unequal wealth distribution and unfavourable conditions that lead to underdevelopment. They sought to promote domestic development concepts rather than accept a global blanket prescription for resolving the underdevelopment problem. In addition, their worldview influenced thousands of young intellectuals and activists on both continents. Their experience and unique views on the role of regional integration in establishing economic space and political differentiation were invaluable. They helped the UN embrace local intellectual thought as a development principle. Their intellectual and personal qualities allowed them to argue for reviving economic principles in both regions' development policies. Adedeji mocked the Bretton Woods institutions for their determination to tout success stories from SAPs despite all evidence to the contrary. This paper compares their philosophical framework to today's economic and development concerns.

Keywords: Adedeji, Prebisch, economic integration, public intellectuals, underdevelopment, SAP's.

Overview

As demonstrated around the world, there have been numerous occasions in which individuals have made a tremendous difference in how society lives or defends the right to equality and equity. The paper covers two gigantic public thinkers and public servants who spent their entire careers fighting for impartiality and fair trade across all continents, as well as their contributions to public policy. More importantly, they have contributed to the formation of new theories, societal interactions, and trading partners that benefit both academics and the broader welfare of humanity, in addition to their efforts to promote equality and equity. Honouring and reinvigorating such noble ideas and personalities contribute significantly to developing and strengthening society's response to contemporary and ongoing challenges. While lived in the harsh postcolonial era of the 1960s and 1970s, Adebayo Adedeji and Raúl Prebisch shed light on the connection between developed and developing countries, which functioned as a defence mechanism and the foundation for the current relationship.

Unlike the majority of his peers, the late Prof. Adebayo Adedeji had the good fortune to attend a prestigious Western school system. Between 1958 and 1967, he earned a variety of degrees, including a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of London and a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Harvard University (Agarwal, Sanmi-Ajiki, 2000). Additionally, Adebayo Adedeji became Nigeria's first Professor of Public Administration in 1966, while teaching at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University). Between 1971 until 1975, he also served as Nigeria's post-civil war Minister of Economic Planning and Reconstruction. Nagar, and Otitodun, 2010; Adebajo (2020) Among the several innovations and accomplishments during his time was his successful negotiation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for which Adedeji is frequently referred to as the "father of ECOWAS."

[h]aving inherited or borrowed development policy as well as political theory, [would subsequently be able] to revive its own economic assumptions and design its own orientations, just as it ha[d] come to reject much of its neo-colonial legal and organisational legacy. As Agarwal, Sanmi-Ajiki, (2000) indicated. (Adedeji and Shaw 1985)

As a very successful and distinguished United Nations Under Secretary -General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Prof. Adedeji will be remembered for his unique initiatives for the sustainable development of Africa, most notable among which are the Lagos Plan of Action (1980), the Final Act o f Lagos (1980), the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme (AAF -SAP, 1989) and the African Charter for Popular Participation (ACPP, 1990). He also served as the UN Secretary -General's Special Representative on Africa's Economic Crisis between 1984 and 1986. Professor Adedeji has authored many publications.

According to Dosman (2012), Raúl Prebisch was born in 1901 and raised in provincial Tucumán from middle-class and mixed parentage. His father, Albin Prebisch, was a German immigrant and small business owner, and his mother, Rosa Linares Uriburu, came from a notable but financially distressed colonial family. He was a driving influence in twentieth-century international development theory, policy, and institution building, yet such global success could not have been imagined during his formative years in Argentina. Dosman elaborated on Prebisch's intellectual engagement in a series of academic pieces. In 1919, the first piece was published with grace and outstanding analytic promise in the discipline of economics. By 1921, his research into Argentina's economic history had produced findings that confounded established economists, establishing, for example, that Argentina's experience with business cycles was distinct from that of developed Europe's developed countries and coining the terms "centre" and "periphery." According to Sprout (1992), Prebisch had a significant influence on the evolution of ideas and policy in development economics during his lifetime. However, the concepts for which he is best known, the declining terms of trade thesis and export pessimism, import-substitution, industrialization, and state intervention, stand in stark contrast to the dominant free-market ideology in the world.

In his 1961 study, *Towards a Dynamic Development Policy for Latin America*, he had shifted ground considerably. He now spoke of institutional weak points in the region (feudal structures, inequalities in income distribution, and a lack of genuine commitment to economic planning and discipline) that went well beyond CEPAL's earlier diagnoses, and he repeated these concerns even more urgently in his May 1963 Mar del Plata farewell speech to CEPAL. UNCTAD further convinced him that import-substitution was easily abused; without an "intelligent state" it was a double-edged sword and recipe for stagnation. The innovation of *Change and Development: Latin America's Great Task* was bringing his earlier criticisms together into one systematic analysis

with explicit links among economic reforms, social change and development in Latin America. It was a courageous break with past doctrine and a notable display of theoretical self-criticism.

Saad-filho, (2005) Structuralism and dependency theory were Latin America's first substantial contributions to political economics. In principle, Western capitals found it difficult to criticise Prebisch's attitude to markets and the state's role in the economy. Dosman (2012) From the start, critics, portrayed Prebisch as dangerously socialist, cementing his image in Washington as a radical protectionist. Throughout his tenure at the Central Bank, he developed a concept of the "intelligent state," which he defined as "a lean but robust public sector capable of establishing broad national development objectives and supporting rather than strangling the private sector's vitality." However, his practicality was immaterial. Looking back the role of public intellectuals helps to address the current economic development issues in developing world.

Key Concepts Promoted by Adebayo Adedeji and Raúl Prebisch

How is development conceptualised in a larger sense? How does development occur, and how has a lofty concept of development evolved since the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme and the coining of the term's "centre" and "periphery."? How have concept-based policies shaped practises, which in turn have impacted collective understanding and altered societal living standards? The purpose of this paper is to analyse key public intellectuals and public officials who have dedicated their entire careers fighting for interdependence by leading thinkers and practitioners who address the issue of lowering living standards globally through the adoption of fair trade. The volume's exploration of the interplay of ideas reveals some early findings, spanning from specific challenges such as poverty and inequality to the experiences of certain countries and regions. Adedeji and Raúl Prebisch have devoted their lives to conceptualising the gap between the developed and developing worlds, as well as attempting to narrow it by encouraging governments to pursue a variety of policy alternatives.

Adedeji's perspective on African development sprang out of the decolonisation ferment, the rise of the post-cold war development as planned socioeconomic transformation, and the growing absence of evidence for predominantly early post-independence trickle-down benefits (Adedeji, 2006). Adedeji's most significant contribution to development theory is arguably his vision of an increasingly 'nationalist' but increasingly integrated (and diversely) continent-of-regions, an Africa secure in itself and recognised as an integral part of the global community. Adedeji has illustrated the critical demonstration influence that skilled development administration can have on policy and planning, practise rethinking, and strategy formulation. Adedeji's significant contributions include a review of the continent's socioeconomic and political situation, examining the development paradigms currently being implemented in Africa, and an examination of African leaders' commitments to lay national, sub-regional, and continental foundations (Nagar, and Otitodun, 2010). Additionally, for socioeconomic and political transformation necessary to enable Africa's progress to surpass that of other developing areas; and to objectively examine Africa's security, governance, regional integration, and development concerns.

Adedeji's introduction of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA); the Lagos Final Act (LFA); and the Abuja Treaty had a significant impact on reorienting policy toward resisting economic pressure from Bretton Woods institutions. According to Akani (2017), African leaders replied to what appears to be a western version of LPA in 1989 under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). This was referred to as the African Alternative Framework to the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) for Socio-Economic Transformation (AAFSAP). The AAF-SAP was prompted by the adoption of SAP as an African development strategy. Adedeji was instrumental in conceptualising the field of international cooperation in order to avert the SAP's predicted economic damage to

African countries. Its significance cannot be overstated as the overall concept around which other development initiatives will revolve. These initiatives, which arose between 1985 and 1991, took as their starting point the realisation of LPA's wide goal. Additionally, Adedeji illuminated the numerous structures and institutional setups, which include the following:

- The African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER) 1986–1990 in July 1985 in Addis Ababa – Ethiopia.
- The African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme for Socio-economic Transformation (AAF-SAP) in 1989 at Addis Ababa – Ethiopia.
- The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (ACPPDT) in Arusha, Tanzania (1990).
- The O.A.U. Declaration on the Political and Socio-economic situation in Africa and the Fundamental changes taking place in the world –1990.

Similarly, Adedeji enlightened the need of sub-regional arrangements that eventually an opportunity into one economic society in Africa. Abuja Treaty is the perfect example for such arrangement. Lehloeny and Mpya (2016) assert that the Abuja Treaty established the African Economic Community with the declared objective of establishing a functional continental economic community by 2028. This treaty intends to integrate African economies in order to increase the continent's economic interdependence and self-sufficiency and to coordinate policies across regional economic communities RECs. While the action was not viewed as comprehensive, it was also criticised for its top-down approach and the economic integration, which do not address how and when RECs mature into fully marked integration (Kidane, 2021).

Prebisch's early emphasis on the dynamics of centre-periphery capitalism contributed to rebalancing current discussions over the benefits of free markets; yet, examining the State's capabilities were insufficient (Sprout, 1992). Historically, Prebisch was preoccupied with the heterogeneity of the organisational structure in his work. (Saad-Filho, 2005) There is a solid theoretical and historical connection between these schools of thought, partially because famous structuralists contributed significantly to the development of dependency theory in the 1960s. Despite the fact that their similarities, structuralism and dependency theory have a fundamental difference. While the former asserts that capitalist development is possible in the periphery through industrialisation and comprehensive social reforms, the latter is more pessimistic, arguing that capitalism consistently underdeveloped countries.

His highly referred work on the economic development of Latin America and its primary problems made the case that integration into the global system only allows for a gradual and irregular infiltration of technical improvement into the peripheral countries. Not all sectors have the same capacity to energise the economy, to "promote technical advancement," as Prebisch put it (Ocampo, 2002). Prebisch's primary themes include economic integration, which he saw as extending beyond commerce to incorporate the social and political components of progress (Dosman, 2012). Indeed, CEPAL's early work in social policy and development was ground breaking under his leadership. Additionally, as the father of structuralism, he posed a challenge to orthodox economics by establishing a distinctly Latin American school of thinking and practice centred on conceptions of power and global equality.

Contributions to Knowledge as Public Intellectuals

Adebayo Adedeji and Raúl Prebisch are widely regarded as two of Latin America's and Africa's most brilliant intellectuals of their generation, and their work has received widespread attention.

They are regarded as the embodiment of regional economic integration on both sides of the Atlantic, as is the case in Latin America and Africa. These public thinkers presented a wealth of information and novel insights about the vital role of regional integration in the development of economic space and political variety. They have, however, made significant contributions to the development of new theories, societal contacts, and trading partners, all of which have benefited academics and the greater welfare of humanity, as well as their efforts to promote equality and equity.

Professor Adedeji's significant public and academic achievements have aided in Africa's development. For him, economic progress must go hand in hand with social fairness and equity, much like Prebisch (Adebajo, 2013). He is often considered as the "Father of the model of African economic unification." As far as we know, his participation in the Abuja Treaty laid the groundwork for the continent's development and economic institutions. Additionally, he played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975; the East and Central Africa Preferential Trade Area (PTA) in 1981, which later became the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in 1983 (Nagar, and Otitodun, 2010).

Therein lays Adedeji's greatest contribution to development theory. There is much more to Adedeji's contribution, however, as he has demonstrated the critical demonstration effect that the skillful deployment of development administration can have on policy and planning, as well as the reconsideration of current practise and the formulation of strategy (McGregor, 2007). He made various important intellectual contributions across disciplines because of his multidisciplinary approach. His role as an ethical and moral leader in development makes him a "key thinker" in that field. For this and other reasons, Asante (1991) recognises the role of colleagues at the UNECA in helping to formulate the concepts about African development that became firmly connected with Adedeji's as a theoretician and executive. Asante also points out how Adedeji's stint as UNECA Executive Secretary provided a crucial forum for the propagation of these ideas, pointing out that the beginning of Adedeji's ongoing challenge to conventional development thinking from an African perspective.

Raúl Prebisch was an exceptional scholar and practitioner in a wide variety of fields, but most notably for his enormous contribution to developmental economics. According to Ocampo (2001), three areas that Prebisch's thinking the first is for developing countries to recognise the role of technical progress in economic growth and the channels through which it is transmitted from the "country of origin": derived demand for raw materials; proper technology transfer, including technology embedded in production equipment; and transfer to developing countries of production branches already "mature" in industrialised countries. Second, it's impossible to look at developing countries' dynamics without considering where they fit in the global economic picture. Their growth patterns differ significantly from those of the world's most developed countries. Hence, there aren't any "stages of development," and the dynamics of "late development" or "peripheral capitalism," to borrow Prebisch's own word, are quite different from those of nations that developed earlier and became the "centre" of the global economy. As a third point, the international agenda is woefully short on important concerns for developing countries, such as international labour mobility or wealthier countries opening up their markets more quickly to those nations' needs; this has "centre-periphery" elements.

On the central concept of periphery economic problems that should be examined within a global framework, Prebisch's influence was prevalent. Most of his concern was that developing countries would be forced to increase their exports to acquire the same number of commodities from the developed countries (Vera, 2013). There has been far too little appreciation for the rich

conceptual contributions made by his thesis of a global economy governed by two structurally different poles (the “centre” and the “periphery”) to understanding the process of economic development, its obstacles, and sometimes disrupting effects. Ocampo (2001) the critical assessment and contributions are international asymmetries, development from within, and regional integration. International asymmetries for over two centuries, the global economy has had a propensity to widen inequities. Although emerging nations have made significant progress in industrialisation during the last half-century, global disparities persist and deepen. Prebisch calls this “development from within,” which entails reshaping the economies of peripheral countries. Endogenous processes such as establishing national human and technological capital (knowledge capital) and institutional development are now being emphasised in new discussions. The third is “Regional integration,” which Prebisch asserts has always featured an element of paradox. However, protectionist policies in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in integration processes that were confined to non-competitive areas of the local economy.

The Current Status of Economic Integration in Africa

This paper tries to examine briefly the attainment of regional economic integration based on the Adebayo Adedeji initiative such as LPA, FAL and Abuja Treaty. The purpose of reviewing an idea’s theoretical and practical aspects is to determine where and what aspects of the concepts should be revisited in the future. In the context of a development project, one of which is the evaluation of citizen participation in matters relating to regional economic integration across Africa, using both a top-down and a bottom-up approach, respectively. It is also vital to examine the extent to which regional integration affects ordinary residents’ lives. It then aims to present an analysis of what this means for the African continent due to these developments.

There is enormous potential for regional economic integration in Africa to provide more solid and fair economic growth while also helping to alleviate poverty and unemployment. Kayizzi-Mugerwa, Anyanwu, and Conceição, (2014) as a powerful vehicle for promoting product and export diversification, regional integration offers African countries an opportunity to address a significant constraint on export competitiveness imposed by the small size of their national economies and geography/transport costs, thus increasing their countries’ growth and development prospects. Though, the current approach for African economic integration falls far short of its original objectives. Although African states have made significant progress in economic integration, there are still many challenges, including a lack of funding for the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and human resource issues and inadequate planning. Adebayo Adedeji also pointed out that the capacity constraints on socio-economic disparities still exist in many African countries (Nagar and Otitodun, (2010).

Since then, Adedeji has maintained his position that regional integration should be viewed as a tool for national survival and socio-economic change. Although Adedeji advocates regional integration, organisations like ECOWAS, COMESA, and ECCAS have failed to meet their integration targets. In 2012, less than 10% of Africa’s trade was handled within the continent’s own countries (Adebajo, 2013). African leaders have mostly overlooked the importance of political support for economic integration and progress. They are unwilling to relinquish sovereignty over collective benefits yet lack the domestic discipline necessary to implement sub-regional and regional accords. Failure of the economic integration process can be attributed to a wide range of factors, the most important of which are the current catastrophic economic conditions as well as a lack of trust in supranationalism, overdependence, operationalisation gaps, and a lack of international negotiating power. The omission of the legal foundation, representation, mandate, structural formation, and responsibility between member states, RECs, and the AU

is critical from a unification standpoint (Jiboku, 2015). The African Union's governance system and its accompanying organs must be severely scrutinised. The AU, as an intergovernmental structural organisation, has left unresolved the question of why they have been unable to develop effective and direct representation. Numerous assumptions are made to some extent, such that the organisational structure of RECs is not consistent and that the diversity of membership leads to more substantial collateral harm or unforeseen repercussions for the AU.

The existing REC structure is deficient in governance approaches suited for African states' political, economic, and sociocultural situations; also, a paradigm shift is required to ensure effective and efficient service delivery to citizens (Kidane, 2018). Inadequate coordination between the AU, RECs, and national governments creates a conflict of interest that creates crucial hurdles such as maladministration, financial mismanagement, and insufficient policy harmonisation. Postcolonial Africa sought to undo the legacies of European division and rule, as well as to reclaim and rethink the African people's unity; African nations that emerged postcolonial inherited inadequate infrastructure, inexperienced leadership, and a fragmented political and historical conscience (Dinka & Kennels 2007:6). The colonial history clashed with indigenous wisdom, experience, and centuries-old knowledge. Postcolonial Africa faced significant obstacles on two fronts: the first is the psychological harm perpetrated by invaders. The second is adherence to colonial boundaries via the OAU charter, without regard for the larger goal of continental union. These factors contribute to Africa's lack of global competence and development capacity to help its citizens.

Africa's Development and Underdevelopment Challenges in the Context of Regional Integration

Discourse on development in Africa is intertwined with the position of Africa in the global political economy. Sponsors and social scientists continue to debate the plague of underdevelopment in the African continent. These debates are centred on thoughts to discover appropriate governance models that can transform the socio-political economy of the continent. Despite individual countries in Africa conducting different developmental schemes to promote development, the level of growth in the continent continues to move at a slow pace. Development theory has shifted from a resolute focus on capital accumulation toward a more compound understanding of the organisations that make development possible (Evans 2004). It is generally perceived as a development of people's way of life, which is common among various discourses on postcolonial Africa. Olukoshi (2006) describes development scholars as "high priests" or "policymakers" on African issues. According to McLean (2012), 'developmentalism' outlines the Post-World War 2 economic theory and thinking styles. It focuses on debates surrounding the developmental states and world economic growth. Under-development in Africa is caused by many factors such as relying on primary exports, insufficient capital, inadequate basic infrastructure, political conflicts, unstable government, and predominance of corruption in governance (Mkandawire, 2001b). The 1980s witnessed severe economic crises within the continent, basically on food, education, and health. However, the Bretton Woods Institutions came to Africa's rescue by reversing the debt of 250 \$ billion, which led to Africa's unsustainability and significant cuts in these several sectors. The Bretton Woods Institutions was a joint formation of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to assist individual countries in rebuilding and promoting international cooperation. Each year, member countries meet annually in New Hampshire in the United States to debate global financial issues. In collaboration with the Bretton institutions, the World Trade Organisation establishes basic rules and policies on commercial and economic relations. To date, the institutions play a vital role to provide solutions that coordinate, monitor, and regulate Africa's development activities. Bretton institutions further established and initiated the 'Structural Adjustment Program (SAPs)' to promote macro-economic stabilisation,

privatisation, and free-market development (Heidhues, & Obare, 2011). The impact and progress of SAPs continue to be an issue of debate within African countries and their development plan. Advocates of SAPs encouraged reformation in all African economic structures. At the same time, critics argued that SAPs did not pay detailed attention to the continent's institutional weakness and social dimension of development. SAPs were established to address African countries' fundamental challenges and economic development, such as weak governance in the public sector (Heidhues, & Obare, 2011). The public sector's inadequate management has led to great loss in the public enterprises and Africa's investment and operational costs.

Furthermore, there is the issue of over-valued exchange rates, inefficient resource allocation amongst many (World Bank 1981). However, SAPs failure has been reflected in the development and challenges in Africa, emphasising the need for a new approach towards its development. Hence SAPs has been restructured to address the continent development agenda. Programs such as Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals are part of SAPs structured proms to attain these objectives (Heidhues, & Obare, 2011).

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has continually encouraged African states to integrate their economies into sub-regional markets to form one Africa-wide economic union (Mkandawire & Rodriguez, 2000). The need for regional economic integration transcends within the OAU, from the Summits in Algiers in 1968, Addis Ababa in 1970 – 1973 and 1977 at the Summit in Libreville. Part of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) initiative in conjunction with the U.N Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) was the Lagos Plan of Action, which was set to ensure a successful regional strategy for African development (Adedeji, 2002). The Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Lagos Final Act (FAD.) arose from a pressing need to develop an African social and economic order focused primarily on making full use of the region's resources to create a self-sufficient economy for the continent of Africa. The aim further involves promoting economic growth in each African State in most structural levels, including food and agriculture, industry, and environmental and energy matters. These goals are targeted towards a specific timeline in achieving the economic planning of each sector.

To achieve the aim, all African heads of state acknowledged the joined efforts to attain these goals. They pledged to individually and jointly overcome any obstacles that may confine the progress of these developments and advocate for international support to fulfil the vision. The gathering of more than 50 African independent and sovereign states made a landmark as it recorded a joint agreement between African states with different goals and achievements coming together to a deal on a particular development approach. This plan became the regional approach of economic decolonisation within the African region. However, despite the agreement, the continent witnessed the most adverse financial crisis five years after the Lagos-plan action (Adedeji, 2002).

Since 1980, there has been a continuous decline in the output of resources on goods and services and all productive sectors. Even though increased growth was witnessed in Africa's population, the low growth rates in food production continue to affect the African economy's per capita growth rates. Hence, the Lagos Plan of Action made the creation of regional organisations such as the East African Community (EAC), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS), Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Preferential Trade Area (PTA) initially established by the UNECA vision between the 1970s-1980s the centrepiece of the grand strategy for self-reliant development (Adedeji, 2002). The UNECA vision was to advocate for the economic collaboration of African states with a standard external tariff, free movement of people/goods and implementing macro-

economic policies on fiscal, monetary and exchange rate policies amongst member states. The plan acknowledged that, given the small size of African domestic markets, regional organisations would enlarge market size via the protection of infant industries and the attraction of foreign direct investment (OAU 1980).

The RECs arrangement and duplication of memberships

The Regional Economic Communities comprising individual African states in subregions to achieve greater economic integration became the building blocks for African Union and a key strategy in implementing the 'New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (Adesina, 2002c). Since article 88 of the Abuja treaty stipulates the progressive integration of the R.E.C.s, the full continental economic integration with a protocol between R.E.C.s and A.E.C.s came fully into force in 1998. However, the existing structure of the R.E.C.s was deemed faulty, and arrangements were made to duplicate memberships due to overlaps of all the RECs membership. The overlaps in membership created duplication and competition in different activities, placing additional burdens on foreign affairs personnel who are already stretched and exhausted. Hence at the Maputo summit in 2003, a new protocol draft was set between the African Union and the R.E.C.s in the continent, adopted at the 2007 summit in Accra. The new protocol aims to harmonise and ensure compliance with the Abuja treaty and Lagos plan of action within the time frame stipulated by member states. The table below presents the names of the RECS recognised and those that the African Union does not recognise.

Table 1.1: RECs Membership in the Continent

RECs Membership recognised by African Union	RECs Membership not recognised by African Union
Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC)
Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)	West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA/WAEMU)
Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN_SAD)	Economic Community of the Great Lakes countries (CEPGL)
East African Community (EAC)	Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)
Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)	Mano River Union (MRU)
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	Southern African Customs Union (SACU)
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR/CIRGL)
Southern African Development Community (SADC)	Senegal River Basin Development Authority (OMVS)

Source: (Kidane, 2018)

Amongst the recognised RECs by the African Union, the most developed are ECOWAS, SADC and EAC to date, the remaining existing RECs do not have clear objectives on long-term continental integration or intent of acknowledging regional concerns that override African union imperatives (Mulat, 1998).

Looking at the various development plan set over the years, there is a common consensus between the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), the FAD. and the Abuja treaty. All the goals and objectives are the same and are still being pursued to date. We can say NEPAD is an extension of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Abuja Treaty (Adesina, 2002c). The Constitutive Act of the African Union

indicates the union's premise as being centred towards implementing the Abuja Treaty to promote the socio-economic development of Africa and overcome the challenges posed by globalisation. Hence the Abuja Treaty is legally an integral part of the OAU charter (Adesina, 2002c).

Bretton Woods Institutions and Structural Adjustment Programs SAPs Impact in Africa

Post-World War II economic development relied on the establishment of the Bretton Woods institutions (BWIs), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Their objectives were to aid in the reconstruction of the post-war economy and to foster worldwide economic cooperation. However, criticism of these institutions has come from developing countries and academia. According to Adebajo (2013), critics of the Bretton Woods institutions, numerous African countries are in such deep debt that they could never be able to repay it. Additionally, emerging countries bear the brunt of the prescription and loan demand. These organisations do not provide adequate financial support for strategic development areas such as industrialisation, which is necessary for poverty alleviation. As a result of its "neoliberal" economic policies, the Bretton Woods institutions have been the target of heavy criticism for decades. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has come several criticisms for pressuring bankrupt governments all over the world to liberalise their markets and undercut labour laws.

For an extended period, the Bretton Woods institutions and the impact of SAPs on Africa's economy, political, and social contexts have been inextricably linked. As a result of the Bretton Woods institutions' determination to claim success stories from SAPs despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, Adedeji has been highly critical of them. In spite of the SAPs being implemented since 1980, he noted that Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) had declined from 2.7 per cent to 1.8 per cent by 1988; investment ratios had fallen from 20.6 per cent to 17.1 per cent; budget deficits had increased from 6.5 per cent to 7.5 per cent of GDP; and the ratio of debt service to export earnings had increased from 17.5 per cent to 23.4 per cent (Adedeji 2004: 276). On the other hand, the worry was expressed about the continent's trade degradation, which continues to be harmed by the acts of international financial institutions in general. By 2010, Africa's contribution to world trade had decreased from 5.6 per cent in 1980 to barely 2.1 per cent in 2010. As a result, trade must take precedence over all other agenda items on Africa's regional integration agenda (Nagar and Otitodun, 2010).

Adedeji has developed a reputation as a pragmatic economist who is more concerned with resolving problems than with adhering to ideological constraints. His most bitter ideological clashes were at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. He played a key role in the ECA's 1976 "Revised Framework of Principles for the Implementation of the New International Economic Order." (2013) (Adebajo, A.). There was no mechanism under the Bretton Woods Monetary Agreement for resolving persistent payment imbalances between countries, which resulted in the establishment of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Africa's "brain drain" is a case in point, as it has been highlighted as a result of nearly two decades of incorrect advice from Bretton Woods institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which have pushed African governments to cut spending on education and health care (Nagar and Otitodun, 2010). As a result, Africa is home to some of the least fruitful scientific endeavours on the planet. The continent's research, scientific, and technological shortcomings must be addressed as quickly as feasible. Additionally, human potential development is critical, which can be accomplished through the use of culturally relevant and people-centered approaches to training and youth leadership development, among other activities (Nagar and Otitodun, 2010).

"Growth without development," as advocated for by the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as the export and industrial-led integration of African states into the world economy on unequal

conditions, are incompatible with the development of the continent. Adedeji, Instead, emphasised the need for Africa to utilise its own resources in order to generate more intra-African wealth, with agriculture being the primary priority in this regard (Adebajo, 2013). The two Bretton Woods institutions would eventually abandon some of their economic orthodoxies in Latin America and Africa and heed Prebisch and Adedeji's warnings, but frequently only after significant socioeconomic damage had been done. Both individuals opposed neo-classical economic theory and were often mischaracterised as "dangerous radicals" by critics.

Impact of the LPA and the Abuja Treaty on the African Economy Integration

Acknowledging that Prof. Adebayo Adedeji conceived these three agreements, they were all his brine children. These continental frameworks needed to be discussed because of how few educated elites were pushing back against the unfair treatment of the African continent by foreign financial institutions during that time. However, Adedeji did not produce these essential documents alone; he was a vital pillar.

These policy frameworks, which were produced in collaboration with teams of African economists at the ECA and in consultation with African policymakers, reflected Adedeji's core intellectual concern with the concepts of "economic decolonisation" and "self-reliance," which he had developed during his time at the ECA. This served as the theoretical framework for the following Monrovia Strategy of 1979, the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), as well as the Final Act of Lagos (FAL), both of which were adopted in the year 2000. Adedeji, like Prebisch, was a fervent believer that economic progress must be accompanied by social justice and fairness as a *modus operandi* (Adebajo, A., 2013).

There is a broader misperception that the Lagos Plan of Action is an African continent's economic integration project, which it is not (Kidane, 2018). The UN-ECA conceptualised the Lagos Plan of Action, which was subsequently sponsored and endorsed by the OAU. The plan's objective was to strengthen Africa's self-sufficiency in order to facilitate the continent's economic development between 1980 and 2000. The strategy aimed to limit Africa's reliance on financial institutions backed by Western countries by increasing Africa's natural resources.

However, the Abuja Treaty aimed to promote the African continent's social, economic, and cultural growth through gradual economic integration through the establishment of regional economic communities (Kidane, 2021). Nonetheless, critics of the Abuja Treaty assert that it lacks a structure outlining how and when the economic integration scheme will be implemented, except for general suggestions. The Abuja Treaty main objective was the formation of the African Economic Community (AEC). The final Abuja treaty was signed on 3 June 1991 and entered into force in May 1994. According to Adesina (2002c), the aims of the "Abuja Treaty" did not convert into the idea of such a mechanism being adopted or operating outside of standard OAU organisations. Lehloeny and Mpya (2016) are another important African integration endeavour. While signatories to the Abuja Treaty have agreed to fostering the growth of the African Economic Community, the legal framework, like the LPA, has some inherent limitations that have slowed development in this area.

The commitments of the Lagos Action Plan in 1980 were made concrete in Abuja in June 1991 when the OAU Heads of State and Government signed the treaty that established the African Economic Community. This treaty was tagged the "Abuja Treaty" at the 27th gathering of the OAU, the full implementation was enforced in Africa in May 1994. Like the previous initiatives, the Abuja Treaty was set to establish an African Economic Community (AEC). The aim is to "promote economic, social and cultural development, as well as African economic integration, to increase self-

sufficiency and indigenous development and create a framework for development, mobilisation of human resources and material”. The second goal of the African Economic Community (AEC) is to further promote continental cooperation and development in all aspects of human activity, which improves the standard of life of Africa’s population, maintains economic stability and promotes close and peaceful relationships amongst member states.

The Abuja Treaty encouraged continental integration by emphasising the development of the production sector to increase the intra-African trade (Lehloenyana and Mpya 2016). The third goal was to develop and diversify agriculture, mining, and industry in Africa’s productive base to increase locally produced goods and services that motivate intra-African trade flows. Hence, the Abuja treaty key objectives are centred on three key issues: integration, rehabilitation and modernisation of the continent’s infrastructural network, building a more economical and practical intra-African transportation and communications system.

The Abuja Treaty provides the African Economic Community with the mandate to set up a gradual process, in 6 stages over 34 years, to facilitate these goals. Hence by 2028, the AEC must have accomplished the following objectives as stated in the table below/

Table 1.2: Abuja Treaty Mandate for African Economic Community.

Abuja Treaty for African Economic Community		
Stages	Year	Goals to achieve
Stage 1	Five years span	Strengthened the existing RECs and created new ones where needed
Stage 2	Eight years span	Stabilise the tariff and other obstacles to regional trading and strengthen the sectoral integration on trade, agriculture, finance, transport and communication, industry and energy to coordinate and harmonise RECS activities
Stage 3	Ten years span	Establish free trade area with Customs Union in every REC area/level
Stage 4	Two years span	Coordinate and harmonise tariff and non-tariff systems amongst the various RECs to establish an Africa’s Customs Union
Stage 5	Four years span	Establish African Common Market that adopts standard policies
Stage 6	Five years span	Integrate all sectors by establishing an African Central Bank with a single African currency and setting up an African Economic and Monetary Union. The last stage also sought to create and elect the first Pan-African Parliament

Source: Dinka 2007.

All these stages provide a continental structure that coordinates the relationship between the community and the RECs. The protocol further sets to a strategy to promote closer cooperation amongst the RECs. The RECs have been encouraged to cooperate with the African Union for the easy accomplishment of the OAU Charter (Sako, 2006; Seife, 2022).

The continent has witnessed significant developments, such as establishing the African Union since the original protocol between the AEC and the RECs (Oppong, 2010). Aside from creating African Union, different organs such as the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) were also made. Furthermore, the African Union initiated NEPAD as the development plan for African development and recovery. NEPAD vision is also to facilitate a regional approach to development to attain sustainable development in the continent (Kidane, 2018). Another key strategy was the creation of a memorandum of understanding centred on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa established amongst the member’s states. All these initiatives are frontline by the RECs in collaboration with the African Union

(Oppong, 2010). Furthermore, the RECs ensure the implementation of these programs and projects on a regional level for planning, coordination and monitoring of the integration process (Sako, 2006).

It should be noted that the REC.s objectives and goals must be set in place for African Union to achieve its full potential (Oppong, 2010). Hence particular attention should be given to each REC to drive the policy and action in achieving regional economic development. An example was the restructuring of the SADC region to carry out the Southern African region with the development of SADC's 5-year Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) (Oppong, 2010). NEPAD initiated the RISDP plan to ensure the SADC development agenda aligns with that of the Africa Union (Adesina, 2002c). Furthermore, NEPAD commits to ensuring all African government provides good governance, remains a valuable platform for Africa's engagement and equal partnership with the global economy (Adesina, 2002c).

Impact of Africa's Regional Unification Towards the Achievement of 2063

Edoun (2015) debated that the African Union Agenda 2063 is a critical strategy in achieving the Lagos Plan of Action to reduce poverty within the continent. The plan 2063 investigates goals of 'Economic Transformation in Africa', 'Trade Development', 'Finance Regional Cooperation' and accelerating regional integration amongst African countries amongst many. However, challenges such as conflicts, insecurity, crime and drugs trade and climate change have confined achieving regional integration. Furthermore, technological change and the development of new energy sources have constrained the vision of Africa's natural resources (Edoun, 2015).

African leaders have debated and dreamed on the context of economic cooperation and regional integration. These aspirations since the 1960s are now implemented and added in the critical restricted strategic vision documents, including the newly adopted African Union Agenda 2063 "The Africa We Want" (Seife, 2021). Integration is seen as a means for promoting economic growth and sustainable development and improving the living standards of the African people (Daniel & Nagar, 2014). This notion has received slow progress despite being implemented as part of the African development initiatives. The integration structures on the regional economic communities (RECs) coupled with the building blocks of the continental integration (Mkandawire & Rodriguez, 2000). Undoubtedly, there has been immense progress in Africa. However, the level of improvement compared to the various commitments made by individual states is less effective (Mkandawire, 2001b). The continuous call for African states to establish effective strategies to ensure political and economic stability that promotes sustainable development.

African Union Heads of State and Government signed the treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) in 1991, which stipulates the guiding principles, goals, and a region-wide framework on the integration plan. The AEC vision aims first to consolidate the regional economic communities that lead to free trade agreements (FTAs) (Mkandawire & Rodriguez, 2000). The vision further aims at creating complete economic communities to culminate in a common market and monetary union embracing the entire continent. African union further established other initiatives such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in 2000. Finally, the African Union adopted its constitutive act in 2001 (Adesina, 2002c).

This was to address the challenges arising from multiple memberships in the RECs. The main objective behind this decision is to strengthen coordination and harmonisation of RECs' policies among themselves to accelerate Africa's integration process. Other initiatives were launching the Minimum Integration Program (MIP), aimed by RECs to expedite and complete the regional

and continental integration process. The African Union also established a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) in 2017 to initiate a plan for Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT). Despite all these, enforcing regional integration in Africa remains a challenge, especially at the regional level. As a result, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the AU Commission (AUC.) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) collaborated to establish a regional integration index as a measuring tool to monitor African governments progress on the vision for an integrated Africa.

Currently, there is free movement of people in Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) states with a functional ECOWAS passport that allows intra-regional travel amongst the citizens of its member states for a maximum of 90 days. The Free Movement of People and Persons in Rwanda issues visas on arrival to all African citizens at the airport; The East African Community (EAC) countries grant citizens of their member states and recognise both passport and national identity cards as valid travelling documents. Countries like Rwanda issue visas on arrival to all African citizens and, together with Kenya, work permits for East African Community citizens. The community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) allows an exemption for all diplomatic passports. Amongst other progress is the issue of financial and macro-economic integration, which led to the implementation of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU/UEMOA) and Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) with 14 countries altogether using the CFA franc (Kidane, 2018). In addition, all RECs are starting to wax strong in their infrastructure agreements in the areas of transport, energy and information and technology infrastructure. Even though the journey towards regional integration may seem long and complicated, African governments are encouraged to pool their efforts together to achieve the enormous investments needed to develop, upgrade, and maintain their infrastructure.

For example, if CFTA is adopted, it will boost intra-African trade and create a single continental market for goods and services. There is no doubt that regional integration will offer more economic opportunities in terms of investment, economic growth, production capacity, creation of value chains and trade promotion. Africa's fragmented markets need to be integrated to attract transformative investments, both from Africa and the rest of the world and assist in building competitive and more diversified economies. Despite the progress achieved by African states and regional economic communities, many African countries face several difficulties in implementing the regional integration agenda. More specifically, the weak productive capabilities, lack of technological sophistication, sufficient infrastructure, and weak institutional capacities will have to be addressed urgently. The issue of inadequate financial and human resources and difficulties concerning harmonisation of regional programs into national policy frameworks will similarly have to be tackled for African states to realise the benefits of regional integration. And so, despite the above progress, member states and the RECs need to do more to accelerate the process.

Implementation of decisions relating to regional integration needs to be strengthened at all levels, including mainstreaming them into national development strategies. Member states, particularly policymakers, should consider regional integration as part of their broader strategic development package. Regional integration decisions should be given priority during the planning stages of national programs and strategies. Monitoring the implementation of these decisions should also be taken as one of the key priorities by all the key stakeholders dealing with regional integration issues. Continued political commitment by the African leaders is critical if the continent achieves its regional integration agenda.

Conclusion

Adebayo Adedeji and Raúl Prebisch are widely recognised as two of the most profound minds of their generation, as well as the embodiment of regional economic integration on both the

African and Latin American sides of the continent. For their respective regions, both have served on the United Nations Economic Commission. In the same way, they have attacked the unequal distribution of income and the unfavourable conditions that contribute to underdevelopment in both sections of the world. A generational obligation, both fought in the intellectual sphere and brought conventional opinion to insight the idea of national development philosophy to be developed rather than adopting the global blanket prescription for underdevelopment problems. Thousands of young intellectuals and activists on both continents shared their viewpoint as a result of their influence on regional, academic, and political institutions. As public intellectuals, Adedeji and Prebisch shared a wealth of expertise and unique perspectives on the importance of regional integration in generating economic space and political differentiation. They chastised the Bretton Woods institutions for their desperate attempts to claim success stories from SAPs despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, but he also criticised western institutions for their growth without development.

The idea of “home-grown” development and self-reliance theories built on the specific experiences of Latin America and Africa. The concept of regional economic integration and development ideas, was championed by both Prebisch and Adedeji who had a keen political understanding of what regional governments would support. Even today, considerable structuration, that is, institutional and structural work is necessary for developing countries to fulfil their development goals. It is essential to formulate relevant instruments for active production policies in light of the fact that previous intervention has failed countries not meet their demand as required; however, rather than destroying the existing frameworks, better to reform through time. Apart from that, economic, social, and political integration opens up a variety of options, particularly for countries on the global economy’s periphery. By concluding agreements on cultural affairs and education, several of which are connected with the early stages of integration, a small step toward a more complete integration agenda focused on social development has been taken. Effective integration of the sustainable development agenda places new demands on production processes, which are critical given the economic issues currently confronting the developing countries.

Africa’s underdevelopment reflects the continent’s precarious economic status and absence of intra trade development and sound policy that speaks local realities. Underdevelopment has manifested itself in African governments’ growing incapacity to provide the bare basics of life, as evidenced by their increasing inability to care for their citizens’ basic needs. Africa is suffering from underdevelopment and poverty to an even greater extent due to a scarcity of financial, human, material, and natural resources. Hunger, unemployment, disease, illiteracy, socioeconomic concern, and insecurity tend to overwhelm the mass of the population, resulting in widespread discontent, alienation, and befuddlement. How to make such existing issues go away from both sides in order to have a better understanding of the issues surrounding regional integration and growth, Prebisch and Adedeji have traversed their respective continents extensively. Both were long-term thinkers who had a better grasp of the future than the leaders they advised. Both prophets, however, failed to realise their prophecies in the end: Neither Prebisch’s nor Adedeji’s vision of an African Common Market came to fruition, and neither has Prebisch’s. The intellectual “Father of African Integration” was widely regarded as Adedeji, whereas the intellectual “Father of Latin American Integration” was Prebisch. In opposing Western-dominated conventional knowledge, both men were able to win the support of their respective areas by engaging in spirited policy debates with far more powerful opponents. Even though they became historical heroes, in the end, they were tragic prophets whose visions for regional unification and growth mainly were not carried out.

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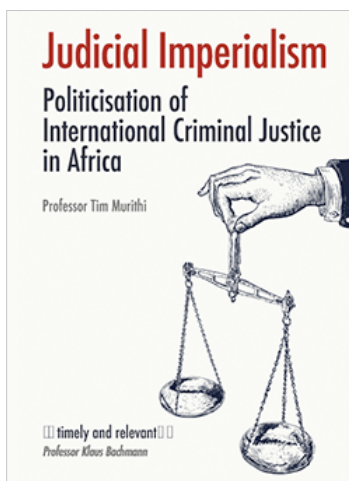
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Judicial Imperialism

Politicization of International Criminal Justice In Africa

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This is a multi-disciplinary study that covers discourses on International organizations, Judiciary, Law, Politics, Decoloniality, African issues, and International Relations. The book is in 3 parts, that are conceptual and theoretical issues, International Criminal Court (ICC), Case studies or case laws on Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, and Ivory Coast, and Analysis and Normative Proposals. The merits of carrying and producing a multi-disciplinary approach for the study of this nature are that it empowers intellectuals to see correlations across subject matters and intellectuals get a more holistic understanding of the law, imperialism, and political discourses. This multi-discipline research also opens doors for different ideas and ways of understanding the nexus between international law and international politics.

This book is concerned with how the politicization of the ICC's interventions can destabilize fragile country situations if they are not managed effectively and lead to the further loss of innocent life. This book argues that the noble intention that underpinned the establishment of the ICC was gradually undermined by the politicization of the referral of cases by the United Nations Security Council (UN), and heads of state, as well as the selection of cases by the office of the prosecutor, under its first incumbent Luis Moreno-Ocampo (p.3). This piece of literature debunks the idea of legal analysts assessing the ICC system through a legal lens, this book utilizes a political prism to examine the instrumentalization of international criminal justice by both global and local actors. This book further argues that within the international sphere the politicization of international criminal justice amounts to a form of judicial imperialism. A key theme that the book engages with is the de-legitimation of the ICC globally, regionally, and nationally.

Part 1 of the book consists of Chapters 1 and 2 and it focuses on the theory of 21st-century imperialism and the politicization of the International Criminal tribunals. On the theory of 21st imperialism the book pointed out that, in clout, the subjects of 21st-century colonialism are alacritous executors of the imperial scheme in the way that they allow foreign players to impose and regulate, through coercion and payments, the route of their own political, economic and social progress, (p.25). The volume reasons the ICC is a contrivance of strong-arming and control in the hands of both global hegemonic players and national politicians. The book demonstrates that to pursue their self-interests and shield their acquaintances the global powers politicize the court. This indicates that there is an understanding between the author of this book and Kenneth Waltz (1979)¹'s the hegemonic theory of international relations, that implies that hegemony is a great capacity for

1 Waltz, K.N., 1979. Theory of. *International Politics*, pp.121-122.

coercion and/or a great degree of influence or control of the structures of the international system and the international behavior of its units. The global powers follow an imperial logic in that they seek to retain their rank of pre-eminence by any means necessary but primarily through their web of client states and non-state actors (for example the ICC). The United States of America (USA) is the current global nation, with China looking to displace it at the fitting time from this mantle. China has employed a soft-power tactic to get itself in a position to take over the ultimate accolade. The 21st century is witnessing new forms of subjugation and mechanisms of exclusion (p.29). It should be noted that the author should be much-admired for using relevant and contemporary issues in the analysis of the correlation between international law and politics. 2

The book objectively exposed the great power exceptionalism that is in international politics, in which the powerful are not subject to the same rules as the less powerful. In 2003, the United States of America coordinated, planned, and led an invasion of Iraq, ostensibly to overthrow the country's brutal dictator Saddam Hussein. However, in doing so it violated Articles 7 and 8 of the Rome Statute, and subsequently violated the international criminal law and committed crimes against humanity (p.37). Several crimes are being committed around the world that will not be referred by the UN Security Council to the ICC, because of the veto power that the Permanent Five members have over such matters. This has created the category of a second-class of global citizens, of those who are subject to the law and those who are above the law. The author was objective in his analysis by highlighting that African Countries are willing executioners of this imperial project because they subject themselves to this international legal order through the self-referral process which has been exploited to target political opponents but does not demand the same exigencies from the other part of the world. This has allowed Africans to be neutralized from any agency (p.33). The significance of carrying out objective research is that it makes the results free from the researcher's biases and thus provides reliable results.

The book was impartial in exposing the weakness of western imposed international laws in African politics. The book noted that international law would be largely toothless without a large measure of political backing (p.46). International Criminal Tribunal cannot enforce the coercive compliance of the ruling (p.47). This well-written volume also indicated that International Criminal Tribunals are far from being immune to politics deeply implicated in the political transitions, they are subject to forces of geopolitics that are corrupted by the political environment that they operate. The absence of a global authority is also another factor responsible for the challenges international law is facing in global politics. The reviewer, the author, and political realists concur with international law's critics. They believe that it is a dangerous moralism and an idealistic attempt to constrain the behavior of the states in what is in effect an anarchical world society.

Part 2 of the book consists of chapters 4,5 and 6 and focuses on the African case studies of Sudan and Kenya to demonstrate the exhibitions of judiciary imperialism in the ICC. In the Omar al Bashir case of Sudan this case, the prosecution is being delayed not because of the decision and discretion of the Court but because of the non-compliance of African countries and the international community in seeing through its request (p.86). The book also demonstrated how AU has rallied its constituency members to resist the Court's activities in Africa. South Africa also has reiterated its commitment to upholding its legal obligations as a State Party to the Rome Statute, yet following the Al-Bashir escapade in Johannesburg in 2015, it is evident that the pan-African agenda has prevailed over the ICC's (p.88). It is important to note that other scholars like Ikejiaki (2013)² noted that international law is Western-made global law and for this reason, third-world countries have treated it with

2 Ikejiaku B.V (2013), International Law is Western Made Global Law: The Perception of Third World Category, *African Journal of Legal Studies*, vol 6, 337-356.

suspensions. In Kenya's case, AU Assembly decided that President Uhuru Kenyatta will not appear before the ICC until the concerns raised by the AU and its member states have been adequately addressed by the UN Security Council and the ICC (p.117). Gbenga O, (2015)³ book on International Law and Boundaries Disputes in Africa critic the content and application of contemporary international law to the resolutions of African territory. The objective nature of this book is also demonstrated by how the author did not only target the western world for interfering in African issues but rather also the contribution of the African governments in promoting black imperialism. The book also demonstrates how international politics should be analyzed from the individual level, communal, national, sub-regional, regional, and international levels. The book examined how the politicization and instrumentalization of the ICC replicate itself at the national level by assessing the machinations of politicians in Uganda and Cote d'Ivoire situations. In Uganda, the government is accused of the self-referral process to target the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) loyalists, Dominic Ongwen, Joseph Kony, Vincent Olli, and Okot Odhiambo. In Cote d'Ivoire, Alassane Quattara was accused of using the court to target the former president Laurent Gbagbo and Charles Ble Goude a former youth Minister in Gbagbo's regime.

Part 3 of the book, which consists of chapters 7 and 8 focuses on the re-legitimization of the ICC systems. The book suggests that a genuine commitment to concurrent jurisdiction is necessary to enable different accountability mechanisms from the communal level to the global level. The book commended the establishment of the African Court but also lamented the chances of getting it politicized at the regional level. The book did justice in suggesting the utilization of the traditional based systems in resolving the African judicial crisis. The reviewer concurs with the author because the use of the traditionally based system in resolving the African crisis was successful in Rwanda's peace and reconciliation process, though use of the traditional Gacaca court system. The book emphasizes the need to redefine the global constitutional order and global governance if there is any hope of achieving goal justice and UN Sustainable development goals in Africa.

This is a very useful book, that is written in a simple, lucid, and highly readable style. This book is an invaluable instrument for the student in international relations, international law, and political sciences fields. Practitioners of the subjects and government officials may also benefit from reading this piece of literature. This is a very informative work of reference for researchers and think tanks and African international regimes like the Africa Union and its Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The African Union Commission on International Law (AUCIL) of 2009, is an independent consultative body to the AU on African International Laws. The book is also relevant in informing debates on decoloniality, Pan-Africanism, and African Renaissance thoughts. Tim Muruthi should be commended for producing a piece of literature that is very crucial in informing African jurists, policymakers, and implementors as they seek to come up with comprehensive development plans and policies that may aid in the realization of the goals of AU Agenda 2063.

Book information

Title: Judicial Imperialism: Politicization of International Criminal Justice In Africa

Author: Tim Muruthi

Publisher: Jacana Media, 2019

ISBN: Paperback ISBN: 979-1-928232-75-9

Length: 239pp

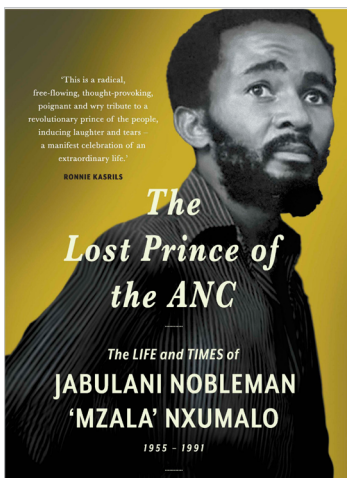
3 Gbenga O, (2005), *On International Law and Boundaries Disputes in Africa*, Routledge.

The Lost Prince of the ANC

The Life and Times of Jabulani Nobleman 'Mzala' Nxumalo 1955–1991

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The Lost “Intellectual Orphan” of the ANC

“Marx has become a functional, philosophical, ancestral mentor-surrogate for intellectuals either ignorant of, or simply deprived of, their own philosophical lineages — **they are intellectual orphans**” (Ayi Kwei Armah in *Masks and Marx: The Marxist Ethos vis-à-vis African Revolutionary Theory and Praxis* 1984).

The Tripartite Alliance comprising of the ANC, Cosatu and SACP is not making progress towards the second stage of the so-called National Democratic Revolution. The Marxist-leaning Cosatu and SACP have succumbed to the hegemony of neoliberalism under the ANC. The two-stage theory of the SACP to resolve the national question in South Africa is clearly failing to transcend the 1994 sell-out project of the ANC.

Socialism remains a “dream deferred”. White monopoly capital (Malikane 2017) or racial capitalism (Robinson 2000) has ensured that since CODESA, the dream of socialism is “lost in transformation” (Terreblanche 2012). This transformation which was effected through an “elite transition” (Bond 2000) was the triumph of the democratization paradigm (Ramose 2007). This paradigm entails the extension of democratic rights to the African majority (without land restoration to the Indigenous conquered people) who were deprived of them since the founding of white South Africa in 1910. What this implies in essence is that for the African majority it is “freedom next time” (Pilger 2006).

The book under review by Mandla Radebe called *The Lost Prince of the ANC* (2022) is a biographical analysis of the important issue of the national question in conqueror South Africa (Ramose 2018). A cursory perusal of this book especially the Preface, makes it clear that Radebe is ideologically aligned with the Congress Tradition as a historical and political movement in South Africa. This tradition emerged as a result of the adoption of the Freedom Charter or the Freedom Cheater (Pheko 2012) in 1955. Radebe operating firmly within this Charterist tradition (Raboroko 1960) evinces a commitment to the political vision of a nonracial democratic South Africa and the bias that the ANC is liberation movement. These historical and political prejudices on the part of Radebe form the overarching ideological framework of this book. Because ‘Mzala’ as the protagonist of the book is also a member of the Congress Tradition, a reader who is not familiar with the essence of this tradition may miss the ideological prejudice of Radebe as the author of the book. Radebe for orthodox methodological and scholarly reasons claims that he will try hard not to exhibit his ideological position. To attain this impossible scholarly ambition Radebe chose the strategic method of conflating his ideological orientation with that of the protagonist of his book. A careless reader may miss this subtle strategy. Radebe as part of the Congress Tradition wrote this book with the spirit of the “road to democracy” except that his book is about “the road to socialism”. This is how in essence Radebe writes within

the two-stage theory of the Congress Tradition by foregrounding 'Mzala' as the protagonist of the so-called National Democratic Revolution.

Despite these problematic ideological trappings of the Congress Tradition, this is a well-written book. For a biography which does not focus mainly on the intellectual contribution of the protagonist but his life and times in general, this is a well-structured book. There are no obvious semantic and grammatical errors. This means that Radebe has done his basic homework as a scholar. Radebe clearly proofread and edited the book with patience and competence. This book is divided into many sections which cover in an interesting fashion the "life and times of Mzala". These sections include a Foreword, Preface, Introduction, thirteen chapters and a Postscript. Readers who are interested in Marxism-Leninism and the National Question in South Africa will find this book a worthwhile read. They will also be treated to a heavy dose of a Charterist historiographical mythology which glorifies the myth of the ANC as a liberation movement and the outdated fallacious two-stage theory of revolution as initially formulated by "communist quacks" (Sobukwe 1963) of the CPSA as the South African white theoretical apparatchiks of Moscow. These "communist quacks" like Joe Slovo raised their "intellectual orphans" (Armah 1984) in the form of African communists such as 'Mzala'.

The book opens with a staunch Charterist Foreword by another "intellectual orphan" (Armah 1984) called Blade Nzimande. This pseudo-communist called Blade provides a brief overview of his friendship with his "intellectual orphan" comrade Mzala before he confidently advances a Charterist political vision of a nonracial, single and new South African nation. Without a comprehension of the glaring contradictions of pseudo-communists in South Africa, a reader will fail to understand why a member of the current useless Tripartite Alliance presiding over neoliberalism in a white settler economy such as Blade can argue that the "struggle to build a new South Africa is inseparable from the struggle against capitalism and its economic inequalities" (Radebe 2022: xiv). The students of the Fees-must-fall movement were right when they called for Blade to fall, but they failed to call for black/African Marxists as "intellectual orphans" (Armah 1984) to fall as well, when they called for decolonisation. As Armah (1984:63) states it regarding "intellectual orphans" like Blade "But for the élite African, Marxism has saving qualities. It enables him to acquire a reputation as a revolutionary while, in fact, he is busily building up a life of unproductive consumerism for himself and elitist privilege for his children, thus expanding the human base of Eurocentrism. Marxism enables a person to do all this at the slight cost of the energy invested in talking. Cold betrayal in practice ; fiery revolution in words".

In the Preface Radebe explains the origin of the book including his commitment to "just telling Mzala's story and letting the readers make their own analysis and direction of his character" (Radebe 2022: xviii). In the process Radebe contrary to what he does in the book by being firmly based in the Charterist tradition (Raboroko 1960), he claims that "I hope, therefore, that political, ideological and familial lineage have not unduly influenced my analysis" (Radebe 2022: xviii). The Introduction which is entitled "Comrade Mzala is dead" provides the basis of the word "lost" in the title of the book. In essence this part discusses how the death of Mzala implies for many of his Charterist comrades the loss of a deep thinker and theoretical contributor to the national question in South Africa on the basis of Marxism-Leninism (the position of intellectual orphans). This loss also means that the fight for the implement of the Freedom Charter has lost its serious Charterist soldier.

The first chapter entitled "The Nxumalos and Mzwandlas" is about Mzala's upbringing and his intellectual formation. It provides an account of his family lineage including Mzala's parents. By emphasizing the fact that Mzala was steeped in christianity before he came across Marxism, it ironically tells us how Mzala became an "intellectual orphan". As Radebe (2022: 33) states it "It was thus clear to anyone who interacted with Mzala that his views on Christianity and his active participation in the SCM(Student Christian Movement) were the foundation that anchored his

determination and involvement in the liberation movement”. While the first chapter provides an account of his christian miseducation, the second chapter entitled “Mzala skips the country for exile” narrates how Mzala who was already an “intellectual orphan” left his parents to join the so-called liberation movement of the ANC in exile. It is interesting that in the process of becoming an “intellectual orphan” Mzala joined the Black Consciousness Movement of Steve Biko.

This made Mzala do take seriously the question of race in South Africa as the BCM proceeds from the fundamental premise that white racism is the thesis, and the antithesis is black solidarity/black nationalism (More 2004). But because of his christian and humanist indoctrination Mzala embraced the dangerous fallacious idea of being ant-white supremacy as opposed to being anti-white. Just like A P Mda (2018) who pioneered the naïve idea of “broad nationalism” with christian brotherhood connotations, Mzala “In hindsight, he indicated that when looking at society, his premise was ‘initially humanist’ ‘hence the strong moral factor” (Radebe 2022: 50). Radebe (2022:50) further states that “ Even before Mzala could skip the country, where he officially joined the ANC and the SACP, he was already clear on the national question and the non-racial character of the struggle”.

In chapter three called “The June 16 Detachment” Radebe provides a biased narration of the “ 1976 Soweto uprising”. Radebe does this by claiming falsely that the young black people who skipped the country just like the “intellectual orphan” Mzala found the ANC to be their only viable option. Radebe can proudly claim this because he mistakenly believes that the ANC is a liberation movement as opposed to a Civil Rights Movement which was anti-apartheid. This is in contrast with the BCM which was against the totality of white power which began with conquest since 1652 (Ramose 2007). Many of the young black people preferred the Pan-Africanist Congress while some decided to build a revolutionary movement which was independent of both the PAC and the ANC called SAYCO (South African Revolutionary Council) (Lebelo 208). In addition to this Charterist historiographical narration by Radebe this chapter provides an interesting account of how Mzala’s process of being an “intellectual orphan” was cemented beyond recovery. Mzala was subjected to the indoctrination of the Congress Tradition both in the ANC camps and in the Soviet Union. “It is in the camps that Mzala interacted with Marxism-Leninism” (Radebe 2022: 70). Radebe(2022: 74) further states that “ However, with further military and political training in the Soviet Union and the GDR, Mzala’s understanding of the problem, using Marxism-Leninism, was cemented”.

The fourth chapter called “The mergence of a revolutionary intellectual” marks the stage at which Mzala is immersed in nonracialism which traces back its origin to his christian and humanist indoctrination which despite adopting the materialist epistemology of Marxism, he could not escape. From christian nonracial brotherhood Mzala transitioned smoothly to the nonracialism of Marxism and the communist quacks in the SAPC such as Joe Slovo and Ruth First. As Armah (1984:58-59) states it “Continuity is one more reason why Marxism attracts those of the non-Western élite who like to talk of revolution. Most Africans educated in Western schools are indoctrinated with Christian worldviews when they are too young to put up any resistance. After that, inertia if not active acceptance keeps them Christian. Much later, if they generate sufficient intellectual energy to break free of Christianity, they still need an alternative worldview, a sort of half-way house after primary addiction and Marxism is an excellent half-way house for anyone previously addicted to Christianity. The mythopoeic composition of the Marxist thought-system is similar to that of Christianity”.

Unlike the Makiwane brothers (the so-called Gang of Eight) who in response to the absurd charge of racism by Joe Slovo as one of the white intellectual parents of many “intellectual orphans” in the Congress Tradition, Mzala could not “defend the African Image and Heritage” by rejecting white intellectual and political leadership and comradeship. Mzala bought into the ridiculous idea that if he rejects white comrades in the tradition, he may be regarded as “an enemy hidden under the

same colour” by white communist quacks such as Joe Slovo. In the Charterist spirit of organizational nonracialism, Mzala accepted the so-called white comrades who were working towards a nonracial South African nation in the interest of all white settlers in South Africa. This is how Mzala captured this through the following absurd statement “Matanzima is a white man in a black man’s skin and Joe Slovo is a black man in a white skin” (Radebe 2022:104) This is how Radebe (2022: 104) as a fellow nonracial Charterist further states it regarding whites and the ANC “ This is a non-racial organisation that is fighting for a non-racial, free democratic South Africa”.

“*Habashwe!* Death to the Traitors: Swaziland and the Battle of South Africa” is chapter six of the book. It captures the attempts by Mzala to contribute to arms-struggle within the ANC as a Civil Rights movement. This chapter shows how Mzala merged theory and praxis. He did this by pushing for arms-struggle inside South Africa based on his article called “ Cooking the Rice inside the Pot”. It also provides an account of Mzala’s defence of the Charterist tradition by critiquing the Azanian Manifesto and calling for the implementation of the Freedom Charter in the resolution of the national question in South Africa. The title of chapter 6 is based on Mzala’s article and thus it is called “Cooking the Rice inside the Pot”. The essence of this article and chapter is to show that Mzala was committed to the people’s war inside South Africa. Mzala was impatient with the tardiness of the ANC in exile. He called for the members of the ANC to de-exile themselves and to stop “building pyramids in Egypt”. As Radebe (2022: 143) states it “ For Mzala, the motive force behind the revolution was not the exile leadership but the masses back at home”. Mzala was correct in this regard except that the ANC was never a revolutionary movement. It is this sense that the ANC persisted in “cooking the rice outside the pot”.

The Charterism of Radebe and his protagonist Mzala reaches its apex in chapter seven, which is revealingly entitled “The Freedom Charter is our loadstar”. Both Radebe and Mzala propagate the myth about the “democratic” creation of the Freedom Charter. The dishonest argument put forward is that the masses were involved as they submitted “slips” which captured their ideas of freedom. This is an annoying myth because Rusty Bernstein and other communist quacks like him actually drafted the Freedom Charter. This is how Radebe(2022: 157) states it “Therefore, he argued, the development of the Freedom Charter was not a secret event”. Mzala was overwhelmed by the fake nonracial gestures of the white Marxists as his intellectual parents, by naively “defining the enemy as a system of white supremacy rather than simply white people” (Radebe 2022:160). This position is absurd because the simple question is, who created white supremacy and who benefits from it?

“Towards people’s war and insurrection” is the eighth chapter which encapsulates Mzala’s article called “Cooking the rice inside the Pot”. Mzala entertains the hope of the people’s war in South Africa before the negotiation. He seems to be worried about how big business can co-opt the ANC. We now know that this is actually what happened (Terreblanche 2012). Mzala engages critically with the two-stage theory of revolution and accentuates the idea that only socialism will resolve the national question. He is also adamant about his Charterism by believing that the Freedom Charter is the right document to resolve the national question in South Africa. “Thus, he envisioned a South Africa aligned with the principles of the Freedom Charter where all people shall enjoy equal rights whatever their colour ,race, or creed” (Radebe 2022: 183). Chapter nine which is entitled “ Chief with a double agenda” is based on the title of a book which was written by Mzala. This is one of the intellectual contributions of Mzala which made him famous and established him as an upcoming intellectual within the Congress Tradition. There is really nothing new about this chapter. It discusses the problematic tribalistic politics of Buthelezi. “Aids: Misinformation, racism and the imperialist connection” is the tenth chapter which discusses Mzala’s critical engagement with biological warfare. It is about his interesting research on the origin of HIV. Mzala was at least critical enough to suspect the role of the CIA and racism in germ warfare.

Chapter eleven which is entitled “ Negotiations: Thank God things are moving” captures Mzala’s embrace of the negotiation and his persistent pursuit of the people’s war to crush the Apartheid regime. “Mzala, like Chris Hani, did not oppose the negotiations” (Radebe 2022: 247). This support of the negotiation process was based on a dishonest view about the ANC which both Mzala and Radebe (2022: 251) capture thus “ He situated his views on the transfer of power on the fact that the ANC is a revolutionary movement and ,as such its political business is not to reform South African majority but to transform it from the social foundation”. But because the ANC was never a revolutionary movement it worked with white business to reform South Africa.

The penultimate chapter captures precisely how the ANC as an unrevolutionary movement worked with white business. This chapter is aptly entitled “ Dazzled by capital: The ANC and the transition to democracy”. Apart from the inevitable betrayal by the ANC, this chapter provides an account of how Mzala pursued his studies in PHD on the national question. This would have been the culmination of his intellectual contribution to the Congress Tradition and endowed him with repute among his Charterist comrades such as Palo Jordan and Eddy Maloka. Chapter thirteenth as the last chapter captures the title of this book. This chapter is called “The Lost Prince of the ANC”. This is however misleading because Mzala as we argue is an African Marxist who embraced christianity and Marxism–Leninism. Therefore, instead of being “the lost prince of the ANC”, Mzala is “the lost ‘intellectual orphan’ of the ANC”. This is how Ayi Kwei Armah(1984: 56) in *Masks and Marx: The Marxist Ethos vis-à-vis African Revolutionary Theory and Praxis 1984*), encapsulates the gist of our critique of African Marxists like Mzala “Marx has become a functional, philosophical, ancestral mentor–surrogate for intellectuals either ignorant of, or simply deprived of, their own philosophical lineages — *they are intellectual orphans*”. This last chapter basically provides an account of how Mzala dies and how he attained the wrong title of “the intellectual prince” instead of the correct one which is “the intellectual orphan”.

The book closes with a Postscript which discusses how the “intellectual orphan” Mzala would have advanced the cause of socialism had he not passed away so young at the age of 35. This loss is lamented by loyal Charterists like Radebe who still believes in the useless idea of two–stage theory of revolution. The last part of the book provides a summation of the intellectual contribution of Mzala, on the basis of his European “intellectual surrogate parents” such as Marx and Lenin. Even a perfunctory shows how the “intellectual orphan” Mzala embraced orthodox Marxism as recommended by white communist quacks in South Africa. The emphasis on the working class as the revolutionary class without regard to race is glaring manifestation of his uncritical embrace of classical Marxism. The inherent racism of Western culture and civilization (Robinson 2000) which informs the racism of the white working class is ignored by Mzala despite his bad experience in the Socialist Countries he visited at some point in his training to be an “intellectual orphan”. This is because as Armah (1984:59) argues “As an intellectual product, Marxism has the prestige and convenience of a ready–made Western thought system loaded with impressive–sounding terms and mouth–filling phrases redolent of education and instantly useable in academic debate or dinner–table chit–chat”. This is why for Afrikanists like us Mzala is not an “intellectual prince” but an “intellectual orphan” thus, “the apparatchik that peers from underneath the cloak of scholarship”, to paraphrase Neville Alexander.

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Book information

Title: The Lost Prince of the ANC: The Life and Times of Jabulani Nobleman 'Mzala' Nxumalo 1955-1991
 Author: Radebe, M.J.
 Publisher: Jacana Media, 2022
 ISBN: Paperback ISBN: 9781431432981
 Length: 497pp

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