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LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IMPASSE IN THE TIMES OF CRISIS

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Abstract

Liberalism is theoretically based on a liberal way of thinking with ideas of individual sovereignty, property rights, and free trade. The sovereignty of the individual in question has transformed into a politically democratic form of government and economically a capitalist economic system. With the globalisation of trade and democracy (human rights), areas of freedom have become limiting state sovereignty and political decision-making. Civil society originated from liberalism, such as social movements and non-governmental organisations that have reached the capacity to directly affect domestic and foreign policies by using the areas of individual freedom. In this case, the political will that came to power through elections is at an impasse between implementing the policies that some electorate voted for and those against them. This paper will examine the dilemma of liberal democracy based on individual sovereignty/civil society and state sovereignty through three cases happening in liberal democracies: the raiding of the Congress building by the protesters in the USA, the COVID-19 policies, and the immigrant issue. Relying on these cases, the paper will argue that liberal democracy leads itself to an impasse in practice..

Keywords

Liberal Democracy, Political Impasse, Individual Sovereignty, Civil Society, State Sovereignty.



Resumo

O liberalismo baseia-se teoricamente numa forma de pensar liberal com ideias de soberania individual, direitos de propriedade e comércio livre. A soberania do indivíduo em questão transformou-se numa forma de governo politicamente democrática e economicamente num sistema económico capitalista. Com a globalização do comércio e da democracia (direitos humanos), os espaços de liberdade passaram a limitar a soberania do Estado e a tomada de decisões políticas. A sociedade civil originária do liberalismo, como os movimentos sociais e as organizações não governamentais, alcançou a capacidade de afetar diretamente as políticas internas e externas, utilizando os espaços de liberdade individual. Neste caso, a vontade política que chegou ao poder através de eleições encontra-se num impasse entre a implementação das políticas que alguns eleitores votaram a favor e as que lhes são contrárias. O presente documento analisará o dilema da democracia liberal baseada na soberania individual/sociedade civil e na soberania do Estado através de três casos ocorridos em democracias liberais: a invasão do edifício do Congresso pelos manifestantes nos EUA, as políticas contra a COVID-19 e a questão dos imigrantes. Com base nestes casos, o artigo argumentará que a democracia liberal conduz a si própria a um impasse na prática.

Palavras-chave

Democracia Liberal, Impasse Político, Soberania Individual, Sociedade Civil, Soberania do Estado.

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LIBERAL DEMOCRACY IMPASSE IN THE TIMES OF CRISIS

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1. Introduction

The distribution of authority between the rulers and the ruled ones has changed throughout the history of humanity. The times that the rulers were too strong and the ruled ones were too weak shaped the social, political, and economic structure of the power balance in a state administration. The evolution of this power balance has been apparent in developed Western countries (Fukuyama, 1991). Therefore, the political, economic, and social transformation, especially in Western European countries, has built a new model for almost all countries worldwide. Based on that experience, liberal democracy is considered the best form of government humankind has created (Plattner, 1999).

The form of political administration and ideology known as liberal democracy is a way of thinking that eliminates the areas of sovereignty other than the individual's own free will and puts the individual's choice in the centre (Golston, 2018). Therefore, the individual who gains freedom from everything is competent to make decisions regarding himself. The source of this competence is rationality (Myers, 1998). The rational individual is the essential subject of liberalism. The individual's property, political, and economic rights in the emergence of liberalism resulted in an individual-centred political ideology and bodied itself with liberal democracy. Therefore, liberal democracy is a political system that puts individual sovereignty¹ in the centre, and the government chosen by the rational individual voluntarily comes to power. In this context, it is necessary to seek the source of legitimacy of liberal democracy in the sovereignty of the individual (Prokhovnik, 1999, p. 70). Individual sovereignty comes first and is essential in liberal understanding and democracy. As in every aspect, individuals have the right to choose by whom they will be ruled via elections. In other words, rulers get their legitimacy to rule through individual sovereignty. Other sources of domination or legitimacy are regarded as illegitimate, and

¹ Individual sovereignty is defined by Nikola Lj. Ilievski, after a comprehensive theoretical explanation, as "individual sovereignty could be defined as a concept which gives an ultimate primacy of the will of the individual, limited by other individual's life, property and liberty; inviolable individual's physical integrity and property; politically manifested in *minimal government or private protective agency* and socially manifested in *spontaneous order*." (2015, p. 32).



their effectiveness in influencing the behaviour and decisions of individuals has decreased (von Hayek & Çetin, 2012). Under these conditions, the legitimate way to get power is through elections in which individuals reveal their preferences. It cannot be expected in a liberal democracy that any factor other than individual will (citizens) be effective in a systemic sense. However, liberal democracy has created a government that is obliged to go beyond the election results and meet every individual's different demands and expectations. Once it is elected, regardless of what percentage a political party gets, established governments have to serve every individual (citizens or electorates). In this case, a dilemma is inevitable if there is a contesting ideological or status distinctions among individuals.

Even if a government comes to power with the free will of individuals, it must act within the framework of specific responsibilities. Failure to fulfil these responsibilities may mean its legitimacy is shaken, and there is again a vicious circle in this dilemma. Although individuals shape their own lifestyles and political power with their own free will, the sum represents a lifestyle, a political view and a way of life (Çetin, 2001), mostly referring to the dominant identity shared by the majority. Therefore, the government's responsibility to meet the demands of those who voted for it and the obligation to act according to the expectations of the voters might conflict with the demands of other groups, which think differently. Will it act according to the voters it has taken responsibility for, or will it choose policies according to individuals with different demands since liberal democracy is based on individual sovereignty? This difference revealed by these demands and the majority of voters will significantly explain the changes and transformations in social, political and economic policies. In fact, this is the point that liberal democracy tries to make when advocating for a pluralistic democracy compared to majoritarian democracy. The protection of minority and marginalised groups is shown in the dynamics of liberal democracy (Kymlicka, 2018), but the dilemma between pluralist and majoritarian democracy has not been resolved yet. There is a situation where a political party cannot come to power via election if it implements certain policies against the majority of the electorate. Under these circumstances, it seems far from rational for any government to follow procedures that would sacrifice its own power for liberal democracy. To avoid such a situation and increase social support, a political party that comes to power must convince its own electoral base to meet the minority demands.

This paper delves theoretically into this impasse that liberal democracy is in now and practically examines three cases to substantiate its main argument. To do that, after a short historical background on the evolution of liberalism, the paper presents the relations between liberal democracy, civil society, and politics. Followingly, the main theoretical argument will be applied in three cases (the raiding of the Congress building by the protesters in the USA, the Covid 19 policies, and the immigrant issue), specifically in the liberal democratic political systems.

2. Theoretical Framework: Evolution of Liberalism and Liberal Democracy Impasse

The basis of liberal thought relies on the instinct to protect the individual's property right against religious and constitutional governments. The bourgeois, or new merchants, who took action against the absolute dominance of the dynasties, especially in England,



started to raise their claims for commercial freedom to protect their economic activities and the wealth they obtained from these activities (Thompson, 2017, pp. 48-49). The struggle to eliminate the restrictions that started in the economic field was later reflected in the political and intellectual fields, causing the Industrial Revolution and then Western European countries' rapid and unstoppable rise. The struggle for emancipation in the economic field has evolved to limit the areas in which the Monarchs would intervene in the economy. The limitation of monarchical governments' decision-making power in the economic sphere was later reflected in the political sphere and turned into a struggle for greater involvement of the people (primarily the bourgeois and merchants) in the decision-making mechanisms. After long political movements, the emergence of written texts in which the powers of monarchical governments were restricted led to the rise of constitutional movements (Küçük, 2015). This direction caused absolute monarchies to turn into constitutional monarchies over time.

At the end of the 18th century, with the French Revolution, the resonance of freedom, equality, and fraternity discourses in the European continent led to the expansion of the concept of the nation, which was kept in a narrow framework. Although the revolution in France and the attempt to politically eliminate the members of the monarchy and aristocracy by placing them on the target board caused populism and terrorism for a short time, it led to the establishment of an understanding based on the political, economic, and social equality of the people first and then each individual within the framework of the aforementioned concepts (Özkaya, 2021, pp. 51-52). The strengthening of European countries, which continue to grow and develop rapidly in economic, political, and military terms, has been identified with the understanding of the sovereignty of the people and the individual and has caused freedom to be perceived as the primary source of development and growth (Petersmann, 2006).

This process, which can be read as the emancipation history of the individual, has led to the emergence of liberal democracy as a political system that shapes European politics. Liberal democracy is a political system that advocates a limited understanding of the state and is based on the freedom of individuals (Çetin, 2001, pp. 228-229). Liberal core relies mainly on individuals, even if the sum of individuality creates a collective identity or preferences. In essence, individuals have the right to make decisions regarding himself/herself, which includes by whom he/she would be ruled. That leads us to elections. From a liberal perspective, election results cannot be taken as social groups or collectivity but should be taken as the collective sum of individuals' preferences². Different preferences of individuals, in this manner, can be seen in election results, and the legitimacy of elections comes from rational individuals (Przeworski and Wallerstein, 1986, p. 217). That is why liberal democracy, which shows the characteristics of pluralistic democracy, does not limit the relationship between the rulers and the ruled ones only to elections but tries to close this gap with the concept of civil society and general will, which John Locke (Çetin, 2001, p. 221) and Rousseau laid the foundations for. Based on its European origins, Robert Cox (1999, p. 6) suggests that "In its European origins, civil society and the bourgeoisie were synonymous. Civil society signified the self-

² Conceptual clearance between individuality and collectivity is well discussed and presented by Alain Touraine (2005). He problematizes these concepts in the light of being "subject" which origins from individual sense but also accumulated with cultural and social norms.



conscious social group whose influence, if not necessarily its executive power, was expanding.”

Civil society is a social institution that operates to influence political decisions and the way of doing politics. This institution creates a vital area, especially for those with different demands. Associations, foundations, lobbyists, and elites in civil society play an active role in influencing political decisions. As Michael W. Foley and Bob Edwards emphasise, civil society is “the ability

of associations to mobilise citizens on behalf of public causes” (1996, p. 38), which can be interpreted as a group of individuals with common ideas. On this occasion, while acting not as a political party and not aiming to come to power, civil society is instrumental in expressing opinions about the economic and political structures of the society, influencing people in the social sense and continuing to exist as an actor that political decision-makers should pay attention to (De Clerck-Sachsse, 2012; Duncombe and Dunne, 2018). Although non-governmental organisations are not political parties, they play a very influential role in crucial times, especially in times of social and economic ruptures. When appropriate, they turn out to be more effective than a political party or a government. The fact that non-governmental institutions and organisations have an influence and power in shaping society economically, politically, culturally and socially without a political party is seen as a substantial gain for liberal democracy. However, the fact that its borders are not clear creates a handicap in terms of the operability of liberal democracy. The fact that non-governmental institutions and organisations can become decision-makers in influencing the public and politicians at critical times or significantly affecting decision-makers indicates a deadlock due to the lack of political response (Seckinelgin, 2002, pp. 362-363). It is because the essential factor in the establishment of liberal democracy is the sovereignty of individuals. On the other hand, the sovereignty of individuals is based on the decision of who will rule the individuals (Özkaya, 2021). Therefore, it may cause a political party that has come to power through elections to produce or make policies against the demands of the voters who voted for it through non-governmental institutions and organisations.

Civil society can also be considered as a different field of struggle between different institutions of a society or predominantly minority groups. For democracy to continue functioning, it is inevitable to draw a framework regarding civil society’s boundaries and to what extent it can/should be effective. The fact that the influence rates of non-governmental organisations vary poses a significant problem in determining these limits. For instance, a social movement³ that can be considered a non-governmental organisation has been able to influence a political party or the political party in power, produce a policy and get what it wants, or ensure that its demands are met. What will happen if it conflicts with his request? Such a problem poses a significant problem because social movements or civil society can cause a change of power without a political party.

Especially with the Arab Spring, it is important to show the effectiveness of the social movement as a non-governmental organisation that they both fill the squares with the

³ The concept of social movement and civil society is used interchangeably despite the fact that their conceptual backgrounds are different. It is because they both almost have similar functioning in times of crisis in liberal democracies.



social dynamism in world politics and go so far as to demand the resignation of political decision-makers. The situation in which a ruling political party comes to power through elections changes without an election as a result of social protest can be considered a revolution under normal conditions. On the other hand, the fact that the change of political power took place through the social movement or civil society (Touraine, 1992) is not considered a revolution but a search for democratic rights. A mechanism emerges when a social reaction based on accumulated or instantaneous responses causes a change of power. A limited number of communities, not the majority, are the decision-makers or politically cultivated. That a particular part of the society directs or shapes the government in such a way constitutes a great contradiction to the sovereignty of the individual and the election concepts that constitute the essence of liberal democracy. Therefore, the main problem in this section is that civil society or social movements gain such an excessive influence, which has a damaging effect on the legitimacy of elections.

As a result of an individuality-centred understanding of liberalism, citizens are protected against potential violations of their fundamental rights. This situation, which seems very meaningful and moral in theory, encounters problems in practice. In societies where opposing ideas or polarisations exist among citizens, individual rights (sovereignty) are legitimised through dominant identities and values, while opposing and minority ideas are not considered within the scope of individual rights. As Nootens emphasises, with minority rights and status, the minority cannot benefit from the principle of self-determination, or they have to maintain their existence in a fundamental contradiction with the sovereignty of the nation-state (2006, p. 39). The illegitimacy of marginalisation and opposition is discursively emphasised and removed from being a human rights issue and turned into a security issue. This is true not only for main identities but also for sects, political ideologies, religions, political parties, geographical divisions, and similar dualities.

The citizen profile, which consists of rational individuals freed from the bindingness of sociality and traditionalism in the centre of common values and understandings (Çetin, 2001, p. 222), is one of the important components of liberal democracy. Therefore, the fact that the individuals forming a nationality do not have a homogeneous profile can cause problems in implementing liberal democracy. Deepened ideological oppositions cause political and social upheavals, and such divisions find room for action through individual sovereignty and civil society conceptualised by liberalism.

Przeworski and Wallerstein illustrate the core issue of liberal democracy by suggesting ideal conditions in which liberal democracy can smoothly operate. They suggest that "In an ideal democracy—one in which all citizens are homogeneous, all are informed, and all vote: in which the voting procedure aggregates individual preferences uniquely and introduces no biases" (1986, p. 218). However, the places where political problems go to polarisation, political and social turmoil, and even civil war are more likely to be seen in political units that are in transition to democracy (democratisation process). Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Central and Southeast Asia, and Eastern Europe are geographies that have experienced this transformation (Sørensen, 2018). In these countries where the democratisation process is in progress, "civil society, understood as the realm of private voluntary association, from neighbourhood committees to interest groups to philanthropic enterprises of all sorts, has come to be seen as an essential ingredient in both democratisation and the health of established democracies" (Foley and



Edwards, 1996, p. 38). In the case of resistance against democratisation, individual preferences, either within a civil society organisation or in voting for a political party, might make it quite difficult to maintain the process and cause social and political disorder. The politicisation of civil society is described by Foley and Edwards (1996, p. 46) as "civil society is treated as an autonomous sphere of social power within which citizens can pressure authoritarians for change, protect themselves from tyranny, and democratise from below." Such development seems to be a part of the democratisation process, but it is only applicable to smooth conditions. In the case of social, political, and economic crises, individual preferences (sovereignty) might get contradictory against one another.

However, the fact that liberal democracy is stuck between individual sovereignty and manageability, causing an impasse, can be seen in the countries and geographies included in the category of "others" but also Western Europe and North America, which are known as the cradle of liberal democracy (Galdston, 2018). The claim that the far-right and populist movements are on the rise in Europe (Rummens, 2017) weakens liberal democracy. To give some examples, Brexit, the rise of the National Front in France, the 2016 Presidential election in the United States (Inglehart and Norris, 2017), the entry of the far-right into the parliament in Germany, Austria, the rise of the far-right in the Hungarian and Czech Republic elections (Blokker, 2019) can be listed. These anti-liberal democracies, political parties or social groups are being operated on the grounds of the liberties that liberal democracy provides. Problematising liberal democracy in times of crisis in the Western spheres is actually quite expected. Alan Touraine, in this sense, suggests that "it has been very frequently observed that the idea of 'social movement' is more appropriate to countries that have experienced genuine capitalist development than to others" (1992, p. 134). This means that liberal democracy, in nature, might pave the way for anti-liberal social movements or civil society groups to challenge its core ontologic presence.

If it were claimed that liberal democracy was in a deadlock only in countries trying to democratise, it would not be possible to produce the counterargument because it would be expected that the transition to liberal democracy would be painful for countries that could not complete individual sovereignty, rational individual profile, and homogenisation process. However, the claim that liberal democracy is in a deadlock only makes sense if tested in countries where liberal democracy has been successfully practised. In this context, the sharpening of the Republican and Democrat separation in America, the raiding of the Congress building by the protesters, the actions against the Covid 19 policies, and the deadlocks of liberal democracy through immigration issues will be examined by looking at the limits of the individual sovereignty in relations with civil society and the state.

3. Liberal Democracy Impasse in the Times of Crisis

"In today's conditions, it is impossible to claim that a state has unlimited and absolute sovereignty and is a democratic state of law. A democratic state that is also a state of the law is now limited; the rights of minorities are guaranteed against the will of the majority" (Küçük, 2015, p. 311; Kymlicka, 2018). Liberal democracies have given rise to the representation of sovereign individuals governed by the elected. The state is expected



to fulfil the obligation of ensuring the security of life and property of the individual and public order subject to the limitations of individual sovereignty. Under these conditions, a political structure governed by liberal democracy may encounter contradictions when practices such as developing policies for the individuals despite the individual or prioritising the social benefit over individuals.

3.1. The Capitol Raid and the Impasse of Liberal Democracy

Liberal democracy has been a part of the political culture since the foundation of the United States of America (USA). It has become one of the best practice areas of liberal democracy over time. In the USA, which pioneered the ideas of political, social, and economic freedom (liberal democracy), political polarisation (Hsiao and Radnitz, 2021) peaked after the 2016 presidential election. Since Donald Trump won the presidential election for the first time as the Republican candidate, the polarisation was more evident in the following years.

Considering the issue in detail, we can state more clearly that liberal democracy drags itself into a dead-end with civil society consisting of sovereign individuals. Joe Biden emerged victorious from the legal and legitimate elections. Opening the election result discussion in a liberal democracy will bring along the legitimacy debates. The allegations that Donald Trump, who lost the election, interfered in the elections cast a shadow over the election results and caused uncertainties about whether he would leave the office (Luke, 2021, p. 4). On the day that the presidential election results would be confirmed by Congress, Donald Trump said on his X account, "The Great Protest in Washington on 6 January. Be there, and it will be wild -Big protest in DC on 6 January. Be there, will be wild!" he called a part of the public to protest, and the gathered protesters postponed the senate session (Holland et al., 2021). Theoretically, the fact that the above-mentioned political groups fight with each other outside the elections has shown how much damage can be done to the operability of the liberal democratic system (Oser, 2021). After these statements, for the first time in American political history, the people entered the Congress building to protest the Congress session, causing the admission and oath session to be postponed.

It is usual for people to use their sovereignty to protest the election results if it is considered within the scope of freedom of protest or assembly, regarded as one of the fundamental rights in liberal democracies. However, the realisation of this right to protest by entering public buildings is prohibited within the legal framework. As in this case, the solution found by liberal democracy to overcome this impasse is to determine the limits of the right to protest within the framework of existing laws and, in fact, the laws made by transferring the sovereignty rights of other individuals (Habermas, 1994). The will of individuals who do not want to cede their sovereignty, and the will of those who do, actually led to the emergence of social groups that think differently from each other and created polarisation between two different mentalities (Republican-Democrat, Populist-Democrat, nationalist-internationalist, pluralist-majoritarian). Therefore, the fact that additional and alternative ideas started to struggle for power, together with the polarisation, caused social movements to intervene in politics, even momentarily (Oklopcic, 2019). Even if the protesters had not entered the Congress building and continued to protest around it, it would have overshadowed the electoral results, which



are the source of legitimacy for liberal democracy. Under these conditions, the source of the election and the legal and social source of the protest demonstrations is, again, liberal democracy. What is meant here is not the idea that individual rights should be sacrificed for sociality or that individual rights should be ignored for the continuity of the state and political institutions. It is true that the democratic system of liberal democracy, shaped by the sovereignty of the individual, is valid if political orthodoxy is ensured. Political science literature explains this situation by examining whether the political culture is democratic. However, keeping the individual sovereignty and freedom areas as wide as possible in liberal democracy can lead to a political deadlock in case of political polarisation or tensions.

3.2 COVID-19 and the Structural Crisis of Liberal Democracy

For liberal democracy to remain functional, the claim that an average level of welfare (economic development), short and long-term political routine and primarily democratic political culture is necessary has become undeniable. The reflexes of liberal democracy in the face of crisis are of the nature to support the claims in this direction (Norrlöf, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the entire functioning at the global level and has led to questioning individuality and sociality in economic, political, and cultural terms (Murshed, 2020; Greitens, 2020). It has shown that the global economic order, in which the whole world is economically interconnected, is ready to turn from internationalisation to nationalisation in case of crisis. This situation actually leads to the deterioration of all national economies' logistics and resource hierarchy. Therefore, the fact that the crises leave the states between economic nationalisation and internationalisation (Dag, 2020) and that the scientific approaches on which rationality is based are not followed by society (Hotez, 2020) show that the liberal economic system and the rational individual are in a deadlock. From a political point of view, the Western European states and the USA, where liberal democracy is established, have followed a policy that can be defined as a significant shutdown to protect the health of their citizens, which is their main responsibility. States that have implemented a policy of massive closure have closed their land, air, and sea borders to other countries and have made it mandatory for their own citizens to stay at home. The basic logic of such a policy is to fulfil the state's primary responsibility and protect its citizens from the contagiousness of the virus and possible deaths. However, the said policy can be evaluated as contrary to the essence of liberalism. The future of the individual, society or the state, which is one of the main problems of political ideologies, has come to the fore again. The state has suspended the right of the individual to go out, protect his own health, and make his own decisions rationally in terms of the health of both the individual and society. Later, the right to decide whether to vaccinate against Covid or not by narrowing the living spaces of those who do not have the vaccine can be evaluated in the same problematic category (Amon and Wurth, 2020).

In this context, if an elected government implements excessive closure policies, even for the sake of public health, it may result in both a loss of votes and an economic loss. At the same time, the fact that the state makes decisions about their own lives on behalf of individuals may mean taking away the sovereignty of the individual and the opportunity to participate in politics not only by-election but instantaneously (participatory



democracy). On the other hand, individuals who do not comply with the decisions and prohibitions endanger society, revealing another problem in the individual-society-state relationship. In this context, communities that protest against the state's curfews when curfews are relaxed or completely prohibited and do not comply with any social distancing and mask rules during the protest are a critical example (Lange and Monscheuer, 2021; Iacoella et al., 2021). It is not surprising that such demonstrations take place in states where liberal democracy or even partially liberal democracy is practised on the grounds of freedom of assembly and demonstration, and the promotion of active participation of civil society in politics is among the sine qua none of (liberal) democracies. As can be seen, the basic principles of liberal democracy present a deadlock in terms of manageability in times of crisis (Goetz and Martinsen, 2021). This claim itself can be considered illiberal because it evokes a more statist approach, but it does not change the fact that the decisions taken for the individual, despite the individual, create a deadlock in liberal democracies. Therefore, it would not be wrong to argue that active civil society and fundamental rights based on individual sovereignty bring more harm than good politically and socially, or in other words, reduce manageability, especially in times of crisis. The concern that the psychological effects of Covid 19 may lead to anti-system or political violence can be evaluated similarly (Bartusevicius, Bor, Jørgensen, & Bang, 2021). This situation may be valid for liberal democracies and all political systems and understandings. It will not change the fact that the basic principles of liberal democracy lead it to an impasse in some cases (Ogurlu and Dag, 2021).

3.3 Immigration and Liberal Democracy

Finally, it is seen that the understanding of basic human rights, which is the most important indicator of individual sovereignty in liberal democracies, fails when faced with the problem of immigrants. Liberal democracy claims to be universal as a form of political government and with the idea of individual sovereignty. Based on the right to live, it is believed that a life with dignity is not only valid for the citizens of the states governed by liberal democracy but for all humanity, according to the liberal understanding. As a reflection of the claim of universality, fundamental human rights have been considered universal human rights. In this framework, discrimination against people based on their identity, religion, language or any other reason and violation of their right to live with dignity was strongly opposed. In liberal democracies, this situation has led to the production and implementation of policies in order to protect minorities and cultures with a pluralistic understanding of democracy (Kymlicka, 2018).

The ideal of liberal democracy and human rights, represented by Western European and North American states and protected almost globally, envisages the protection of those whose right to live is violated if they seek refuge in their own countries. When other states request extradition for political reasons, whether they are threatened by death or torture is very effective in deciding whether to return people to their own countries. Military interventions in order to protect the right to live of its citizens against the danger of terrorism from another country and because a country started to kill its own citizens did not cause the problems to be solved but deepened them. For example, interventions for the protection of their citizens and the ideal of human rights (as in the examples of Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and Syria) later revealed the significant refugee problem. In



countries where the political, social, and economic order has almost disappeared, protecting the right to live and a living standard worthy of human dignity is no longer possible. Therefore, there has been a wave of migration towards countries where these rights are guaranteed, where they do not have to worry about their right to live and where minimum living standards can be achieved (Castelli Gattinara, 2017).

The main aim of irregular migrants is to access fundamental rights, which they believe are universal and protected by Western states. Therefore, the countries of Western Europe and North America are the final destinations of all the routes they follow, despite all the difficulties and the long duration. The opportunities offered by liberal democracy to its citizens and asylum seekers (for political or humanitarian reasons) have begun to pose a problem in terms of economic and social integration (Stasiulis, 1997; Gibney, 1999). "The combination of economic upheaval, demographic change, and challenging traditional values is causing many less educated citizens to feel that their lives are beyond their control" (Galston, 2018, p. 8). The cost of accessing the fundamental rights protected by liberal democracy for immigrants who try to cross borders in an irregular and unregistered manner has become challenging.

At the same time, immigration acceptance agreements and numbers implemented by states in line with liberal principles face positive and negative reactions from the active civil society that liberal democracy has paved the way for. On the one hand, non-governmental organisations that work for the acceptance and protection of all with humanitarian reflexes; on the other hand, non-governmental organisations that demand immigrants not be accepted due to social integration, religious differences, cultural differences, and economic costs are laying the groundwork for social and political polarisation (Gibney, 1999). The emergence of political and social polarisations has an effect that undermines the operability of liberal democracies. Because liberal and pluralist democratic practices, such as individual sovereignty, freedom of thought, freedom of association and dynamic and active civil society (Çetin, 2001, p. 225), that enable liberal democracy to work cause the activities of anti-immigrant groups to be legitimate on the liberal level and the rise of populist discourses over immigrants. Political and social groups in liberal democracies are torn between the acceptance of immigrants on the grounds of universal human rights and the rejection of an influx of immigrants, which might shake the foundation of a state's political and social structure.

Under these conditions, as in the previous examples, the short and long-term policies determined by the state are supported by some of the citizens and not supported by others, causing political and social disintegration with the individual and organisational (civil society) activities that liberal democracy forms the legal basis for. Those who help immigrants at destinations or facilitate logistics to where immigrants want to go intensively are punished (Duarte, 2020), or those who treat immigrants in an inhumane way (even those who intervene physically) might not face any sanctions (Kalir, 2022; Idemudia and Boehnke, 2020; Kalpouzos and Mann, 2015) can be given as an example of political and social polarisation and is explanatory in terms of exemplifying the impasse of liberal democracy (Reggiardo, 2019).

These three empirical cases indicate that in times of crisis, weaknesses of liberal democracy surface and political, social, and even individual reactions to the crisis vary dramatically. As William A. Galston (2020) emphasises, there are several reasons why



the vulnerability of liberal democracy endures, and one of them is quite associated with the main argument of the paper. It is "The ambiguities of freedom and equality" (2020, p. 19) which suggests that times of crisis extend the social and political divisions and even deepen them. Therefore, ambiguities between individual sovereignty and state or popular sovereignty change the direction of liberties in illiberal ways. This can be applied to social cleavages and political or ideological cleavages, which turn socio-political-economic diversity in a peaceful way into survival in a verbal or physically violent way.

4. Conclusion

A political system, conceptualised as liberal democracy, is based on the free administration of individuals and the sovereignty to make policies on national and international issues is delegated to the administrators representatively (Thompson, 2017, pp. 48-49). Both individuals and society can control the delegation of authority in question. Although the main backbone of the supervisory mechanism is elections, by voting, individuals do not make the elected government absolute sovereign until the next election, and individuals can interfere with the continuous decision-making processes through civil society and social movements (Rucht, 2006; Dag et al., 2018). After the Cold War, liberal democracy declared its absolute victory. It has been presented to the world as the best form of political administration. Democratisation policy has been pursued in order to implement this form of government in other states, and voluntary or compulsory democratisation at the national and international level, and liberal democratisation, in particular, has been tried to be realised (Hobson, 2009; Galston, 2018, p. 5).

It is supported in the political arena that the concepts and principles of liberal democracy are human (individual) centred. Recent crises such as irregular immigrants, rising populism, Occupy Street movements, and the latest global pandemic are evaluated in different ways by the individual, the society and the state, and these differences have seemed to lead to a contradiction. The starting point of such differences stems from the political and social freedoms that liberal democracy brings to politics. The main reason for expressing liberal democracy in this context is not to claim that liberal democracy cannot solve its problems but to reveal the clues that liberal democracy has entered into a dead end. In particular, the fact that current issues cause social groupings and political polarisation leads to the damage of individual-centeredness, which is necessary for liberal democracy to continue its function. The global reflection of this situation can be sought in a transformation from liberal and openly political, social, and economic policies to restrictive and closed policies at the national and international levels (Colgan and Keohane, 2017). The essential opportunities provided by liberal democracy (such as participatory democracy, active citizenship, individual sovereignty, civil society, the rule of law, freedom of expression, and freedom of association) have become the means of voicing and socialising anti-liberal demands and then political and social polarisation. It is pretty standard for liberal democracies to go through troubles, and the search for solutions still continues. Perhaps it can evolve from a pluralistic and liberal democracy to a majoritarian and authoritarian democracy. In any case, it can maintain its democratic character, even if it is not liberal, as long as it does not become a violent and aggressive political crisis (Galston, 2018; Ignatieff, 2020).



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CONFRONTING TRUMP'S POLICY TOWARDS IRAN WITH OBAMA'S: NEOCLASSICAL REALISM AND STRATEGIC CHANGE

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Abstract

The article argues that President Trump's policy change towards Iran—and the Middle East more broadly—during his first term was motivated by a shift in external structural conditions caused by his predecessor's policy. More specifically, President Obama's signature of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)—commonly known as the 'Iran nuclear agreement'—amid his Middle East policy led to a change in the external environment that was perceived by President Trump as an external threat from a domestic point of view. The change in the external environment led to a change in foreign policy with domestic-level factors intervening between the external driver and the strategic response. From an international relations theory perspective, the idea that great powers can induce shifts in the regional distribution of power that create threats at a systemic level and that individual states adjust their foreign policy behaviours to systemic outcomes is consistent with the neoclassical realist framework. The article also confronts Trump's Middle East policy with Obama's arguing that, apart from different styles, both presidents essentially adopted different tactics to pursue U.S. interests.

Keywords

U.S. Foreign Policy, Neoclassical Realism, Trump, Obama, Iran.

Resumo

O artigo argumenta que a decisão do Presidente Trump de alterar a política em relação ao Irão, e ao Médio Oriente em geral, durante o seu primeiro mandato foi motivada por uma alteração nas condições estruturais externas causada pela política seguida pelo seu antecessor. Mais especificamente, a assinatura do Plano de Ação Conjunto Global (PACG) pelo Presidente Obama — vulgarmente conhecido como o 'Acordo nuclear iraniano' — no âmbito da sua política para o Médio Oriente provocou uma alteração no ambiente externo que foi percecionada pelo Presidente Trump como uma ameaça externa do ponto de vista doméstico. A alteração no ambiente externo levou a uma alteração de política externa em que fatores domésticos interferiram entre o estímulo externo e a resposta estratégica. De um ponto de vista da teoria das relações internacionais, a ideia de que as grandes potências podem provocar mudanças regionais na distribuição de poder, criando ameaças ao nível sistémico, e que os Estados ajustam a sua política externa face a ocorrências sistémicas é consistente com o modelo realista neoclássico. O artigo compara também a política do Presidente Trump para o Médio Oriente com a do Presidente Obama argumentando que, para além de estilos



diferentes, ambos os presidentes adotaram essencialmente táticas diferentes na persecução dos interesses norte-americanos.

Palavras-chave

Política Externa Norte-americana, Realismo Neoclássico, Trump, Obama, Irão.

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CONFRONTING TRUMP'S POLICY TOWARDS IRAN WITH OBAMA'S: NEOCLASSICAL REALISM AND STRATEGIC CHANGE

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Introduction

Differently from previous periods relations between the U.S. and Iran have never been good since the hostage crisis in the U.S. Embassy in Teheran at the time of the Islamic Revolution in Iran back in 1979. Nevertheless, during the Obama presidency an agreement was signed in an attempt to soften tensions between the two countries and to counter Iran's efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. This agreement—known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (hereafter JCPOA) and also as the 'Iran nuclear deal'—was the result of a negotiation process that was signed in Vienna on July 14 2015 between Iran, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany, and the European Union (EU). Following that, it was adopted in October 2015 and began to be implemented by mid-January 2016.² Later, President Trump decided to withdraw from the JCPOA considering it a very bad deal. In effect, the JCPOA was always a source of great debate in the U.S. and never really generated consensus.

Against this background the article argues that the policy change by President Trump relative to Obama was due to a perception of threat increase caused by a change in the external environment resulting from the signature of the JCPOA under President Obama. Indeed, great powers can provoke regional shifts in the distribution of power, which create threats at a systemic level (Lobell, 2009: 49).³ In this particular case the argument is that the signature of the JCPOA is considered to have created a change in the distribution of power between Iran and its neighbouring countries, notably Israel and several Arab countries in addition to the U.S.. This created a new threat that was in itself the main trigger for the change in U.S. policy in which domestic factors also intervened. The article argues that this situation is consistent with the neoclassical realist framework of strategic adjustment. Further to that the article analyses comparatively President Obama and President Trump's foreign policies towards Iran and the Middle East region more broadly with respect to their expected objectives and argues that, apart from

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² The full text of the document is available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/iran_joint-comprehensive-plan-of-action_en.pdf.

³ On threats assessment within neoclassical realism, see Lobell (2009: 42-74).



different styles, both presidents essentially adopted different tactics to pursue U.S. interests.

Overall, the article has four purposes. First, to argue that the policy change by Trump is consistent with the neoclassical realist framework (hereafter NCR). Second, to challenge the idea that President Trump's foreign policy was just based on a will to reverse as much of President Obama's policies as possible—as with the "Obamacare", the TPP, and the Paris Agreement—to make up for a lack of strategy. Third, to argue that the main aim of Trump's foreign policy compared to Obama's was to isolate Iran with the possible objective of bringing about a regime change in this country, and to cause a rebalancing of the Middle East region in favour of the U.S. other long-standing allies and of U.S. interests. Fourth, that this was a tactical shift towards Iran in particular and the Middle East more broadly that might belie a strategic shift in U.S. thinking towards the Middle East. Overall, the argument is that both presidents basically wished to promote U.S. goals in terms of U.S. grand strategy that may not be that different and that the most significant difference between the two concerns their tactical approach and style.

The article is organized as follows. Following a short introduction, I survey and set up the general theoretical framework that underlines the rest of the article. Following that I outline the general contours of the terms of relations between the United States and Iran since World War II. Then, I examine the Middle East foreign policy of President Obama and in particular what that led to in terms of consequences for the U.S. in the region. After that I assess President Trump's policy towards the Middle East region and show how it contrasted with his predecessor. This is followed by a more detailed comparison between two different foreign policy options with respect to Iran and the Middle East more broadly by these two very distinct U.S. presidents, Barak Obama and Donald Trump, more specifically the 44th and the 45th Presidents of the United States of America, although focusing the attention on the latter within the NCR framework. The article ends with some final remarks.

The general theoretical framework

The analysis undertaken here is considered to be consistent with the NCR approach to international politics. NCR seeks to provide a realist theory of foreign policy to explain strategic choices of states instead of just considering the structural effects of power in international relations and states' relations. The fundamental and most important idea is that domestic-level factors intervene between external drivers and strategic response, but the framework also seeks to highlight the limits of political choice faced by the foreign policy executive (hereafter FPE) when reacting to structural constraints.

This presents a change relative to structural realism, which argues that given the characteristics of the international system and the conditions of anarchy and self-help "the pressures of competition weight more heavily than ideological preferences or internal political pressures" (Waltz, 1986: 329). As a theory of international politics that is concerned with macro-outcomes at the structural level what that means is that in the long run states that choose to ignore those structural constraints will risk losing out in balance of power terms.



According to Waltz the fundamental idea is to highlight the major characteristics of the international system independently of the units that exist in the system. This does not mean, nor imply, that the foreign policy adopted by the units—in this particular case the states—should be excluded. It only means that it is not an essential element for establishing a theory of international relations (Waltz, 1996: 56). According to Waltz it is necessary to distinguish foreign policy from general theory. Nevertheless, those foreign policy variables are important and may be included in the analysis despite not being essential for theory building (Waltz, 2008: 89). The main point here is that the behaviour of states is strongly conditioned by structural factors and by a struggle for security and survival independently of the nature of the political regime and its societal preferences (Waltz, 1979).

However, structural realism in itself tells us nothing about how states go about processing the pressures and the incentives in the short term or about how they choose to act or react. Differently, NCR is a theory of foreign policy that seeks to fill that gap, that is, to provide a means of analysing why and how states respond to specific pressures in particular ways. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of the permissiveness of the structural environment in determining the impact of domestic level intervening variables on foreign policy outcomes (Ripsman, Taliaferro, & Lobell, 2016). The basic idea behind NCR is that the systemic environment provides the starting point but that domestic intervening variables also play a significant role in determining foreign policy outcomes.

As an essential part of the model the NCR framework has four categories established that affect the FPE's response to systemic stimuli. Those are: leader images and beliefs, strategic culture, state-society relations, and domestic institutions (Ripsman, Taliaferro, & Lobell, 2016: 58-79). This article does not address the four categories of the model in detail. Instead, it puts its attention on the first of these intervening variables, that is the leader images and beliefs, which includes the individual decision makers in the FPE. These individuals include the president and all those involved in the conduct of foreign policy. The viewpoint that is adopted here is that in this particular case each of these two presidents was the most important decision-maker and the ultimate responsible for foreign policy choices within the FPE, albeit not the only one (Ripsman, Taliaferro, & Lobell, 2016: 123). That is, other actors and policymakers' viewpoints matter on what concerns the formulation of foreign policy as is traditionally considered in the foreign policy analysis literature (Alden & Aran 2017; Beasley et al, 2013; Hill, 2003; Mintz & Derouen Jr, 2010; Neack, 2019; Ripsman, Taliaferro & Lobell, 2016; Smith, Hadfield, & Dunne, 2016). As a result, in order to explain the policy change within the Trump administration the policy stance of some of the most relevant members of that administration is also taken into consideration with regards to the policy decisions bearing in mind the perception of threat (Breuning, 2007).

The state of relations between the U.S. and Iran since World War II

After the end of World War II Iran was a close ally of the United States. The United States always seemed willing to provide support inclusive military to Iran in its pursuit of regional dominance. The reason for that was that for quite some time despite its wealth it was not obvious that Saudi Arabia would be able to compete for regional dominance.



This was the case since the creation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on September 23 1932 but also even after the emergence of the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) in the early 1930s and the importance of oil for the U.S.. In essence, this idea resulted from the size of the population of Iran and its military capabilities (Halliday, 1979: 248-9). Nevertheless, in this competition and taking advantage of the importance of oil Riyadh was also able to foster relations with Washington, which resulted in important military ties (Al-Rasheed, 2002: 118-9). Indeed, at some stage the United States was able to establish and maintain close ties both with Saudi Arabia and Iran. In addition to the oil interests one of the U.S. Middle East policy concerns until the end of the Cold War "...was to keep the Arab states away from Soviet influence." (Ross & Makovsly, 2009: 38).

Relations with Iran suffered a blow when the United States and the United Kingdom put together a coup in August 1953 through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), respectively. Both organized a coup to overthrow Mohammed Mosaddeq—the prime minister of Iran at the time—who had been democratically elected and was greatly appreciated by the people in general. The coup—known under the code name of Operation Ajax—was a response to Mosaddeq's decision to nationalize the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). Britain had been unhappy with Mosaddeq for quite some time and had attempted to bring down his government on several occasions (Gasiorowski & Byrne, 2004: 6). Given that the British had already withdrawn from the country and seen their influence significantly reduced it was not possible for them to change the political situation and replace Mosaddeq without external assistance. In light of this they decided to request the support of the United States basing their arguments on concerns related to the Cold War and arguing that there was a risk of an expansion by the ex-Soviet Union in the region in general and Iran in particular. After several attempts they were able to convince President Eisenhower and the United States agreed to participate in the coup (Dueck, 2010: 103). Significantly, the Shah accepted the coup taking place and was happy to get rid of Mosaddeq although he was also very apprehensive if it were to fail (Rahnema, 2015: 14).

In the aftermath of the coup and with the support of the West Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi turned the country into a fierce dictatorship. But all this was not without other consequences. Until 1953 Britain was considered by Iranians in general as a colonial and imperialist country while the United States was seen as anti-imperialist and a friend of Iran. However, after the 1953 coup the United States generated an anti-American sentiment among the general population and was considered a traitor. This occurred despite the friendly relations with the Shah and the support to its regime. That sentiment has never disappeared since.

Following the events of 1979 in Iran as the Islamic Revolution took place the situation changed again, but this time much more dramatically. This time around it altered both the terms of the relation between Washington and Tehran as well as the rivalry and regional security conditions in the region. In effect, that event was the major turning point in the relations between the United States and Iran that has since been considered from a U.S. viewpoint a major security risk by U.S. governments and by Americans at large. Iran became a security threat to the United States and since 1979 most U.S. presidents have in some form voiced concerns over Iran. Interestingly, despite that in regional terms and in spite of being suspicious of each other and of their rivalry both



Saudi Arabia and Iran have managed to coexist (Halliday, 2000:119). In fact, a deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia was brokered by Beijing around mid-2023 with the objective of rapprochement or at least of defining long-lasting peaceful terms of engagement (Jash, 2023; Cafiero, 2024).

Obama's foreign policy towards the Middle east

Oddly enough analysing President Obama's foreign policy towards the Middle East and Iran in particular helps understand President Trump's foreign policy in the region. Obama's main priorities were more targeted towards domestic issues such as transforming the United States into a more liberal and equitable society. As a result, the focus concerning foreign policy evolved around changing the American policy stance in the world to a more friendly and appeased image notably towards foreigners and Muslims in particular.⁴ This was also specially contrasting with the George W. Bush era (Kindsay, 2011). With respect to foreign policy the discourse seemed to be based on a need to convey the image of a conciliatory president committed to diplomacy and multilateralism directed at improving the United States' image in the world and in particular with respect to the Middle East. That included Iran as well (Indyk, Lieberthal, & O'Hanlon, 2012: 1; Nasr, 2013: 2).

This was particularly noticeable during Obama's first term, but it can also be traced throughout his entire presidency. Obama's attitude, which reflected his belief was that by adopting a posture of retrenchment and disengagement from the international geopolitical arena and by accepting other countries' interests in a more generous manner without harming U.S. national interests and security concerns that would lead to reciprocal behaviour (Dueck, 2015: 36-37). However, and most significantly there also seemed to be a sheer disbelief in the capabilities of American power in the world—especially military power—and most notably compared to other Democrat predecessor's such as President Bill Clinton and in terms of the ability of the United States to maintain its unrivalled position of dominant power in the world (Mann, 2012: 72). This was also a major change in attitude compared to President George W. Bush's exaggerations.

Nevertheless, as always occurs policy evolves, and presidents learn as they move along their mandates. By 2011 Daniel Drezner argued that there was a policy attitude adjustment in Obama's foreign policy and grand strategy that was composed of two elements and that was less accommodating: 'multilateral retrenchment' and 'counterpunching' (Drezner, 2011). The expression 'multilateral retrenchment' referred to the reduction of U.S. commitments abroad and the attempt to shift part of the burden to allies around the world while 'counterpunching' referred to Obama's willingness to assert American influence in the world at times when the United States was being challenged.

Overall, the main idea that seemed to prevail was a will to disengage from the region and to accommodate occurring events taking place at the time as much as possible or at least to engage as little as possible. This became apparent during the so-called 'Arab

⁴ Remarks by President Obama to the Muslim world, delivered on June 4 2009, at Cairo University. White House. <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/issues/foreign-policy/presidents-speech-cairo-a-new-beginning>.



Spring', which began in Tunisia in 2010. At the time President Obama pretty much sympathized with demonstrators in many of the Arab countries where protests and street manifestations were taking place and accepted what seemed to be their claims for democracy and human rights. One of the most striking signals of this posture was how quick he was in pressuring a long-standing U.S. ally, President Hosni Mubarak from Egypt, to step down from office in February 2011 and seemed to fully accept the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood to power in that country, which reached its highest point with the election of President Mohamed Morsi. This was somewhat surprising for many given the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood had always had, and still has, an anti-western discourse. He also called for an open dialogue with countries such as Iran (Trager, 2011).

On what concerned Iraq as was the case with Afghanistan the central preoccupation was to end those two wars as soon as possible. In much of 2011 the focus of Obama's presidency remained very much to withdraw from Iraq as was also promised forcefully on September 6 2012 during his re-election campaign. However, in the end Obama's strategy towards Iraq swung between U.S. engagement and retrenchment albeit with engagement decreasing in 2011-12. Although President Obama had already declared a formal end to U.S. combat operations in Iraq in August 2010 there were still U.S. forces present in that country for security and stabilization purposes. These were part of a three-year security agreement that had originally been negotiated by President George W. Bush and Iraq's Shi'a Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki in 2008 just before the end of his presidency (Indyk, Lieberthal & O'Hanlon, 2012: 76). In 2011 it was also time to renegotiate the U.S.-Iraqi security agreement—a new Status of Forced Agreement (SOFA)—that would lead to maintaining some U.S. forces in the country and under certain specific circumstances (Mason, 2012). However, that became a problem as Obama was also preparing to run for re-election and that obviously came into collusion with his election promises. Ultimately, only about 10,000 U.S. military were left in Iraq, a number that was considered insufficient for the task at hand and a considerable risk for the security of Iraq and to U.S. security interests (Nasr, 2013: 148-150).

The military intervention in Libya in 2011, albeit not just involving the United States, also failed to take into consideration that those types of operations—particularly with a view to regime change—cannot be undertaken lightly and with the least involvement possible in the hope that locals are able to stabilize the situation in a peaceful and straightforward manner following military intervention (Hehir & Murray, 2013). In fact, after defending intervention in Libya in 2011 the state of confusion and chaos that ensued afterwards was responsible for many of Obama's hesitations concerning Syria, most notably with regards to military action as he later admitted. Overall, the specific case of Syria is also illustrative of Obama's friendly and optimistic approach to foreign policy but also of his sudden policy shifts. At the beginning of his presidency there was the hope of establishing a working relation with President Bashar al-Assad believing that he could be helpful in brokering peace negotiations with Israel, particularly related to the Palestinian problem. However, this did not prove to be very fruitful or propitious (Indyk, Lieberthal & O'Hanlon, 2012: 167-168). Later, the situation swung to an idea of regime change and the need for Assad to step down (Dueck, 2015: 85). Following that in August 2011 Obama announced the famous "red line" that would lead to military intervention if chemical weapons were to be used by the Assad regime against civilians. But that was as far as he went on that matter. The failure to act based on what seemed to be the evidence at



the time was considered by many to have caused severe damage to U.S. credibility in the region and possibly well beyond. In the meantime, Iran—Syria's long-standing ally at the time—continued to maintain if not even increase its presence in the country.

Assessing Trump's Middle East foreign policy

The speech by President Trump at the 73rd United Nations General Assembly on September 25 2018 and at the 8362nd Security Council meeting the following day—as he chaired the Security Council meeting given that the presidency of the Council was being held by the United States of America—placed particular emphasis on Iran. To a large extent it also set the tone of his approach. According to President Trump Iran had been and continued to be a promotor of international terrorism, to engage in illicit actions promoting violence, and in developing its ballistic missile program. There were several other items on President Trump's speeches that were mentioned but Iran clearly took centre stage and was one of the top priorities. In his own words at the United Nations Security Council Briefing on Counterproliferation: "The regime is the world's leading sponsor of terror and fuels conflict across the region (referring to the Middle East) and far beyond. A regime with such a track record must never be allowed to possess a nuclear weapon".⁵ He also stated that these were the reasons why the U.S. decided to withdraw earlier in the year from the JCPOA. Following that the United States decided to impose sanctions on Iran, which went into full effect by early November. Further to that additional sanctions were announced that should be even stronger and more dramatic to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear capabilities and to change its behaviour. This line of reasoning came on top of a series of comments and actions directed against Iran since President Trump took office on January 20 2017 that basically condemned the Iranian regime. Overall, this was in sharp contrast to what was a more conciliatory approach adopted by President Obama.

Indeed, Iran was the main focus of Trump's policy towards the Middle East with the country considered responsible for most of the existing problems in the region and for funding terrorist activities (Nasr, 2018: 108). In this regard by focusing on Iran as a threat President Trump was by no means an exception amongst U.S. Presidents, quite the opposite as noted above. In addition, besides the fact that President Trump's opinions on Iran were well-known several other members if not most of his administration also tended to hold a very hard-line on Iran. Vice-President Mike Pence, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and National Security Advisor John Bolton, among many others were all in favour of a hard line on Iran. Somewhat differently Secretary of Defence James Mattis considered that the U.S. should stay in the JCPOA and often times took a softer stance on Iran compared to other members of the Trump administration but overall was also considered to be a hard-liner on Iran. At the same time there was also a will to strengthen relations with the Arab countries in the region with a view to a future normalisation of relations with Israel.

For some this policy change—among others above mentioned—was considered as a means to make up for a lack of strategy (Zenko & Lissner, 2017). While it is true that

⁵ <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-United-nations-security-council-briefing-counterproliferation-new-york-ny/>.



Trump reversed many of his predecessor's decisions this is not uncommon between presidents of the United States. In fact, nearly most of the presidents during the Cold War repudiated their predecessor's strategy and often considered it inadequate to deal with the challenges at the time (Gaddis, 2005). In that respect much of the difference between those previous occasions with their specific circumstances and this one, which is significant, concerned to a large extent the style adopted.

Significantly, Trump's foreign policy towards the Middle East began to take form shortly after the beginning of his presidency with his first foreign visit, which was to Saudi Arabia in April 2017. This visit was symbolic because it showed the Trump's administration commitment to strengthen relations with Saudi Arabia—with a total of \$350 billion in deals that were signed in Riyadh—but also in terms of military equipment given that \$110 billion were in American-made weapons. The arms component was particularly significant because it indicated that a military reinforcement of Saudi Arabia's military capabilities was a priority to the United States given the perceived threat posed by Iran. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile noting that Saudi Arabia had been fighting the Houthis in Yemen and so increasing its military capabilities was also a priority. Notwithstanding, the overall stability of Saudi Arabia was very important to Saudi Arabia and the U.S. given the existing economic and financial links between them. In fact, it was no less important to the U.S. than to Saudi Arabia. Broadly speaking Trump's foreign policy in the Middle East was consistent with the notion of "calibrated strategies" attempting to balance the necessity of growth and strategy with the environment's reality and the necessary pragmatism concerning implementation. Within that context, Trump's Middle East foreign policy would seem to follow a model of multilateral leadership accompanied by diplomatic negotiations (Dombrowski & Reich, 2017: 1036).

President Trump also tried to generate enthusiasm within six Gulf Arab states (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE) plus Egypt and Jordan for the creation of a security and political alliance to counter Iran's expansion known as Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA). The creation of MESA was somewhat of a further development of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). However, this proved to be a difficult task given that the latter had been in somewhat of a crisis since 2011 notably due to a number of events related to political, religious, economic, and social divergences between many of its members. And the situation if anything seemed to have gotten worse particularly due to tensions related to Qatar. Indeed, "In the summer of 2017, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), widely regarded as one of the most stable regional organizations of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region was hit by the gravest crisis since its formation" (Bianco & Stansfield, 2018: 613).

Despite that President Trump announced in early August 2018 that a meeting about MESA would take place on October 12-13 although the meeting was postponed due to the Middle East disputes involving Qatar. Comments issued by Qatar, notably over Israel, Iran, Hamas, and accusations of links to terrorism were not well received by several Gulf States, particularly Saudi Arabia, and generated tensions with the Trump administration. But other difficulties existed due to different security perceptions by many of the Gulf Arab states. Be that as it may, irrespective of how events unfolded all seemed geared towards the objective of trying to isolate Iran and reorganize the region through the development of military partnerships. This was to be carried out through the increase in



defence capabilities that would prevent threats on the part of Iran and would significantly diminish its capacity to intervene in the region.

The U.S. support to Saudi Arabia in Yemen began in late March 2015 well before Trump becoming the 45th President of the United States. Then, there were some unofficial justifications connecting the U.S. participation to obtaining the Gulf monarchies' leaders support to the Iran deal. This was a time when the U.S. was working towards signing the JCPOA and some sort of acceptance on the part of Saudi Arabia was needed to avoid matters getting off-track. The U.S. support to Saudi Arabia was deemed necessary in order to reconcile Saudi Arabia with the idea of the signing of the JCPOA given that Iran was helping rebels in Yemen in an area that was strategically critical for Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, there was some scaling back towards the end of Obama's mandate.

However, after Trump's election U.S. support to Saudi Arabia increased again consisting of arms sales and various types of technical and logistics support. And this happened with the benefit of a majority vote by the U.S. Senate following a previous attempt to put an end to that support by some U.S. Senators. Despite that there were some warnings against Saudi Arabia by the international community when force was employed against innocent civilians such as the strike at a school bus that killed forty children. All in all, the main justification for the overall support of Saudi Arabia by the U.S. would seem to have been to prevent Iran from gaining further influence in the region while providing assistance and support to a traditional allied state.

On August 16 2018 there was also the announcement of the creation of the Iran Action Group led by Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook with a view to address what the current U.S. administration considered to be the security threat that the Iran regime presented (Pompeo, 2018). The role of the Iran Action Group was essentially to coordinate actions among various U.S. agencies on matters related to Iran and to coordinate policy with the nations that shared the U.S. understanding of the threat that Iran posed. It seems that there was a clear intention to stimulate and coordinate some type of collective thinking on Iran that militated towards its isolation. This strategy was not without risks given that it could push Iran even further towards Russia, India, and China. In fact, that became evident with Iran's participation as an observer state at the 18th meeting of the Council of Heads of States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Qingdao in June 2018 while the annual G7 Summit was also taking place in Canada, more specifically in Charlevoix. Since then, in addition to Iran being a member of the SCO "Today, Russia and China effectively shelter Iran from complete isolation and provide it with political support, defence assistance, and economic ties that it cannot receive elsewhere" (Esfandiary & Tabatabai, 2018: 2). Given those risks the policy adopted provided further support to the idea that the strategy was to weaken Iran as much as possible, and probably to lead to regime change. Finally, in order to try to further stabilise and bring peace to the Middle East President Trump facilitated the Abraham Accords in 2020 with the objective of normalising diplomatic relations between Israel and several Arab states.

For some at a discourse level Iran has played a significant role within U.S. foreign policy over time and often times that has even tended to amplify the security concern given that Iran does not pose a direct danger to the U.S. that matches the level of attention that it attracts (Villar, 2016). However, within the economic circumstances between the



U.S. and Saudi Arabia then it is easy to understand the hype about Iran. Nevertheless, the fact is that under President Biden the situation did not change much with respect to Iran due to the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine and the war in Gaza.

Obama and Trump's policy choices towards Iran: a comparison

The objective of signing the JCPOA was to counter Iran's development of nuclear infrastructures and capabilities that were considered a threat to international security (Joyner, 2016). Previously, at the time of the George W. Bush Administration there had been negotiations, but they were often at a standstill (Guldimann, 2007). At the time the negotiations were frequently instrumentalised and led to misperceptions and misunderstandings that could have led to confrontation (Jervis, 2013; Maleki & Tirman, 2014). However, this was neither the only nor the main reason for the failure of the negotiations then. In fact, well before 2013 Iran attempted to diplomatically solve disputes on several occasions. One such example occurred in March 2003 with Iran offering a comprehensive deal—which later became known as the "Great Bargain"—in order to try to have sanctions removed. However, that proposal was rejected by the U.S. for reasons not yet fully understood (Leverett & Leverett, 2013: 122-124). Also, in 2005 Iran had again tried to have sanctions removed given their negative effects on its economy and for that purpose even approached representatives of the European countries namely France, Germany and the UK, which had joined the U.S. in the negotiation process. But again, this was rejected and according to some European officials it was the responsibility of the U.S. (Axworthy, 2013: 384; Parchami, 2014).

Obama's approach to Iran followed a totally different path from President Bush. Coming through the war in Iraq and the intervention in Libya he was in a position of weakness. As a result, he decided to engage with the EU, Russia and China as a way to stabilize the Middle East and contain Iran's nuclear programme (Parsi, 2012). It was a way of partnering to promote U.S. goals and interests. The approach was also welcome by U.S. partners considering that Obama's diplomatic approach was more likely to yield positive results with Iran differently from Bush's refusal to engage in diplomacy (Parsi, 2017: 10-11). The agreement also fitted Iran's foreign policy goals under President Rouhani (Zarif, 2014: 58). Ultimately, the agreement was signed and began to be implemented in January 2016.

President Obama's idea was to prevent or at least delay to a significant extent Iran's development of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, the end result became unacceptable to many countries in the Middle East, most notably Israel and Saudi Arabia having been weary of the JCPOA from the very beginning and having never accepted the decision to negotiate with Iran (Rezaei, 2016; Kaye, 2016). Others in the U.S. considered the signing of the JCPOA as an example of bad policy given that they considered that the U.S. had made all the concessions at a time when Iran was heavily sanctioned but got all it wanted (Singh, 2016: 24-25).

Trump adopted a different tactical approach, which was more forceful and based strongly on Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Israel. He considered the signing of the JCPOA a threat to the U.S. and the Middle East region as a whole in terms of stability and regional security. At the same time, he abandoned the previous multilateral approach



involving the EU, Russia, and China, and also threatened Russia and China with sanctions given that they were—and still are—strategic rivals of the U.S. (NSS 2017; NDS 2018). Both countries were considered to be empowered under the whole negotiation process. Trump worried that the JCPOA would not prevent Iran from acquiring the nuclear bomb, which ultimately would force war between the U.S. and Iran, but he also worried about the reaction of Iran's neighbouring countries, in particular, Israel and Saudi Arabia (Simon, 2023: 360-2). The latter had showed some interest in acquiring nuclear power for economic purposes although not for military ones. That situation could change with the existence of the JCPOA.

Seen in a broader perspective, hostility towards Iran also seems to be what provided the cement that supported the relations between all the Gulf States and a country like Israel that was not known to be one of their main allies or partners, particularly given the Palestinian conflict. It is within that context that it can be understood that the JCPOA was also considered by the Trump administration to be a terrible deal, in fact, "the worst deal ever" (Nasr, 2018: 108). This was particularly the case with regards to the 'Sunset Clause'. This also explains why President Trump promised to dismantle it and made it his top priority (Allin & Simon, 2017: 42).

It itself this marked a considerable shift from Obama's policy in the region that is considered as a strategic adjustment to a change in structural conditions and that is consistent with NCR. From an international relations theory perspective, the signing of the JCPOA caused a change in the external environment, which was considered a threat that led to a policy response. Within this context it is worthwhile recalling some of the other main differences between Obama's foreign policy in the Middle East and Trump's that also provide support to this idea: 1) Obama pressured Israel on the Palestinian conflict favouring a 'two-state solution' and causing significant anxiety and nervousness among some Israelis. Nevertheless, he also generated some disappointment among Palestinians given that, ultimately, his policy was heavily skewed towards Israel (Ruebner, 2016). Differently, Trump appointed David Friedman as Ambassador to Israel, someone who held very conservative positions on Israel and had always been opposed to the 'two-state solution'; 2) Obama was considered unfriendly towards Israel whereas Trump had been extremely friendly and supportive of Israel as corroborated by his relationship with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; 3) Trump officially recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the U.S. Embassy in Israel moved there from Tel Aviv. The relocation to Jerusalem occurred on May 14 2018 to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the Israeli Declaration of Independence. Obama delayed its implementation on the basis of national security interests as had been the case with several other previous U.S. presidents; 4) Obama was open to signing an agreement with Iran while Trump rejected it and even told Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel that Iran would never be allowed to have nuclear weapons. All these contrasting policy decisions are above all a tactical shift that may belie a strategic shift in U.S. thinking.



Conclusion

This article has several purposes as was outlined at the outset. President Trump's foreign policy towards the Middle East was not simply a mere reversal of President Obama's policies as a way to make up for a lack of strategy. In fact, his policy reversal was a response to a perceived threat generated by his predecessor, which is consistent with neoclassical realism from an international relations theory perspective. Following his policy decisions Trump had a well-established policy that intended to isolate Iran within the region in order to preserve America's interest and establish security in the region. Obama adopted a more conciliatory policy towards Iran engaging the EU, China and Russia. His main objective was to withdraw as quickly as possible from the region, sign the JCPOA and allow for events to unfold, and for the region to somehow stabilize considering that U.S. interests would be met.

Trump adopted a different tactical approach more forceful and based strongly on Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Israel. He intended to lead those allied states in the Middle East in isolating and weakening Iran in order to safeguard U.S. interests and somewhat control events in the region. Following the choice of a number of very hard-liners on Iran belonging to his administration Trump was quick to strengthen U.S. relations with Saudi Arabia and to display full support towards Israel. That included recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and moving the U.S. Embassy there while making negative comments and remarks about the Iran's regime. In addition, a number of policy actions such as the creation of the Iran Action and the tentative set-up of MESA all point in the same direction, which is to reinforce an alliance to rebalance against Iran and reorganize the region. The support of Saudi Arabia in Yemen is just an addition to the remaining policy actions. Other decisions and actions in relation to other policy areas also provide support to the idea of an existing foreign policy strategy (Kroenig, 2017).

For some Trump's foreign policy marked a distinct breakup from the postwar western internationalist consensus (Stokes, 2018). After the dissolution of the Soviet Union following the end of the Cold War we witnessed the emergence of a unipolar international order with the U.S. surging as an unrivalled state in terms of preponderance and capabilities (Ikenberry, 2003). With the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and the Iraq War in 2003 the U.S. was called by some an empire (Cox, 2004; Rosen, 2003). And on several occasions, particularly with the Bush doctrine, we saw unilateralism taking over.

However, there are distinct features associated with Trump's unilateralist policy, a new twist as it were, compared to other U.S. presidents with unilateralist tendencies. Many of Trump's policy decisions such as the withdrawal of the U.S. from the TPP, the rebuttal of the Paris Agreement and most significantly the decision to refute the JCPOA marked a unilateralism that seemed concerned with U.S. interests alone independently of any other impact and consequence on other states, even allies and partners. It has always been about U.S. interests, but not necessarily with a total disregard for other states' interests. It goes well beyond the decision-making process.

But beyond mere consequentialist concerns there was also a cost-benefit approach that seemed new in U.S. foreign policy and to be a radical departure from the more general internationalist approach that had informed U.S. foreign policy until Trump's election. Differently from others Trump's foreign policy did not wish to deepen a rules-based order,



but instead to pursue a self-centred and highly nationalist foreign policy. However, ultimately it is probably more of a different tactic rather than a different strategy.

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A SCIENCE DIPLOMACY SCALE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: A VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY STUDY IN TÜRKIYE

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Abstract

It is stated in the literature that scientific studies carried out by higher education institutions, which are among the leading institutions that produce knowledge and science, are effective in the development of science diplomacy practices. However, no research has been found in Türkiye on the level of this effect. In this context, there was gap in the literature develop a scale of science diplomacy in higher education in order to determine the extent to which scientific studies carried out by higher education institutions affect science diplomacy practices. The aim of the study was to develop a scale that can reveal the impact of scientific studies conducted by higher education institutions on science diplomacy practices according to the opinions of deans and vice deans. A total of 183 individuals participated in the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) study and 246 individuals participated in the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) study using the simple random sampling method to create the study group for the research. EFA, CFA, and Cronbach alpha values were examined for validity and reliability analyses of the Science Diplomacy Scale in Higher Education. Four items were redundant items in the factor analysis, and they were removed from the scale based on expert opinion. The CFA results show that the goodness-of-fit indices of the model fall within the reference ranges stated in the literature and that the model fits well with the research data. The findings obtained, the scale is a valid and reliable measurement tool. As a result of the research, a four-dimensional and 25-item Science Diplomacy Scale in Higher Education was developed with 5-point Likert rating.

Keywords

Science Diplomacy, Scale Development, Higher Education, Dean, Türkiye.

Resumo

A literatura refere que os estudos científicos realizados por instituições de ensino superior, que se encontram entre as principais instituições produtoras de conhecimento e ciência, são eficazes no desenvolvimento de práticas de diplomacia científica. No entanto, não foi



encontrada nenhuma investigação na Turquia sobre o nível deste impacto. Neste contexto, havia uma lacuna na literatura no que diz respeito ao desenvolvimento de uma escala de diplomacia científica no ensino superior, a fim de determinar em que medida os estudos científicos realizados pelas instituições de ensino superior afetam as práticas de diplomacia científica. O objetivo do estudo foi desenvolver uma escala capaz de revelar o impacto dos estudos científicos realizados pelas instituições de ensino superior nas práticas de diplomacia científica, de acordo com as opiniões dos reitores e vice-reitores. Um total de 183 indivíduos participaram no estudo de análise fatorial exploratória (AFE) e 246 indivíduos participaram no estudo de análise fatorial confirmatória (AFC), utilizando o método de amostragem aleatória simples para criar o grupo de estudo para a investigação. Os valores da AFE, da AFC e do alfa de Cronbach foram examinados para efeitos de análise da validade e da fiabilidade da Escala de Diplomacia Científica no Ensino Superior. Quatro itens foram redundantes na análise fatorial e retirados da escala com base na opinião de peritos. Os resultados da AFC mostram que os índices de adequação do modelo estão dentro dos intervalos de referência indicados na literatura e que o modelo se ajusta bem aos dados da investigação. De acordo com as conclusões obtidas, a escala é um instrumento de medição válido e fiável. Como resultado da investigação, foi desenvolvida uma Escala de Diplomacia Científica no Ensino Superior, de quatro dimensões e 25 itens, com classificação de Likert de 5 pontos.

Palavras-chave

Diplomacia Científica, Desenvolvimento de Escala, Ensino Superior, Reitor, Turquia.

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A SCIENCE DIPLOMACY SCALE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: A VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY STUDY IN TÜRKİYE

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Introduction

Diplomacy, a concept as ancient as the history of civilization, has numerous definitions in the literature. Diplomacy is an attempt to find solutions through mutual negotiation to issues that exist or may arise between states. In other words, diplomacy is the process of relations conducted by state actors, taking into account the goals they set for themselves and the capabilities they possess, as well as the goals and capabilities of other states (Kerr & Wiseman, 2013, p. 164; Knight, 2022, p. 9).

Power is the combination of military, economic, political, and social resources possessed by states. The elements of national power consist of factors such as geographical location, natural resources, industrial capacity, economic development, military superiority, and population. The instruments states use in their relations with other states, such as coercion, deterrence, and creating pressure, are described as hard power; while instruments such as influence, attraction, and encouragement are described as soft power. Soft power allows desired outcomes to be achieved not through material incentives and payments, but through a state's culture, norms, values, and attractive international policies (Açıkalın & Sarı, 2021, p. 1693; Galluccio, 2021, p. 35; Wilson III, 2008, p. 111).

Nye noted that states can use soft power as a tool to garner public support. The concepts of soft power and public diplomacy are complementary elements in obtaining public support. Public diplomacy is a diplomatic method that translates soft power resources and practices into policy. In other words, public diplomacy is the process by which states and non-state actors establish positive relations with other societies. Public diplomacy facilitates the recognition of values, traditions, social structures, and beliefs, and supports the identification of common interests with other societies (Cull, 2009, p. 15; Hayden, 2011, p. 27; Nye, 1990, p. 15; Pavon Guinea & Codina, 2023, p. 8).



Among the new types of public diplomacy seen in the present era, science diplomacy is used to achieve international development through scientific collaborations. Although science diplomacy is among the new types of diplomacy in this era, it is not a new phenomenon when viewed historically. Great powers have invited renowned scientists of the time to their countries to increase scientific research and gain respect for their countries. However, innovations in diplomacy and science have elevated the concept of science diplomacy to a more significant position in the 21st century (Moedas, 2016, p. 2; Turekian et al., 2015, p. 4; Pinto, 2022, p. 100).

Science Diplomacy

Science diplomacy is defined as the realization of foreign policy goals through science, facilitating and enhancing international scientific cooperation. Science diplomacy serves the function of building scientific bridges between states and societies. The instruments of science diplomacy can be listed as:

- Inter-governmental scientific cooperation initiatives,
- Establishing partnerships for scientific endeavors that exceed individual country budgets and require large investments,
- Collaboration between governments, civil society organizations, and scientists on global issues such as health, environment, climate, security, mass migrations, and education,
- Dissemination of scientific research and publications,
- Deployment of scientists abroad,
- Scholarship opportunities for international students or researchers (Galluccio, 2021, p. 26; Flink & Rüffin, 2019, p. 106; Kıran & Açıkalın, 2021, p. 978; Ruffini, 2017, p. 13; Turekian, 2018, p. 5; The Royal Society, 2010, p. 15).

Although science diplomacy is mostly considered as positive way of dialogue between actors, there are also some criticisms may arise from the intersection of politics and science. In this context, difficulties of implementing science diplomacy are mainly discussed in the literature, highlighting several criticisms, including:

- Increasing competition and pressure between countries in the field of science and technology,
- The perception of science as a tool for political action on the international stage,
- The possibility that political pressure might overshadow scientific autonomy,
- The potential for scientific research, knowledge production, and sharing to be hindered or lose inclusivity in conflict-ridden environments,
- Scientists becoming dependent on project-based funding initiatives that serve foreign policy objectives (Flink & Rüffin, 2019, pp. 16-17; Weis, 2005, p. 310).



Unless this harmony is achieved, science diplomacy will face the risk of becoming dysfunctional. Therefore, in order to have effective and positive science diplomacy practices to be carried out through objective, transparent, critical, functional and inclusive strategies should be developed between policy makers and the scientific community (Flink, 2022, p. 197; Ruffini, 2020, p. 7).

Higher Education

Higher education institutions play a significant role in the development of international networks within individual, knowledge, and communication flows, in the establishment of new partnerships with the industry, especially in the cultural and scientific fields, and in completing the diplomatic networks of states. Higher education institutions contribute to the establishment of mutually beneficial relationships between close and distant geographical regions through international projects in collaboration with NGOs, accelerating global change with developments in communication and technology. Higher education institutions also activate public diplomacy in solving global issues and economic development (Erçetin, 2001, p. 77; Kitamura, 2015, p. 27; Moghimi et al, 2016, p. 200; Moshtari & Safarpour, 2024, p. 90; Vinet, 2010, p. 6773).

When examining the literature, the internationalization process of higher education institutions has been addressed within the framework of cultural diplomacy, which is considered a tool of public diplomacy. Student and staff mobility, language learning, internship programs, and efforts to attract foreign students to the country were examined from a cultural perspective. Additionally, many activities such as creating brand awareness in higher education, implementing success rankings and competitiveness practices, collaborations with NGOs, local governments, and industries, public relations efforts, and active use of media and digital channels were evaluated from the perspective of cultural diplomacy (Gienow-Hecht & Donfried, 2010, p. 5; Fernández, 2021, p. 32). However, research projects based on international cooperation between higher education institutions, science and technology centers, international education centers, binational universities, and multinational expert networks have given diplomacy a scientific dimension beyond cultural studies, ensuring the production, dissemination, and utilization of knowledge. With the changing internationalization process dependent on knowledge, innovation, economy, and technology development, the concept of science diplomacy has gained importance in higher education. Especially in the 21st century, international collaborative scientific studies by higher education institutions play an important role in addressing global issues such as increasing global-scale migrations, epidemic diseases, security, economic deprivation, environmental and climate change, and natural disasters, and in generating global solutions (Adam, 2024, p. 510; Knight, 2014, p. 2; Sutton & Lyons, 2013, p. 6; Zakerian et al., 2017, p. 187).

Science Diplomacy Practices in Higher Education

The question about mission of higher education institutions is not easy task (Hashim, 2022). Although there various and newly discussed definitions it can be said that higher education aim to educate and prepare the individuals of the future for their professions, as well as to generate new scientific knowledge and present this knowledge for the benefit



of societies (White, 1997; Barnett, 1998; Erçetin, 2001). From this standpoint, higher education institutions can play an active role in increasing and developing science diplomacy practices. Higher education institutions contribute to complementing the diplomatic network of states, especially in the cultural and scientific fields, by developing international networks within individual, knowledge, and communication flows, and establishing new partnerships with industry (Kaliguna, 2020). They can also contribute to create mutually beneficial relationships between close and distant geographical areas through international projects in collaboration with NGOs, accelerating global change with developments in communication and technology. Higher education institutions activate science diplomacy in solving global issues and promoting economic development. Therefore, in an international politics that transcends national borders and sometimes leads to the formation of destructive regional blocs, significantly reshaping the world and bringing about both competition and collaboration, the presence of higher education institutions is profoundly felt (Moghimi et al., 2016, p. 201; Sandström & Hudson, 2018; Vinet, 2010, p. 6773).

Science diplomacy practices conducted in higher education institutions can be listed as:

- International scientific publications, research, and reports by faculty members, especially in the context of solving global-scale issues,
- Participation of faculty members as experts in making and implementing foreign policy targets,
- Internationally collaborative symposia, workshops, and seminars organized in higher education,
- The assignment of faculty members abroad for research and teaching,
- Programs and scientific projects aimed at attracting qualified students from foreign countries,
- Scholarship opportunities for international students,
- International scientific collaboration projects conducted in partnership with various industrial sectors,
- Contributing to international mission, promotion, and branding efforts (Asadi et al., 2021, p. 41; Borchelt, 2008, p. 150; Knight, 2012, pp. 21-22; Kitamura, 2015, p. 29; Moghimi et al., 2016, p. 202; Olgun & Erçetin, 2024, p. 1124; Sutton & Lyons, 2013, p. 8; Tian & Liu, 2021, p. 199; Zakerian et al., 2017, p. 189).

Along with the discussion role of higher education institutions in science diplomacy, there is limited literature on how it can be measured and it can be said that there is gap for instruments and case studies related for it. In this context, the aim of the study is to develop a scale that can reveal the impact of scientific studies conducted by higher education institutions on science diplomacy practices according to the opinions of deans and vice deans in Türkiye.



Research Methodology

This section outlines the stages of development process for the Science Diplomacy Scale (SDS) in Higher Education.

Study Group

The population of the study consisted of 531 deans and vice deans serving at universities in Ankara during the academic year 2023-2024. There are various opinions in the literature regarding the sample size for the scale development process. Hatcher (1994) suggested that the sample size should be at least 5 times the number of items in the scale or over 150 (Hatcher, 1994, p. 9). With the simple random sampling method, each participant has an equal chance of being selected (Potas & Ok Akçıl, 2020, p. 145). In the study conducted based on the principle of voluntarism using the simple random sampling method, 183 individuals participated in the exploratory factor analysis, and 246 individuals participated in the confirmatory factor analysis, comprising the study group for the research.

Data Analysis

An extensive literature review was conducted during the process of developing the Science Diplomacy Scale (SDS) in Higher Education. Articles, theses, domestic and foreign books, and research reports in indexes such as Google Scholar, Tr Index, Scopus, and Web of Science were examined. Keywords such as science diplomacy, public diplomacy, and soft power were used for electronic sources. A pool of 33 items was created, believed to reflect the level of impact of scientific studies conducted by higher education institutions on science diplomacy. Five experts were consulted during preparation of the scale. Each item was reviewed as "appropriate," "inappropriate," or "modifiable." After expert review, items with consensus or divergence of opinion were identified individually. Four items in the pool were revised and adjusted based on expert opinions, resulting in a reduction to 29 items. Following the expert evaluations, a scale was prepared using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "very highly effective (5), highly effective (4), moderately effective (3), slightly effective (2), and ineffective (1)" options, in line with the purpose of the research.

Research Ethics

In order to collect data for the study, approval was obtained from Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University Ethics Committee on 27/12/2023 with meeting decision number 2023/369.

Findings

This section includes the validity and reliability analyses of the SDS. Factor analysis was conducted to determine the structural validity of the SDS. Factor analysis is one of the methods used to obtain evidence for construct validity in scale development or adaptation studies. Rather than providing a single coefficient of validity for the measurement purpose, factor analysis is applied to reveal the factor structure or confirm a previously hypothesized factor structure (Hair et al., 1998). Both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) can be used for factor analysis. EFA allows us to see the possible theoretical structure of the variables, while CFA provides experimental



evidence to support the theoretical structure. In this study, principal component analysis (varimax rotation) was used for exploratory factor analysis to test the structural validity of the scale. SPSS 22.00 and AMOS 27.00 software programs were used for the validity and reliability analyses in both EFA and CFA.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to test the structural validity of the Science Diplomacy Scale in Higher Education. In this analysis, items that do not measure the same construct were removed, and the common factor variance, factor eigenvalues, explained total variance ratio, and item factor loadings were examined. In this context, attention was paid to common variance of items $>.10$, factor loading value of 1, explained total variance ratio of $>50\%$, and item factor loadings $>.40$, as well as a difference of $.10$ between items loaded on multiple factors.

In order to test the suitability of the data for factor analysis, it is necessary to examine the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett test analysis values. The KMO value is expected to be $>.50$, and the Bartlett value should be significant (Field, 2000, p. 424).

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett Test Analysis

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.930
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	4419.392
	df	406
	Sig.	.000

In the study, according to Table 1, the KMO value of the scale was greater than $.50$ ($KMO=.930$), and the Bartlett test result was significant ($X^2=4419.392$; $p=.000$). After examining these values, the data were found to be suitable for factor analysis.

In Table 2, the communalities table is based on principal component analysis. After reviewing this table, the values for the items ranged between $.47$ and $.83$. Since the item factor loadings of the scale are greater than $.40$, no item was removed at this point, and factor analysis continued.

In Table 3, five factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1, explaining a total variance of 69.5% . Varimax rotation was applied to the component matrix to test the scale's five-factor structure, and the results are presented in Table 4.

When there is a difference of less than $.10$ between the factor loading values of an item across multiple factors, a collinearity issue arises. Since each item should measure only one attribute in exploratory factor analysis, collinear items need to be removed from the scale to ensure its construct validity. In this context, items 27, 23, and 19 in Table 4 were collinear. These collinear items were sequentially removed during the analysis. Initially, item 27 was removed, and the analysis was repeated. Upon removing item 27 from the scale, items 10, 21, and 23 were collinear. Consequently, item 23 was first removed, followed by item 21, and finally item 10, to refine the scale. With expert consultation, a total of four items were removed from the scale. As a result, the analysis was repeated for the scale consisting of 25 items after removing the four items.



The KMO value of the scale was greater than .50 (KMO=.923), and the Bartlett test result was significant ($\chi^2=3524.656$; $p=.000$).

After examining Table 5, which shows the total explained variance after the removal of collinear items, there were four factors with eigenvalues exceeding 1. These four factors explain a total variance of 66.5%. According to the analysis, the scale has a four-dimensional structure. In the first factor, there are a total of 10 items explaining 51% of the variance; in the second factor, there are 5 items explaining 6.8% of the variance; in the third factor, there are 5 items explaining 4.7% of the variance; and in the fourth factor, there are 5 items explaining 4.4% of the variance. In the process of scale development, it is necessary for the explained variance of the scale to exceed 2/3 of the total variance; in other words, to be greater than 66%. The data obtained from the factor analysis meet this criterion.

Table 2. Communalities of the Science Diplomacy Scale (SDS) in Higher Education (YBDO)

Items	Initial	Extraction
s1	1.000	.575
s2	1.000	.667
s3	1.000	.752
s4	1.000	.665
s5	1.000	.796
s6	1.000	.724
s7	1.000	.515
s8	1.000	.734
s9	1.000	.619
s10	1.000	.633
s11	1.000	.501
s12	1.000	.779
s13	1.000	.816
s14	1.000	.825
s15	1.000	.692
s16	1.000	.754
s17	1.000	.672
s18	1.000	.610
s19	1.000	.750
s20	1.000	.628
s21	1.000	.479
s22	1.000	.769
s23	1.000	.833
s24	1.000	.810
s25	1.000	.694
s26	1.000	.646
s27	1.000	.807
s28	1.000	.761
s29	1.000	.675

**Table 3.** Explained Total Variance of the Science Diplomacy Scale (SDS) in Higher Education (YBDO)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	15.032	51.834	51.834	15.032	51.834	51.834	4.995	17.223	17.223
2	1.731	5.969	57.803	1.731	5.969	57.803	4.608	15.890	33.113
3	1.189	4.099	61.901	1.189	4.099	61.901	4.341	14.970	48.083
4	1.135	3.915	65.816	1.135	3.915	65.816	3.580	12.344	60.426
5	1.094	3.771	69.587	1.094	3.771	69.587	2.657	9.161	69.587
6	.924	3.187	72.774						
7	.865	2.982	75.756						
8	.727	2.507	78.264						
9	.688	2.373	80.636						
10	.586	2.021	82.658						
11	.535	1.846	84.504						
12	.480	1.656	86.160						
13	.428	1.476	87.636						
14	.413	1.423	89.058						
15	.384	1.325	90.383						
16	.356	1.229	91.612						
17	.329	1.135	92.747						
18	.294	1.014	93.761						
19	.271	.934	94.695						
20	.233	.804	95.499						
21	.203	.700	96.199						
22	.201	.692	96.892						
23	.179	.616	97.508						
24	.168	.579	98.087						
25	.142	.489	98.576						
26	.122	.421	98.998						
27	.114	.394	99.392						
28	.092	.319	99.710						
29	.084	.290	100.000						

Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix Resulting from Factor Analyses

Item No	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
s5	.767	.338	.111		.282
s12	.755	.135		.214	.370
s13	.632		.614	.175	
s22	.628	.403	.230	.360	.171
s8	.583	.461	.311		.286
s10	.545	.385	.347	.161	.204
s28	.263	.776	.201		.208
s24	.342	.676	.374	.300	
s1	.299	.577	.125	.352	.116
s29	.503	.558	.108	.226	.219
s27		.547	.545	.172	.421
s19	.459	.521	.412	.207	.235
s20	.209	.505	.331	.431	.181
s23	.472	.502	.469	.328	.176
s15	.252	.147	.706	.254	.208
s16	.127	.316	.687	.307	.268
s14	.546	.213	.664	.164	.119
s2		.355	.606	.399	.123
s17	.452	.394	.519	.204	
s18	.125	.170	.220	.669	.263

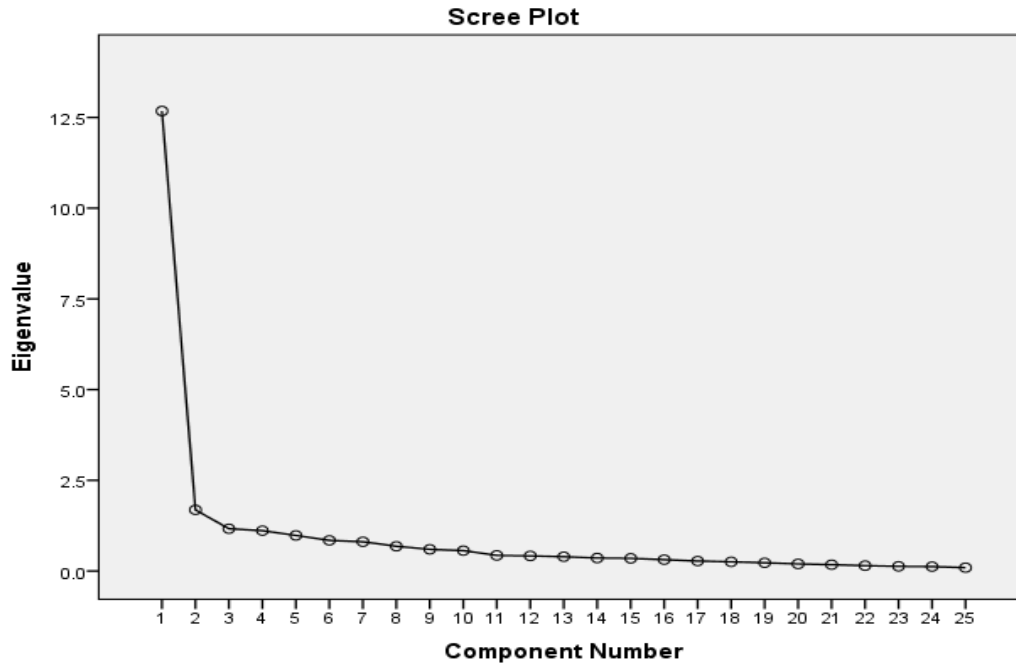


s7		.160	.141	.664	.170
s9	.368	.158	.251	.623	
s25	.428	.377		.599	
s4		-.153	.415	.567	.377
s21	.360	.205	.228	.430	.265
s3	.290	.114	.210	.209	.753
s6	.342	.305	.329	.175	.613
s11	.180	.335		.318	.505
s26	.339	.457	.323		.465

Table 5. Total Explained Variance after Removal of Collinear Items

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Cumulative		Total	% of Cumulative		Total	% of Cumulative	
		Variance	%		Variance	%		Variance	%
1	12.677	50.708	50.708	12.677	50.708	50.708	5.595	22.380	22.380
2	1.686	6.744	57.452	1.686	6.744	57.452	4.281	17.122	39.502
3	1.166	4.665	62.117	1.166	4.665	62.117	3.383	13.533	53.035
4	1.112	4.448	66.565	1.112	4.448	66.565	3.383	13.530	66.565
5	.980	3.921	70.486						
6	.846	3.382	73.869						
7	.807	3.228	77.097						
8	.683	2.731	79.828						
9	.598	2.391	82.219						
10	.563	2.251	84.470						
11	.430	1.721	86.191						
12	.416	1.665	87.856						
13	.395	1.582	89.437						
14	.359	1.434	90.871						
15	.350	1.400	92.271						
16	.314	1.254	93.525						
17	.276	1.105	94.631						
18	.254	1.014	95.645						
19	.227	.908	96.553						
20	.195	.782	97.335						
21	.174	.697	98.032						
22	.148	.594	98.626						
23	.129	.518	99.144						
24	.121	.484	99.628						
25	.093	.372	100.000						

The results of the scree plot showing four factors with eigenvalues above 1 are presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Scree Plot After Removal of Cross-Loadings**Table 6.** Rotated Component Matrix Resulting from Factor Analysis after Removal of Cross-Loadings

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
s28	.743	.208	.223	.122
s24	.714	.395	.144	.312
s29	.709	.199	.352	.158
s22	.634	.355	.362	.247
s1	.632	.171	.184	.318
s25	.625	.175	.109	.455
s5	.602	.307	.532	
s8	.590	.426	.451	
s19	.589	.468	.350	.223
s20	.527	.322	.166	.448
s14	.372	.771	.267	.144
s13	.337	.762	.232	.101
s15	.165	.707	.230	.342
s16	.244	.630	.225	.447
s17	.501	.596	.165	.183
s3	.112	.199	.784	.301
s6	.293	.324	.677	.280
s12	.447	.267	.615	
s26	.445	.331	.518	.128
s11	.334		.490	.347
s18	.235	.152	.226	.704
s7	.171		.128	.699



s4	-.101	.354	.300	.625
s2	.252	.520		.526
s9	.383	.289		.521

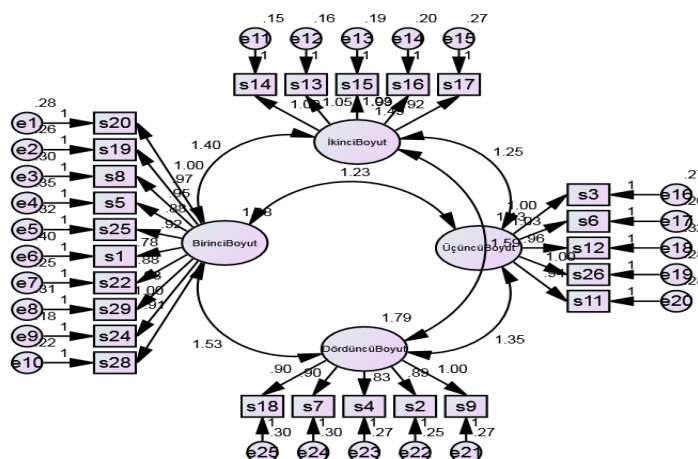
The four underlying factors resulting from exploratory factor analysis were named as dimensions based on the content of the items constituting the factors and their factor loading values. In this context, the first dimension was named "collaboration and scientific work" (10 items), the second dimension was "partnership and societal contribution" (5 items), the third dimension was "education and teaching" (5 items), and the fourth dimension was "institutional internationalization" (5 items).

To confirm whether the factor structure emerging from the exploratory factor analysis of the Science Diplomacy Scale in Higher Education will be validated, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory factor analysis was used to determine the construct validity of the scale. The most commonly used goodness-of-fit indices in CFA, which are also used as references in this study, are listed as follows: chi-square test statistic (χ^2), degrees of freedom (df), chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df), normed fit index (NFI), and comparative fit index (CFI). A sample of 246 participants was used for confirmatory factor analysis of the scale. In this study, the goodness-of-fit indices for the four-dimensional scale structure were calculated. The absolute fit indices of the scale included CMIN/DF=3.38; RMSEA=0.099; incremental fit indices included NFI=0.911; and parsimony fit indices included CFI=0.935; RFI=90; IFI=0.935; and TLI=0.928. The model obtained from the confirmatory factor analysis shows that the goodness-of-fit indicators fall within the reference ranges stated in the literature, indicating a good fit with the research data. The standardized path diagram obtained from CFA is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Path Diagram for the Science Diplomacy Scale in Higher Education (YBDO)





Reliability Analysis

In order to determine whether the scale is a reliable measure, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was calculated. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Cronbach's Alpha Values for the Scale and Dimensions

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient
Collaboration and Scientific Work	.97
Partnership and Social Contribution	.97
Education and Teaching	.95
Institutional Internationalization	.96
Total	.99

According to Table 7, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the Science Diplomacy Scale in Higher Education were calculated as follows: 0.97 for collaboration and scientific work dimension, 0.97 for partnership and social contribution dimension, 0.95 for education and teaching dimension, 0.96 for institutional internationalization dimension, and 0.99 for the total scale. This result indicates that the data obtained from the scale are reliable.

Conclusion

Higher education is one of the key actors that contribute to diplomatic relations with state, non-state actors, and civil society organizations by producing knowledge and science. Many international activities such as research, projects, scientific publications developed to solve global problems around the world, cooperation with the sector and NGOs, provision of scientific data for foreign policy targets, scientific studies of students and faculty members within the scope of international exchange programs, financial and technological support provided for conducting research in developing countries are carried out more efficient in higher education institutions.

In this context, it is believed that the scientific studies conducted by higher education, which are among the leading centers of science production, have an impact on the practices of science diplomacy. However, current literature has gap addressing measure tool on role of higher education institutions . In this respect, scale of science diplomacy in higher education in order to determine the level to which scientific studies conducted by higher education institutions affect science diplomacy practices.

The aim of the study was to develop a scale that can reveal the impact of scientific research conducted by higher education institutions on science diplomacy practices, based on the opinions of deans and vice deans. The study is limited to the views of deans and vice deans serving at universities in Ankara. The evaluations made within the scope of the research are limited to the time period in which the scale was implemented, the data obtained from the scale form, and the results of the data.

The validity and reliability analyses for the Science Diplomacy Scale in Higher Education were examined. The KMO value of the scale was greater than .50, and the Bartlett test result was significant. As a result of EFA, the scale has a four-factor structure with eigenvalues greater than 1, explaining 66.5% of the total variance. According to EFA



data, four items in the scale were overlapping items, and these overlapping items were sequentially removed during the analysis. Four items were removed from the scale based on expert opinions, and the analyses were repeated for the 25-item scale. The CFA results show that the goodness-of-fit indices of the model fall within the reference ranges stated in the literature and that the model fits well with the research data. In the study, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was calculated to determine whether the scale is reliable, and the scale had a high level of reliability.

In conclusion, the scale consists of four dimensions and 25 items. In this context, there are 10 items in the dimension of cooperation and scientific research, 5 items in the dimension of partnership and societal contribution, 5 items in the dimension of education and teaching, and 5 items in the dimension of institutional internationalization. The items in the scale are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from ineffective (1), low level of effectiveness (2), moderate level of effectiveness (3), high level of effectiveness (4), to very high level of effectiveness (5). The highest possible score that can be obtained from the scale is 125, and the lowest score is 25.

Consequently, Developed scale will contribute to the literature and to the determination of the current situation in higher education institutions within the framework of science diplomacy practices. The study was limited to the opinions of deans and assistant deans working in Türkiye. To contribute to the validity and reliability of the scale, it can be applied to groups with different sizes and characteristics such as rectors vice rectors, and institute directors, and academic staff such as faculty members and research assistants. In addition, through the mentioned scale, science diplomacy practices of higher education institutions in Türkiye and foreign countries can be analyzed comparatively.

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**Attachment: Science Diplomacy Scale in Higher Education (SDS)**

Item No.	Cooperation and Scientific Work
S28	Presentation of scientific information and suggestions by faculty members at your faculty for the resolution of international issues
S24	International promotional activities of your faculty
S29	Adaptation ability of faculty members at your faculty to the European Higher Education Area
S22	International mission of your faculty
S1	Scientific studies such as international symposiums, workshops, seminars organized at your faculty
S25	International diploma equivalence provided by your faculty
S5	International publications authored by faculty members at your faculty
S8	International scientific projects conducted by faculty members at your faculty
S19	Scientific collaboration studies conducted between your faculty and international higher education institutions
S20	Scientific collaboration studies conducted between your faculty and international non-governmental organizations
Item No	Partnership and Societal Contribution
S14	Participation status of your faculty in international R&D funds
S13	Budget used by your faculty in international scientific studies
S15	Participation status of students at your faculty in techno-parks or socio-parks projects
S16	International scientific collaboration projects conducted by your faculty with the business world (sector)
S17	International alumni network (communication network) of your faculty
Item No	Education and Teaching
S3	Student exchange programs implemented at your faculty
S6	Faculty exchange programs implemented at your faculty
S12	Use of foreign language by faculty members at your faculty in producing scientific knowledge
S26	Assignment of faculty members at your faculty as consultants in various institutions as part of scientific studies
S11	Visibility of faculty members at your faculty in the media
Item No	Institutional Internationalization (5 item)
S18	Programs conducted in foreign languages at your faculty
S7	Foreign national faculty members working at your faculty
S4	Scholarship opportunities provided to international foreign national students at your faculty
S2	Activities such as international competitions, Olympiads, festivals organized at your faculty
S9	Internationally accredited programs at your faculty

ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS RESEARCH IN INDONESIA USING THE SCOPUS DATABASE

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Abstract

This article examines the progress of trends and orientations in international relations research in Indonesia using the Scopus database and a bibliometric methodology. This research is significant in that it supplements previous studies that aim to chart international relations research in Indonesia by examining the curriculum and expertise of each lecturer across various campuses. However, there has not been a comprehensive study that maps international relations research in Indonesia using Scopus data. Several points are analyzed, specifically: The information provided includes three main categories: (1) Annual outputs and Subject Areas, (2) Most Contributing authors, institutions, and nations, and (3) Influential Works. The author uses the Scopus database to gather publications on studies on international relations research in Indonesia. The data gathering was subsequently visualized using VOSviewer. The study reveals that between 2014 and 2023, there are a total of 390 documents in the Scopus database that specifically address research on international relations research in Indonesia. I. Gede Wahyu Wicaksana has the most documents, totaling 8. This study aims to examine and present data on international relations research conducted in Indonesia, enabling scholars to identify innovative aspects of international relations research. The field of international relations research in Indonesia is categorized into eight distinct clusters, each with a prominent theme or research focus. These clusters encompass international trade, China, international relations, Indonesia, the Cold War, ASEAN, Covid-19, and Japan. Overall, this article contributes to mapping new research potentials in international relations research in Indonesia that have not been explored in more depth by international relations scholars in Indonesia.



Keywords

Bibliometrics, International Relations, Indonesia, Scopus, VOSviewer.

Resumo

Este artigo analisa a evolução das tendências e orientações da investigação em relações internacionais na Indonésia, utilizando a base de dados Scopus e uma metodologia bibliométrica. Esta investigação é significativa na medida em que complementa estudos anteriores que visam mapear a investigação em relações internacionais na Indonésia, examinando o currículo e as competências de cada docente em vários campos. No entanto, ainda não existe um estudo exaustivo que mapeie a investigação em relações internacionais na Indonésia utilizando dados da Scopus. São analisados vários tópicos. A informação fornecida inclui três categorias principais: (1) produções anuais e áreas temáticas, (2) autores, instituições e nações que mais contribuem e (3) trabalhos com impacto. Os autores utilizam a base de dados Scopus para reunir publicações sobre estudos de investigação em relações internacionais na Indonésia. A recolha de dados foi posteriormente visualizada com recurso ao VOSviewer. O estudo revela que, entre 2014 e 2023, há um total de 390 documentos na base de dados Scopus que abordam especificamente a investigação sobre relações internacionais na Indonésia. I. Gede Wahyu Wicaksana tem o maior número de documentos, totalizando 8. Este estudo tem como objetivo examinar e apresentar dados sobre a investigação em relações internacionais realizada na Indonésia, permitindo aos académicos identificar aspetos inovadores da investigação em relações internacionais. Este campo de estudo na Indonésia é categorizado em oito grupos distintos, cada um com um tema ou foco de investigação proeminente. Estes grupos englobam o comércio internacional, a China, as relações internacionais, a Indonésia, a Guerra Fria, a ASEAN, a Covid-19 e o Japão. De um modo geral, este artigo contribui para mapear novos potenciais de investigação em relações internacionais na Indonésia que ainda não foram explorados em maior profundidade pelos académicos de relações internacionais na Indonésia..

Palavras-chave

Bibliometria, Relações Internacionais, Indonésia, Scopus, VOSviewer.

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ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS RESEARCH IN INDONESIA USING THE SCOPUS DATABASE

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I. Introduction

The field of international relations emerged in England in 1919 to avert conflicts and foster global harmony. The outbreak of World War I can be attributed to the lack of effective communication and understanding among European countries at that time. The absence of intense diplomatic and consular relations resulted in negative perceptions and misunderstandings, ultimately leading to the war. The negative opinions eventually escalated tensions and conflicts amongst the parties involved, ultimately culminating in the outbreak of World War I from 1914 to 1918 (Pareira, 1999).

After World War I, international connections emerged to foster favorable national sentiments and promote collaboration through diplomatic and consular connections. This significant interaction is anticipated to mitigate tensions among nations during that period and prevent warfare (Baylis & Smith, 2001).

The field of international relations originated in England (Anglo-Saxon) and subsequently expanded to mainland Europe (Continental Europe). It later developed in the United States (Anglo-America) and eventually extended to third-world nations, including Latin America, Africa, and Asia (including Indonesia) (Pareira, 1999).

In Indonesia, the field of international relations has experienced significant growth. In 2023, numerous universities have established dedicated study courses in International Relations affiliated with the Indonesian International Relations Association (AIHII). International Relations is categorized into nine regions: Sumatra, Jabodetabek, West Java, DI Yogyakarta, Central Java, East Java, Bali Lombok, East Indonesia, and Kalimantan. In total, there are 73 study programs available in these regions (AIHII, 2020).

The proliferation of International Relations study programs in Indonesia has naturally led to the advancement of research on International Relations carried out by academics across various study programs. The research topics pursued by these academics in Indonesia are closely linked to their educational backgrounds. For instance, in several International Relations study programs in Indonesia, research topics are categorized into



three clusters: International Security, International Political Economy, and Transnational Society (Puspitasari et al., 2014).

The views utilized in this context encompass various approaches, such as realism, liberalism, constructivism, developmentalism, feminism, postmodernism, and critical theory. Prior research has highlighted the criticisms raised by scholars regarding International Relations study programs in Indonesia. One primary concern is the absence of an Indigenous theory of International Relations, which can be attributed to various factors such as the challenges in theory development, limited resources, the slower progress of social science in Indonesia, and the relatively recent establishment of International Relations study programs in the country (Puspitasari et al., 2014). However, no previous research specifically investigated the direction of international relations research in the Scopus database, which is why This research was designed to enhance the existing scholarly resources in the field of International Relations research in Indonesia.

II. Methodology

This study used bibliometric analysis to examine scientific data on international relations research conducted in Indonesia, as retrieved from the Scopus database. Bibliometric analysis is a field within information and library science that employs statistical methods to examine bibliographic data derived from scientific publications. Xicheng Yin, Hongwei Wang, Wei Wang, and Kevin Zhu define bibliometric analysis as contemporary statistical methodologies and data extraction techniques within informatics. It presents a distinctive perspective on a particular subject and facilitates the discovery of previously unrecognized information. Originally part of library science, bibliometrics has recently developed to evaluate research advancements on certain topics, including the analysis of a journal's bibliometric data over a specified period (Yin et al., 2020).

Bibliometric analysis is a rigorous methodology that provides a detailed representation of knowledge structure, evaluation, and quantification. It examines explicitly scientific articles obtained via databases. This article was generated utilizing the Scopus database. Scopus is widely regarded as a vast international database encompassing many documents, including articles, reviews, proceedings, editorials, books, and book chapters across multiple disciplines. In addition, researchers utilize VOSviewer software to visually represent the study map. VOSviewer has a more comprehensive range of capabilities and can generate advanced visualizations ahead of other bibliometric analysis applications (van Eck & Waltman, 2010). This study utilized a research framework of five distinct stages, as illustrated in Table 1.

The initial phase of this research involves the identification of the primary theme. The research focuses on the trajectory of international relations research in Indonesia between 2014-2023, as documented in the Scopus Database. The second stage of this research involves identifying the problem formulation and establishing research objectives. Formulating challenges and research objectives is employed to ascertain the trajectory of international relations research in Indonesia between 2014-2023 based on the Scopus Database. The research uses the technique of Systematic Literature Review (SLR), facilitated by programs such as Mendeley for the automatic presentation of article sources, VOSviewer for data visualization, and Scopus as a reference source.

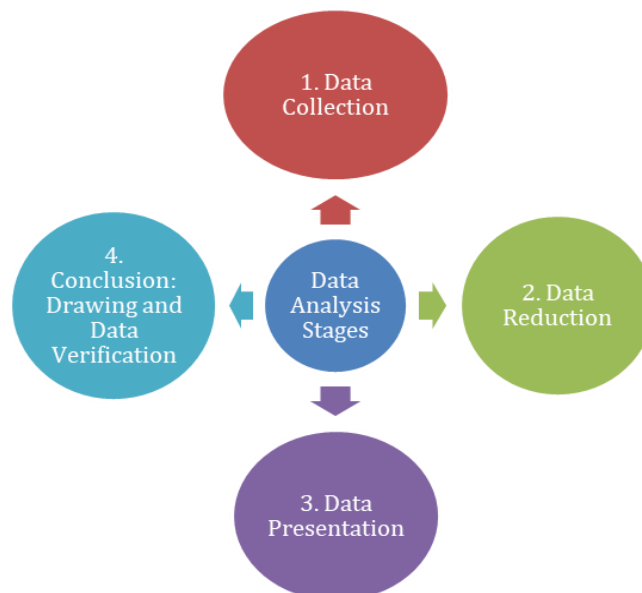
**Table 1.** Steps in Conducting Research with Reference Sources from Scopus

Research Implementation Stage				
Step I	Step II	Step III	Step IV	Step V
Determining the research topic. ↓ Analysis of International Relations Research in Indonesia using the Scopus Database	Formulating Research Questions. ↓ How has international relations research in Indonesia from 2014 to 2023 progressed in the Scopus database? ↓ The purpose of the research is to find out the progress of international relations research in Indonesia from 2014 to 2023 in the Scopus database. ↓ Determine the systematic literature review (SLR) method using supporting applications like Scopus, VOSviewer, and Mendeley.	Article Search and Selection. ↓ Determine a reputable journal as a journal database, namely Scopus. ↓ Use the database to find related articles for reference. ↓ Searched for articles with the keyword "Indonesia and International Relations" and then found 390 related articles.	Thematic analysis and conceptualization ↓ Download the RIS file from Scopus, which is then extracted into the Mendeley application for automatic reference formatting. ↓ Extract the RIS file into the VOSviewer application to visualize data from Scopus through network, overlay, and density visualization. ↓ Then, the results from the VOSviewer visualization will be downloaded to analyse them.	Finding and compiling research results ↓ Choose the article's title that suits the needs and group it according to its relationship to the topic of International Relations Research in Indonesia. ↓ Opening, reading, analyzing, and concluding the results of previous research from the articles contained in the Mendeley application ↓ Analyzing the coherence of these findings with the topic of International Relations Research in Indonesia ↓ Develop a narration based on article data that has been analyzed, as well as data visualization from the VOSviewer application. ↓ Determine the general description for compiling research results. ↓ Build references with the Mendeley application.



The third phase of this research involves searching for and selecting articles. Currently, Scopus serves as a reliable repository of authoritative scholarly articles. A theme analysis will be carried out in the fourth stage to examine the study of international relations in Indonesia. To initiate this procedure, the initial step involves acquiring the Scopus RIS file, which compiles articles from previously conducted journal searches. The Mendeley program was subsequently utilized to extract the RIS files to compile the reference sources automatically. The data acquired from the Scopus database is subsequently displayed in the VOSviewer program utilizing the Scopus RIS file. Network visualization, overlay visualization, and density visualization are distinct ways of visualizing data. Subsequently, the gathered data is examined. Figure 1 below describes the phases involved in data analysis.

Figure 1. Data Analysis Stages



Source: Author analysis

Data collection is the initial phase of the data analysis process. The data gathered thus far consists of prior articles about the subject issue. The information is sourced from the reputable and reliable Scopus database. The data gathered in this investigation will subsequently be transformed into qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data refers to statistical information obtained from the Scopus database, while qualitative material is managed using the VOSviewer application. The data was condensed in the second phase. Reduction entailed eliminating information considered extra or less valuable to the investigation. Data reduction enhances the researcher's ability to focus and generate novel, reliable, and understandable discoveries.

Data presentation is the third stage in this table. Data can be presented using visual aids such as pictures, charts, tables, or concise summaries based on the gathered data. In conclusion, the final element of this research involves visualizing and confirming the data. This research provides quantitative data to elucidate and enhance comprehension of the



investigated subject. The researcher also pays attention to the qualitative data obtained from this investigation, which is essential. Anticipated outcomes of this research include the emergence of novel discoveries, conclusions, and ideas and the advancement of social science concerning the discussed topics, specifically the study of International Relations in Indonesia. This will ensure that the research findings are current and complement prior research. Research discoveries might manifest as validating prior research findings that remain theoretical or as entirely novel research findings.

III. Result

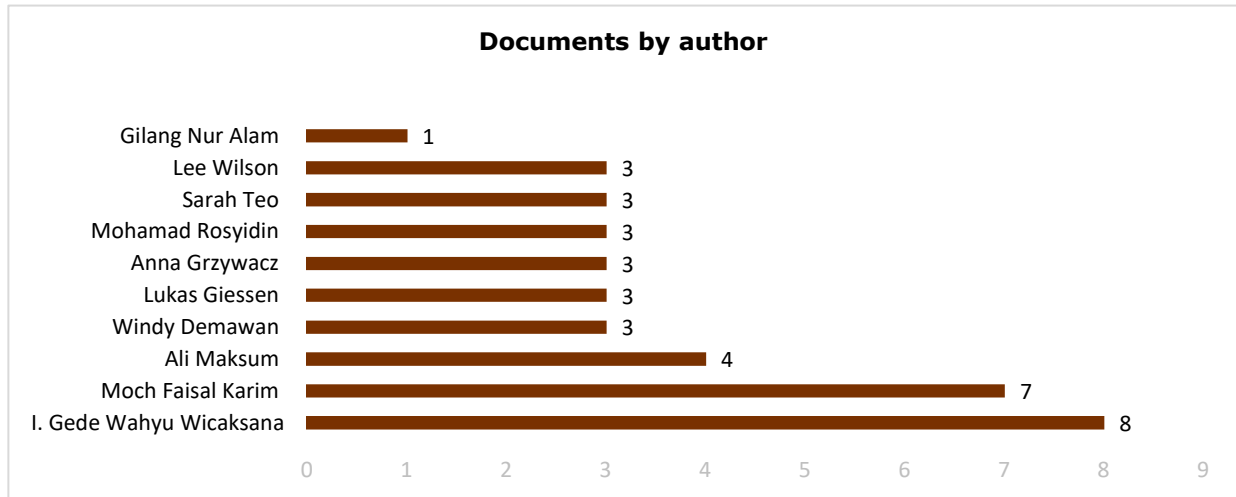
Leading Authors, Institutions, and Countries Represented in international relations research in Indonesia

This section provides an overview of the individuals who have made significant contributions to the field of International Relations in Indonesia. The information includes the authors' names, affiliated institutions, and respective countries of origin. Figure 2 demonstrates that I. Gede Wahyu Wicaksana, a scholar from Universitas Airlangga in Indonesia, is among the most influential authors in the field of International Relations in Indonesia. This is evident from the quantity of documents in the Scopus database, which amounts to eight (Darmayadi & Purnamasari, 2022; Effendi, 2022; Gede Wahyu Wicaksana, 2021; Phillips & Hiariej, 2016; Thalang, 2022; Wicaksana, 2022b, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2022a; Wicaksana & Karim, 2022; Wicaksana & Santoso, 2022)

Moch Faisal Karim is the subsequent author who has contributed significantly to advancing International Relations studies in Indonesia with seven documents.(Effendi, 2022; Hermawan et al., 2023; Hicks, 2021; Karim & Tiffani, 2022; Lumayag, 2020; Wicaksana & Santoso, 2022) Following him is Ali Maksum, who has contributed four documents.(Dermawan et al., 2021; Maksum, 2021, 2022; Maksum et al., 2020; Maksum & Bustami, 2014) Windy Demawan(Dermawan et al., 2021, 2022; Nurhasan Affandi et al., 2019), Lukas Giessen(Faxon et al., 2022; Giessen et al., 2016; Wibowo & Giessen, 2018), Anna Grzywacz (Grzywacz, 2020b, 2020a; Grzywacz & Gawrycki, 2021), Mohamad Rosyidin (Rosyidin, 2017, 2023; Rosyidin & Dir, 2021), Sarah Teo(Boon & Teo, 2022; Ichsan Azis et al., 2023; Singh et al., 2017), and Lee Wilson (Brigg et al., 2016; McDonald & Wilson, 2017; Wilson, 2017) each have three documents. The upcoming author is Gilang Nur Alam (Nurhasan Affandi et al., 2019), who has submitted a single document. The figure below provides a comprehensive overview of the prominent authors who have made significant contributions to the field of international relations research in Indonesia.



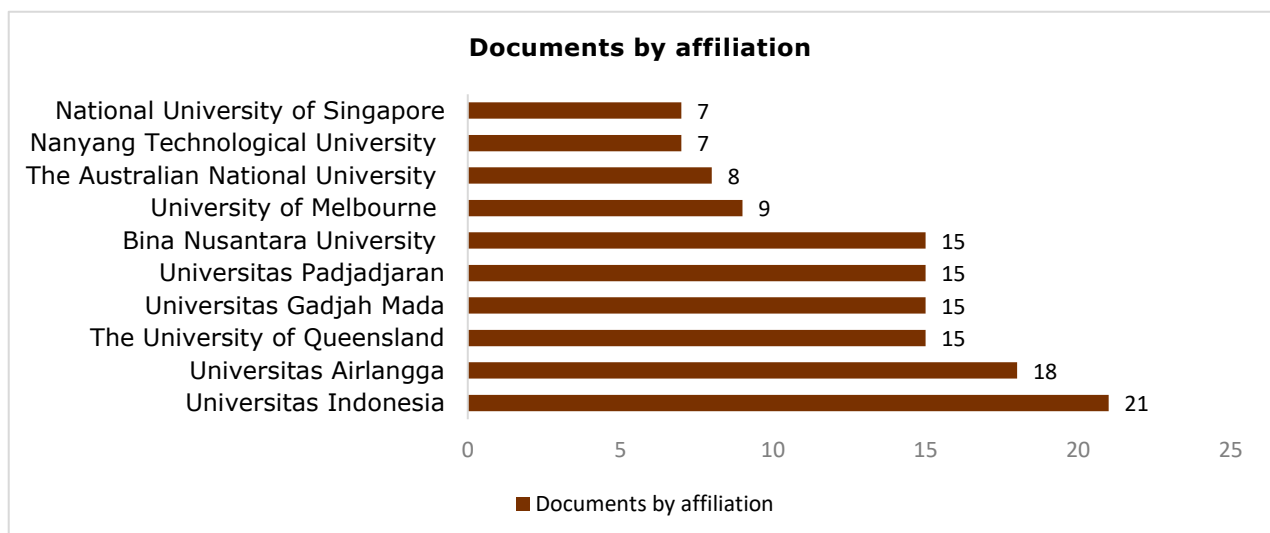
Figure 2. The Most Authors Contribution to International Relations Research in Indonesia, 2014–2023



Source: Author analysis from Scopus (2023) database.

Figure 3 demonstrates that Based on the author's affiliation, The University of Indonesia is the primary institution driving the advancement of International Relations research in Indonesia. It has contributed 21 documents, making it the most influential institution in this field. Following closely behind is Universitas Airlangga, with 18 documents. The University of Queensland, Gadjah Mada University, Padjadjaran University, and Bina Nusantara University each have 15 documents. The University of Melbourne has nine documents, and The Australian National University has eight. Nanyang Technological University and the National University of Singapore both have seven documents.

Figure 3. Affiliation Contribution to International Relations Research in Indonesia, 2014–2023

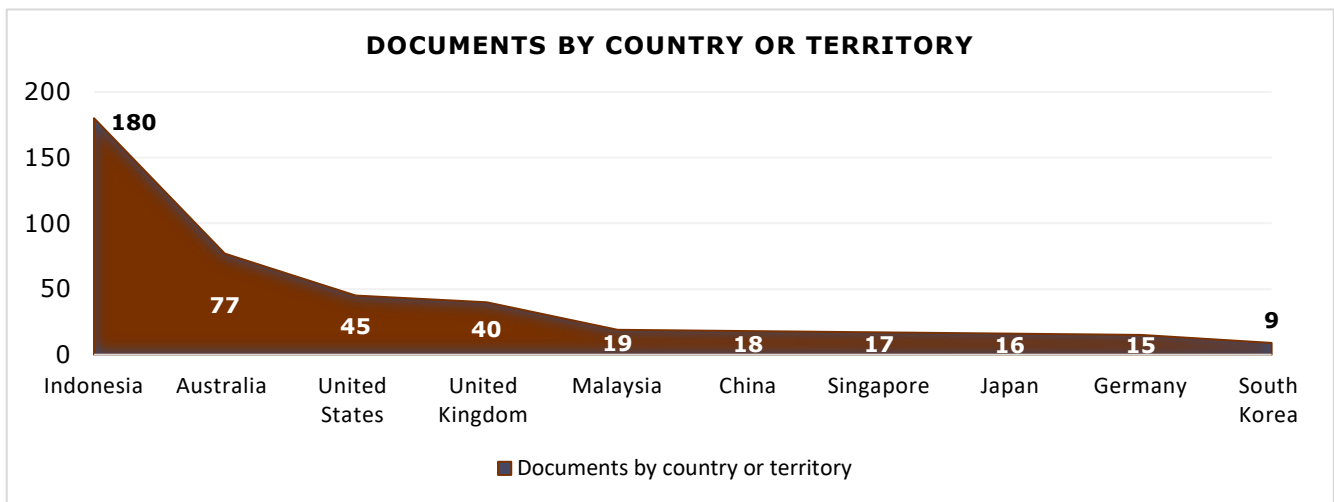


Source: Author analysis from Scopus (2023) database.



Figure 4 describes the nations from which the contributions to International Relations research in Indonesia originate. Indonesia has 180 documents, Australia has 77 documents, the United States has 45 documents, the United Kingdom has 40 documents, Malaysia has 19 documents, China has 18 documents, Singapore has 17 documents, Japan has 16 documents, Germany has 15 documents, and South Korea has nine documents.

Figure 4. Author's Countries in international relations research in Indonesia



Source: Author analysis from Scopus (2023) database.

Influential Works in International Relations Research in Indonesia

Table 2 displays the top ten most referenced publications, the articles with the most significant impact produced in the field of International Relations research in Indonesia. The citations are included in the Scopus database (as of January 2024), indicating that publications referencing papers in International Relations research in Indonesia are also published in other journals indexed by Scopus. The article "Trading forests: Land-use change and carbon emissions embodied in production and exports of forest-risk commodities" by Henders, S., Persson, U.M., and Kastner, T. has been referenced 207 times in the Scopus database. The article "Land use biodiversity impacts embodied in international food trade" by Chaudhary, A., and Kastner, T. has been referenced 158 times. The publication "Frontiers of Commodification: State Lands and Their Formalisation" by Kelly, A.B., and Peluso, N.L. has received 95 citations.

The essay "Diplomacy as theatre: Staging the Bandung conference of 1955" by Shimazu, N. has been referenced 95 times. The article "From governance to government: The strengthened role of state bureaucracies in forest and agricultural certification" by Giessen, L., Burns, S., Sahide, M.A.K., Wibowo, A. has been referenced 90 times. The works by Tong, T., Ortiz, J., Xu, C., Li, F., Tian, X., Sarkis, J., Geng, Y., ... Bleischwitz, R., Xu, Y., Spiegel, S.J., Agrawal, S., Micah, D., ...Konolius, K., Paul, B., Ngoasong, M.Z., Nair, D. were cited 89, 72, 62, 57, and 53 times, respectively.

**Table 2.** Top Ten Most Cited Works

No	Authors	Title Article	Year, Source	Cited
1	Henders, S., Persson, U.M., Kastner, T.	Trading forests: Land-use change and carbon emissions embodied in production and exports of forest-risk commodities	2015, Environmental Research Letters, 10(12), 125012	207
2	Chaudhary, A., Kastner, T.	Land use biodiversity impacts embodied in international food trade	2016, Global Environmental Change, 38, pp. 195–204	158
3	Kelly, A.B., Peluso, N.L.	Frontiers of Commodification: State Lands and Their Formalization	2015, Society and Natural Resources, 28(5), pp. 473–495	95
4	Shimazu, N.	Diplomacy as theatre: Staging the Bandung conference of 1955	2014, Modern Asian Studies, 48(1), pp. 225–252	95
5	Giessen, L., Burns, S., Sahide, M.A.K., Wibowo, A.	From governance to government: The strengthened role of state bureaucracies in forest and agricultural certification	2016, Policy and Society, 35(1), pp. 71–89	90
6	Tong, T., Ortiz, J., Xu, C., Li, F.	Economic growth, energy consumption, and carbon dioxide emissions in the E7 countries: A bootstrap ARDL bound test	2020, Energy, Sustainability and Society, 10(1), 20	89
7	Tian, X., Sarkis, J., Geng, Y., ... Bleischwitz, R., Xu, Y.	Evolution of China's water footprint and virtual water trade: A global trade assessment	2018, Environment International, 121, pp. 178–188	72
8	Spiegel, S.J., Agrawal, S., Mikha, D., ...Konolius, K., Paul, B.	Phasing Out Mercury? Ecological Economics and Indonesia's Small-Scale Gold Mining Sector	2018, Ecological Economics, 144, pp. 1–11	62
9	Ngoasong, M.Z.	How international oil and gas companies respond to local content policies in petroleum-producing developing countries: A narrative enquiry	2014, Energy Policy, 73, pp. 471–479	57
10	Nair, D.	Saving face in diplomacy: A political sociology of face-to-face interactions in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations	2019, European Journal of International Relations, 25(3), pp. 672–697	53

*The Data Retrieved on 10 January 2024 in the Scopus database

Main Research, Cluster Analysis, and Mapping Study

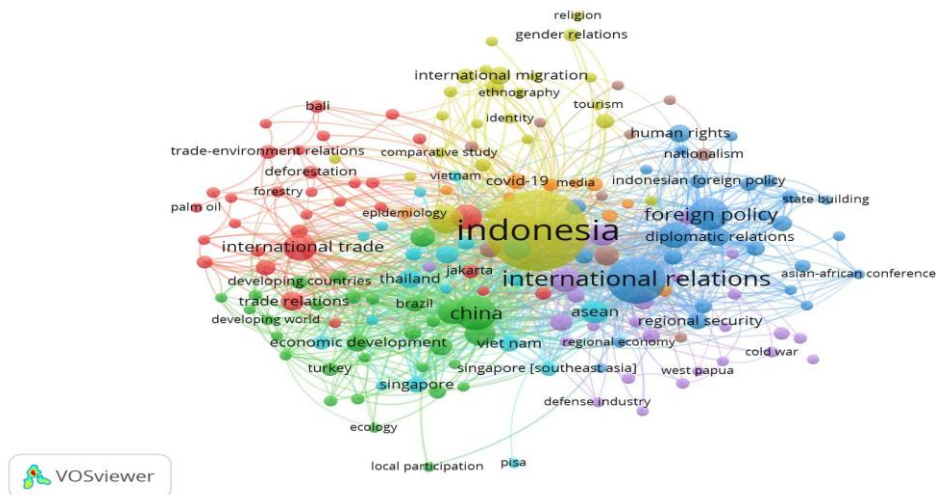
Cluster Analysis

This section will elucidate the concepts deliberated upon in the field of International Relations research in Indonesia from 2014 to 2023. A total of 390 documents were analyzed, revealing the existence of 8 distinct concept clusters in this area of study. Figure 5 depicts the cluster analysis of topics in the field of International Relations research in Indonesia. This clustering aims to assist researchers in analyzing specific themes for future research. If past researchers have often discussed a notion, the corresponding circle will be more significant. Researchers can utilize this network to compare their research findings with studies that are comparable or dissimilar to their



own. The network depicted below proves that, even if it belongs to the same cluster, one thought maintains connections with ideas from distinct clusters. Table 3 displays the identified clusters and the list of idea items.

Figure 5. Cluster analysis of concepts in international relations research in Indonesia, 2014-2023



Source: Author analysis from VOSviewer

Table 3 displays each cluster along with its corresponding idea elements. This suggests that researchers, particularly those new to the field, can focus on alternative concepts if they select a specific cluster. Researchers can determine the topics pertinent to their research by utilizing the concepts offered in each cluster. Cluster 1 covers international trade, trade relations, palm oil, forestry, deforestation, trade environment relations, and Bali. Cluster 2 mostly centers around China, Brazil, Vietnam, Singapore, Turkey, ecology, economic development, developing world, developing countries.

Cluster 3 covers international relations, diplomatic relations, foreign policy, state building, human rights, Indonesian foreign policy. Cluster 4 explicitly examines topics such as Indonesia, religion, gender relations, international migration, ethnography, identity, tourism, comparative studies. Cluster 5 encompasses the Cold War, the regional economy, West Papua, and the defense sector. Cluster 6 primarily focuses on ASEAN, Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand, economic. Covid-19, media, and epidemiology are all components of Cluster 7. Cluster 8 specifically concentrates on Japan and Asia.



Table 3. Cluster and items of concept

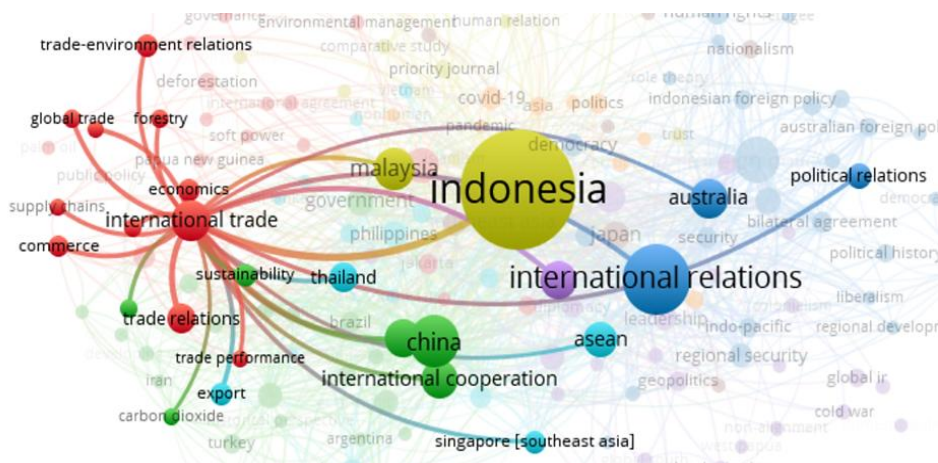
Cluster	Items of Concept	Total
Cluster 1	international trade, trade relations, palm oil, forestry, deforestation, trade environment relations, Bali	7
Cluster 2	China, Brazil, Vietnam, Singapore, Turkey, ecology, economic development, developing world, developing countries	11
Cluster 3	International relations, diplomatic relations, foreign policy, state building, human rights, Indonesian foreign policy	6
Cluster 4	Indonesia, religion, gender relations, international migration, ethnography, identity, tourism, comparative study	8
Cluster 5	cold war, regional economy, west papua, defense industry	4
Cluster 6	ASEAN, Vietnam, Singapore, economic, Thailand	5
Cluster 7	covid-19, media, epidemiology	3
Cluster 8	Japan, Asia	2

Source: Author analysis from VOSviewer

Mapping Study

This section will provide an overview of the prevailing research in the field of International Relations research in Indonesia, focusing on the 8 clusters. To examine the prevailing research, we employed VOSviewer to represent it visually. Cluster 1 in International Relations research in Indonesia concentrates primarily on international trade and its interconnectedness with other issues. Based on the graph, international trade is linked to 20 additional words, as depicted in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Network Visualisation of Cluster 1

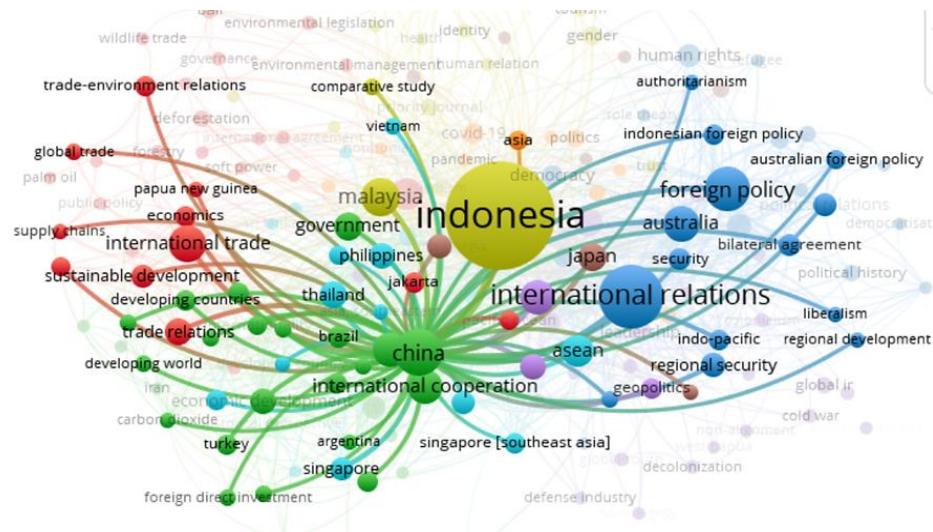


Source: Author analysis from VOSviewer

Cluster 2 in the field of International Relations research in Indonesia predominantly focuses on China as a research topic, with several connections to other keywords. Based on the graph, China is linked to 42 additional terms (refer to Figure 7).



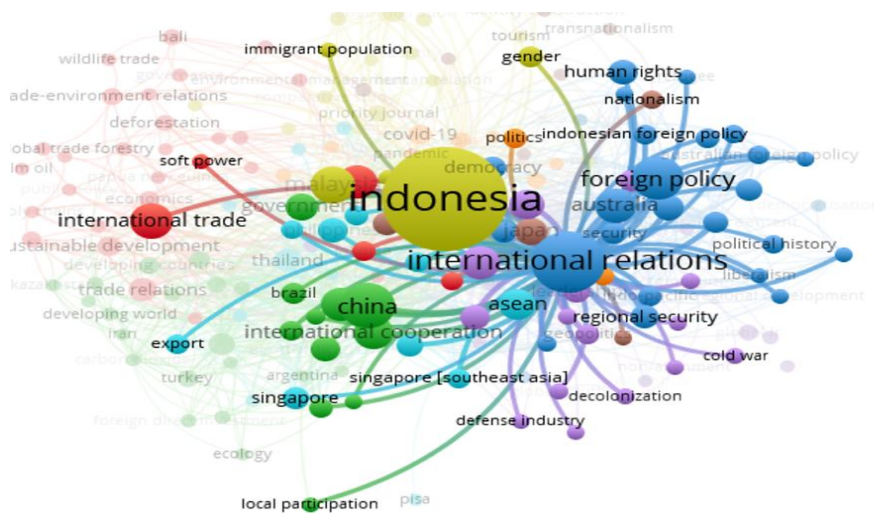
Figure 7. Network Visualisation of Cluster 2



Source: Author analysis from VOSviewer

Within Cluster 3, the research topic of International Relations is the most commonly explored subject in the study of International Relations research in Indonesia. It is closely connected to several other terms. Based on the graph, International relations are linked to 27 additional terms (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Network Visualisation of Cluster 3



Source: Author analysis from VOSviewer

Cluster 4 in International Relations research in Indonesia predominantly focuses on the research topic of Indonesia, which is extensively explored and interconnected with several other issues. Based on the graph, Indonesia is linked to 39 additional terms (Figure 9).

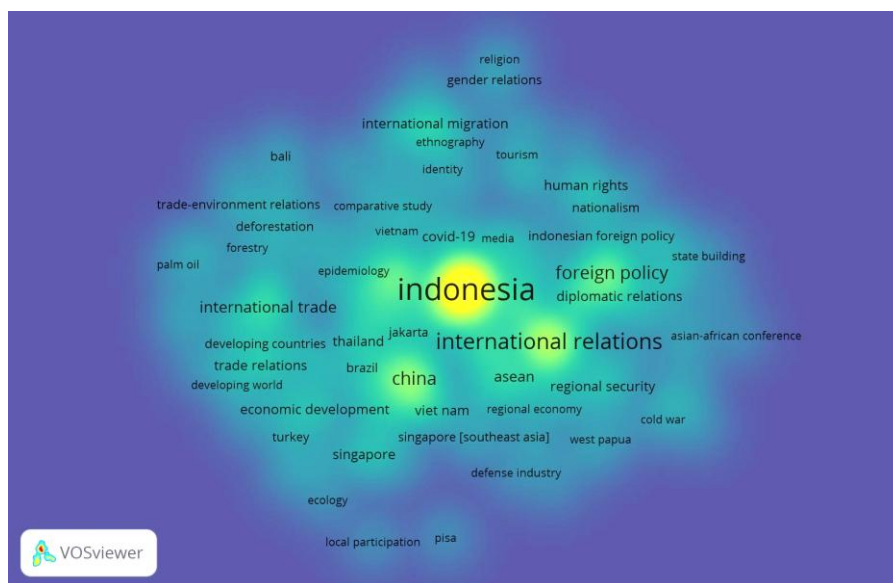
Cluster 7 in International Relations research in Indonesia focuses extensively on the research issue covid-19, which is the most commonly used phrase. This topic is closely connected to several other terminologies. The graph shows a correlation between covid-19 and four additional keywords (Figure 12).

Cluster 8 in Indonesia's International Relations research prominently focuses on Japan as a research topic, exhibiting several connections with other issues. Based on the graph, Japan is linked to 11 additional terms (refer to Figure 13).

**Figure 13.** Network Visualisation of Cluster 8

Source: Author analysis from VOSviewer

The period from 2014-2023 witnessed the growth of International Relations research in Indonesia, which was categorized into 8 clusters. This expansion opens up avenues for future scholars to explore areas that have not received extensive attention in the field of International Relations research in Indonesia. The researchers utilized the density feature in VOSviewer to visually represent research topics that can be investigated in the field of International Relations research in Indonesia. These topics include transnationalism, wildlife trade, global trade forestry, identity, tourism, foreign direct investment, human rights, decolonisation, and other related terms. This analysis offers potential avenues for advancing International Relations research in Indonesia (refer to Figure 14).

Figure 14. Density Visualisation in International Relations Research in Indonesia, 2014-2023

Source: Author analysis from VOSviewer



IV. Discussion

According to the cluster division, it is evident that "international trade" is the most prevalent term in cluster 1. An article about international trade is "How Information Technology, Entrepreneurship, and International Trade Lead to the International Relations in Indonesia?" authored by Gomgom tp Siregar and Irene Silviani (Siregar & Silviani, 2022). This article elucidates the significance of entrepreneurship, information technology, and trade in shaping Indonesia's international relations from 1990 to 2021.

In their article, Gomgom and Irene contend that the Indonesian government should establish a distinct correlation between Information and Technology, entrepreneurship, and trade. They argue that doing so will result in substantial economic benefits for Indonesia when engaging in trade partnerships with other nations in international relations. In their article, Gonggom and Irene made numerous crucial recommendations, including the need for the Indonesian government to adopt more open trade laws and expand the range of trade items. Enhancing entrepreneurial activities and information technology infrastructure is crucial for fostering more robust international contacts.

The term "China" is the most prevalent in cluster 2. An article by Charlotte Setijadi titled "'A Beautiful Bridge': Chinese Indonesian Associations, Social Capital and Strategic Identification in a New Era of China-Indonesia Relations" looks into China (Setijadi, 2016). Charlotte's article elucidates the function of Chinese Indonesian associations, commonly called shetuan, in enhancing the rapport between Indonesia and China. Charlotte's article introduces the concept of "re-Sinification," which refers to the endeavor of Chinese individuals in Indonesia to reestablish their cultural and linguistic ties with China.

Cluster 3 is characterized by a focus on "International Relations." One of the articles in this cluster is titled "Promoting Global IR under the Dominance of Mainstream Theories and the Liberalisation of Universities: Reflections from Indonesia" by I Gede Wahyu Wicaksana and Yohanes William Santoso (Wicaksana & Santoso, 2022). Wicaksana and Santoso elucidate that constructivism and realism are prominent viewpoints employed by Indonesian international relations scholars.

This article also discusses the profound influence of university liberalization on the curriculum of international relations courses in Indonesia. Specifically, it highlights the shift in focus from academic discourse in international relations to meeting the practical demands of the professional world.

Cluster 4 identifies "Indonesia" as the prevailing phrase. An article titled "Indonesia's Strategy in Facing The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)" by Dwi F. Moenardy, Sintia Catur Sutantri, Djoko Roespinoedji, and Mohd Haizam Saudi analyses Indonesia's approach towards the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) (Moenardy & Sutantri, 2021). Their article characterizes RCEP as a collaborative undertaking between ASEAN and its prominent trading counterparts, including China, India, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand.

Moenardy and his colleagues suggested that the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) undeniably yields favorable and unfavorable consequences for Indonesia. Some beneficial effects that can be achieved include higher export value and improved market access. Nevertheless, other adverse consequences emerge, such as an



overreliance on China and possible risks to local Indonesian micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Hence, Moenardy's article advocates for the Indonesian government to develop internal and external measures, which involve enhancing worker training, implementing flexible regulations, and enhancing the quality of local products. The Indonesian government proposes adopting external strategies, including enforcing rules requiring foreign companies to employ Indonesian workers and establishing strategic alliances with countries such as Japan, South Korea, the United States, and Australia to counterbalance China.

The term "cold war" is the most prevalent in Cluster 5, particularly in Matthew Woolgar's article "Ethnic politics, the Cold War and sub-national dynamics: the Indonesian Communist Party, the ethnic Chinese minority and anti-Chinese activities in West Java, 1949-67" (Woolgar, 2023). Woolgar's writing elucidates the influence of the Cold War on anti-ethnic Chinese actions in Indonesia, particularly in West Java. During this period, there were violent incidents targeting ethnic Chinese individuals who were perceived to have ties to the Indonesian Communist Party and the global communist movement. Consequently, a significant number of ethnic Chinese individuals fell victim to these attacks.

Woolgar contends that the cold war had a profound and destructive effect on Indonesia, particularly on the Chinese ethnic minority. This period of Indonesian independence is now seen as one of its most troubling chapters.

Cluster 6 is characterized by the prominence of "ASEAN." One of the publications focusing on ASEAN is an article authored by Ridwan Arifin, Sigit Riyanto, and Akbar Kurnia Putra titled "Collaborative Efforts in ASEAN for Global Asset Recovery Frameworks to Combat Corruption in the Digital Era." (Arifin et al., 2023). The article elucidates the progression of corruption offenses in the digital age within the Southeast Asian region. It highlights the efforts of ASEAN countries in addressing this issue, including establishing the ASEAN Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (AMLAT). AMLAT aims to streamline asset recovery and combat corruption.

Arifin and his colleagues assert that ASEAN member states must adopt a comprehensive and integrated strategy to combat Southeast Asian corruption. This strategy should include regional collaboration and the creation of specialized institutions at the ASEAN level.

The phrase "covid-19" is the most prevalent in Cluster 7. An article by Nikhil Bharjwaj, Nishi Sharma, and Anupreet Kaur Mavi titled "Impact of Covid-19 on Long Run and Short Run Financial Integration Among Emerging Asian Stock Markets" explores the effects of Covid-19 on the financial integration of emerging Asian stock markets (Bhardwaj et al., 2022). The article describes the economic integration in Asian stock markets, focusing on five countries: China, South Korea, India, Indonesia, and Taiwan. The article elucidates that Covid-19 leads to feeble financial integration in the five countries.

Bharjwaj and colleagues assert that policymakers in the five countries should contemplate formulating adaptive policies to mitigate the impact of future pandemic disasters, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, on investment and economic issues in those countries.



Cluster 8 reveals that "Japan" is the most prominent phrase. The article on Japan is authored by L. Ayu Saraswati and is titled "The Gender Politics of Human Waste and Human-as-Waste: Indonesian Migrant Workers and Elderly Care in Japan." (Saraswati, 2017). Saraswati's post elucidated that Japan is facing a crisis in elderly care due to its swiftly aging population and diminishing fertility rate. The current shortage of aged care services presents a favorable situation for female migrant workers, particularly those from Indonesia who are part of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between Japan and Indonesia. A significant number of Indonesian migrant workers are employed in Japan specifically to provide care for older people.

Saraswati contends in her article that Indonesian migrant workers in Japan encounter numerous obstacles, including the arduous national kanji exam they must complete to reside and be employed in Japan. Saraswati contends that within the capitalist system, both the elderly and migrant workers are categorized as 'human-as-waste,' with their worth being assessed solely in terms of economic productivity.

V. Conclusion

From the preceding discussion, several intriguing discoveries warrant further investigation in the field of international relations research in Indonesia, as indicated by the Scopus data. These include eight focal areas of study among international relations scholars in Indonesia, namely international trade, China, international relations, Indonesia, Cold War, ASEAN, Covid-19, and Japan. However, this article reveals an intriguing finding: the citations of international relations research in Indonesia are primarily contributed by foreign scholars rather than Indonesian researchers, as indicated in the Top Ten Most Cited Works section.

According to the analysis, numerous prospective research subjects can be explored in the field of international relations research in Indonesia. These include *transnationalism*, *wildlife trade*, *global trade forestry*, *identity*, *tourism*, *foreign direct investment*, *human rights*, and *decolonisation*. One notable discovery is the lack of international relations research in Indonesia that focuses on Indonesia's perspective of the world. This presents a valuable research opportunity for future Indonesian international relations scholars, as the current research in this field is predominantly influenced by Western approaches.

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STRUCTURAL BREAKS IN THE MARKETS: OIL'S EXAMPLE

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Abstract

The importance of fossil fuels in the world's energy supply and the relationship between their fluctuations and geoeconomic and geopolitical phenomena make it important to analyze the major forces behind the often-unexpected behavior of oil prices. The aim of this paper is to study socio-economic events that are contemporaneous with structural changes in the price of oil, and which may indicate a causal relationship with them. This study uses the Bai & Perron methodology to detect structural breaks. The sample consists of observations of the closing prices of oil futures contracts traded in the US, West Texas Intermediate, corresponding to various maturities. We have identified three key points in the formation of oil prices. Firstly, we note the significant impact of macroeconomic factors, especially those



more closely related to demand, as the main drivers of structural changes in the oil markets. The influence of OPEC in determining prices is also noted, highlighting its prominent role in the global oil landscape, although with less impact on the structural changes identified. Finally, the research suggests that, in a broader context, geopolitical events tend not to trigger significant structural changes in the oil market..

Keywords

Structural breaks, WTI futures, Bai & Perron methodology, oil.

Resumo

A importância dos combustíveis fósseis na oferta mundial de energia e a relação entre as suas flutuações e os fenómenos geoeconómicos e geopolíticos, tornam aliciante analisar as forças maiores por detrás do comportamento, amiúde inesperado, do preço do petróleo. É objetivo deste trabalho estudar os acontecimentos socioeconómicos contemporâneos a alterações de estrutura no preço do petróleo, que com elas possam indiciar relações de causalidade. Neste estudo é utilizada a metodologia de Bai & Perron para a deteção de alterações de estrutura. A amostra consiste em observações dos preços de fecho de contratos de futuros negociados nos EUA, West Texas Intermediate, correspondentes a várias maturidades. Três pontos são por nós identificados como essenciais sobre a formação do preço do petróleo. Em primeiro lugar, observa-se o impacto significativo de fatores macroeconómicos, especialmente os mais relacionados com a procura, como principais impulsionadores de alterações de estrutura nos mercados de petróleo. Também é assinalada a influência da OPEP na determinação dos preços, realçando o seu papel proeminente no panorama global do petróleo, embora com menor impacto nas alterações de estrutura identificadas. Por fim, a pesquisa sugere que, num contexto mais amplo, eventos geopolíticos tendem, por norma, a não desencadear alterações estruturais significativas no mercado do petróleo.

Palavras-chave

Alterações de estrutura, futuros WTI, metodologia de Bai & Perron, petróleo.

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STRUCTURAL BREAKS IN THE MARKETS: OIL'S EXAMPLE

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The determinants of oil prices

Fossil fuels continue to have an overwhelming weight in the world's energy supply, despite progress in alternative sources, particularly renewables. According to data from the International Energy Agency (IEA), in 2021, the total aggregate supply of oil, coal and natural gas was around 80percent of the world's total energy supply, which was only one percentage point less than in 1990. And, unsurprisingly, among fossil fuels, oil continues to be the most representative, albeit in decline in recent years (29percent of total supply in 2021, 37percent in 1990).

Although today we are far from witnessing the disruptions in industrialized countries caused by the supply shock of the 1970s or even the fear with which the world awaited the possible production cuts decided at the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) meetings, the truth is that geoeconomics and geopolitics continue to be greatly influenced by, and condition, the evolution of fossil fuel prices, particularly oil.

It is therefore essential to understand the major forces behind the perhaps often erratic or unexpected behavior of oil prices. One possible approach is to identify the main determinants of this price and its evolution over time.

Liu, Ding, Lv, Wu & Qiang (2019) points to three types of determinants, namely political factors, financial factors and the inability of supply to keep up with demand (particularly due to problems of insufficient storage and different reaction times, being longer in the supply side, which causes sudden over- or under-production crises), a determinant which is shared by more commodities. They also note the divergence between the main determinants before the 2007/2008 financial crisis, in this case demand and supply factors, and those that are the determinants of the oil price in the post-crisis period, where the behavior of demand and supply proves to be important but insufficient to explain the evolution of the oil price. Ding, Liu, Zhang & Long (2017) tell us that oil resources have the characteristics of a commodity (as a productive element) but also financial characteristics.



Due to its fundamental role in the oil market since its foundation in 1960, OPEC's actions and importance in the oil markets have been the subject of numerous studies. Among them, Coleman (2012) points to OPEC's market share as the main determinant of oil prices in the long term. Ben Salem, Nouira, Jeguirim & Rault (2022) conclude that OPEC's decisions, together with determinants such as the price of futures, the Iraq war and the financial crisis, have had a short-term impact, while other factors such as the price of gold and the exchange rate of the US dollar (USD) have both short- and long-term impacts. Demirbas, Omar Al-Sasi, & Nizami (2017) study the impact, among other factors, of OPEC's production decisions on market volatility and the economies of oil-producing countries. Quint & Venditti (2020), on the other hand, refer to the decisive role of OPEC and OPEC+¹, arguing that the production cuts between 2017 and 2020 had a less significant impact than apparent, in the order of 4 USD per barrel. Di Nino, Álvarez & Venditti (2020) find an essential role of this organization's price targeting in the oil price formation. This paper discusses two main strategies: Firstly, Market Share Targeting, where OPEC tries to maintain its market share against non-OPEC producers, with the second strategy being Price Targeting, where OPEC aims to directly stabilize or increase oil prices with its policies. The findings of this study indicate that while global demand remains the main factor driving oil prices, OPEC's Price Targeting actions can also have a significant impact in oil price changes, especially during periods of market instability. Smith (2009) cites the rapid economic growth of China and other developing nations as one of the determinants of oil prices. Other economic factors, such as the impact of a recessionary or expansionary period (Kilian, 2009), the return on bonds or the size of the oil futures markets (Coleman, 2012) or uncertainty (Kang & Ratti, 2013), are also mentioned. Garavini (2020) identifies the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, due to the drastic reduction in oil demand caused by lockdowns and other restrictions, as well as due to the price war between Russia, Saudi Arabia and OPEC.

Coleman (2012) associates the long-term price of oil with the frequency of terrorist attacks in the Middle East and the presence of American soldiers in the region. Ozawa & Tardy (2022) and Karda (2023) explain the geopolitical scenario and the energy crisis that loomed over Europe due to Europe's dependence on Russian oil and gas. Yagi & Managi (2023) explain the rise in oil prices caused by the invasion of Ukraine.

The relationship between political factors and oil markets is well documented in the literature. Cheon, Lackner & Urpelainen (2015) study the dichotomy faced by policymakers when subsidizing oil products which, while a politically advantageous measure, can cause economic distortions and be ineffective in fighting poverty. Arezki, Djankov, Nguyen & Yotzov (2022) study the relationship between oil price movements and the probability of re-election of incumbent administrations, concluding that shocks to the price of oil imports cause a decrease in the probability of re-election. Dragomirescu-Gaina, Philippas & Goutte (2023) observe that US President Donald Trump's tweets (now X posts) about oil are associated with greater speculative activity in the energy derivatives markets.

Referring to the financial aspects associated with oil price formation, Liu (2019) considers them to be more relevant in this asset than in most commodities, due to the existence

¹ OPEC member countries (Algeria, Angola, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela) plus a group of ten countries that take joint decisions with them, namely Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan e Sudan.



of derivative instruments associated with oil (which is not the case with most commodities) which makes it more sensitive, for example, to speculation. In addition to speculation, another financial factor that should be highlighted as a determining factor in the behavior of the oil markets is the attention² (and subsequent behavior) of investors in relation to these markets.

With the emergence of an increasingly digital age, where information flows more quickly, investors' attention to the markets is increasingly impactful, which can be explained from the point of view of behavioral finance, as defined by Liu *et al.* (2019). These same authors cite Li, Ma & Zhang (2015), who studied the relationship between the Google search volume index (GSVI) and oil prices, concluding that the same index represents the concerns of non-commercial investors (without a direct interest in the commodity they are trading - essentially speculators), with a positive feedback mechanism between the GSVI and the volatility of this market. Li *et al.* (2015) also report the GSVI's ability to predict crude oil prices in the short term. In the same vein, Cepni, Nguyen & Sensoy (2022) developed two measures of investor attention based on the news function of the Bloomberg terminal (which is mostly used by institutional investors), proving their usefulness in predicting returns on oil futures (although they noted that their effectiveness decreases with the maturity of the contracts).

Before moving on to the core of our article, the presentation and modeling of structural changes in the oil market, a final word, necessarily summarized, on what the literature tells us about the most impactful shocks in this market.³

Kilian (2009) analyzes the impacts of demand and supply shocks on the price of oil, using WTI spot prices. The author concluded that not all shocks affect the price of this commodity (and the economy as a whole) in the same way, the most significant and persistent on real economic activity being that caused by a sudden movement in aggregate demand. Kang & Ratti (2013) corroborate Kilian's conclusions, in that they associate a positive, oil-specific demand shock with greater uncertainty in economic policy, which also influences oil prices.

About the relationship between inflation and the price of oil, Montoro (2012) studies the relationship between shocks in the oil market and inflation, finding a trade-off between stabilizing inflation and stabilizing production in the presence of these phenomena.

Karali, Ye & Ramirez (2019) conclude that truly unanticipated events (they use the September 11 terrorist attacks as an example) have short-term impacts, while the events that truly mark the markets more permanently are financial crises

Regarding the different players operating in these markets, Dedi & Mandilaras (2022) conclude that different investors react in different ways to shocks: producers and swap dealers reduce their positions in the presence of positive price shocks, while portfolio managers move in the opposite direction. Despite these movements, the same authors state that there is little evidence that these players' positions affect the price of oil.

² Investor attention and market sentiment are defined as the general attitude of investors towards how they expect market prices to develop.

³ Shocks are defined as the unanticipated component of a substantial change in the price of oil (Baumeister & Kilian, 2016).



Structural changes: a brief literature review

After this brief literature review on the determinants of oil prices, we will now look at how the literature investigates the existence of structural changes in time series.

Bai (1997) refers to the very common instability of parameters in economic models, especially in time series that extend over a long period. This is because, over a longer time horizon, the data is much more likely to be influenced by factors such as policy changes. Another author with seminal contributions to the subject, Chow (1960), argues that whenever a linear regression is used to represent an economic relationship, we can question whether the relationship holds for two different time periods or for two different economic groups. For example, is consumer behavior today identical to what it was before the Second World War? According to the author, statistically, these questions can be answered by testing whether two sets of observations can be considered to belong to the same regression model. When there is a sudden and permanent change in the relationship between the points that make up a time series, we have a structural break (or structural change). The point at which this event occurs is called the breakpoint.

Ferreira, Menezes & Oliveira (2013) clearly summarize in their work how changes in structure seem to affect models based on economic and financial time series. They also point out that these changes can reflect legislative, institutional, technological, political or even macroeconomic shocks. Along the same lines, Hansen (2001) states that structural changes can be decisive in time series and that inferences about economic relationships, forecasts and policy recommendations can be flawed if these changes are not considered.

Regarding the tests for structural breaks, we can summarize them in two groups: the tests for detecting a single break and the tests for detecting multiple breaks.

In the first group, Chow (1960) proposed a test based on the assumption that the possible breakpoint date is known, which, without prior information, is difficult to sustain. Thus, this test only allows a possible breakpoint to be assessed simultaneously and is less effective when this point is unknown or has to be estimated (Gabriel, 2002).

Quandt (1960) developed the work of Chow (1960), proposing a method known as the *Quandt Likelihood Ratio* (QLR), based on calculating Chow stability test statistics for all possible breakpoints and analyzing the largest resulting value in absolute terms, estimating the breakpoint by maximum likelihood and then performing a *likelihood ratio* test (Gabriel, 2002). In short, Quandt assumes that a Chow test will be carried out for all possible breakpoints in the sample and the chosen breakpoint will be the one that maximizes the likelihood ratio test.

The test described above is also of limited power, since it only tests the hypothesis that there were no changes against the existence of a change (although, unlike Chow, 1960, we don't have to previously indicate a specific date in order to test for a break on that date), ignoring the possibility of there being more than one break in the same sample. This approach was the basis for several other tests (the so-called "sup" tests), which, according to Casini & Perron (2018), culminated in the work of Andrews (1993), who, although limited (like Quandt) to detecting a single break, had the important merit of showing that the Chow test can be based on maximum values of the Wald tests and the Lagrange multiplier, in addition to the maximum likelihood, as Quandt illustrated.



Andrews & Ploberger (1994) followed the work described in the previous paragraph, developing a distribution for, among other cases, the likelihood ratio test on which Quandt (1960) is based, making it viable. Their study is based on the construction of tests, which, as Gabriel (2002: 23) explains, *"are constructed as a weighted average of the classic tests, and can take two different forms, depending on whether the potency is directed towards alternatives that are closer to or farther from the parameters under the null hypothesis"* (which is that there are no changes in structure).

In the second group of tests, with them being the detection of multiple breaks, we will highlight the contributions of Bai & Perron, also because we followed their methodology in our article, as we will see below.

Bai & Perron (1998) state at the outset of their work that it deals with multiple changes that occur at an unknown point in the sample, in a linear regression estimated by the method of least squares (OLS), deriving the rate of convergence and the limit distributions of the estimated breakpoints. This approach, as the two authors point out, differs from the rest of the literature of the time (in particular the one that we already reviewed in the previous section of this paper) in that, as we have seen, it only dealt with the case of a single change (a single breakpoint).

Their study, in addition to being based on a linear model estimated by OLS, allows for general forms of serial autocorrelation and heteroscedasticity in the errors, as well as lagged dependent variables, regressors with a trend and different distributions for the errors and for the regressors between segments, as the authors themselves summarize in the paper in question. It is a model of partial structural change, where not all parameters are subject to change and, on the other hand, it allows tests of multiple structural breaks, if there are no regressors with a trend.

In the test, the null hypothesis is that there are no changes, and the alternative is an unknown number of changes (at least one) up to a certain maximum, and a test for the null hypothesis of l changes versus the alternative $l + 1$ changes.

Bai & Perron (2003a) refine the practical application of the methodology proposed in 1998, suggesting computational methods for estimating global minimizers. The supF test of the non-existence of structural changes *versus* the existence of a fixed number l of changes (there will always be at least one) is presented⁴. A limitation of this methodology is that it requires the assumption of a predefined number of l breakpoints, so in cases where it is challenging to do so, it may become interesting to run the methodology explained in the next paragraph.

The authors then present two tests of the null hypothesis of no changes against a given number of changes with the upper limit M (the so-called double maximum tests), useful for situations in which the researcher doesn't want to assume a given number of changes beforehand in order to draw conclusions and based on the calculation of a UDmax and a WDmax. The unweighted version of the test, the UDmax, estimates the number of breakpoints using the global minimization of the sum of squared residuals. The WDmax test, on the other hand, applies weights to the individual statistics so that the implied marginal values are equal before calculating the number of breaks (Perron, 2005). The

⁴ Global test L breaks vs. none.



aforementioned Perron (2005) explains the usefulness of this approach to determining the number of breaks.

The last of the tests is that of l versus $l + 1$ changes, called supFT ($l + 1|l$) which consists of applying ($l + 1$) tests of the null hypothesis of no changes in structure versus the alternative hypothesis of a single change⁵. The authors settle in a rejection in favor of the model with ($l + 1$) breaks if the minimum global value of the sum of the squared residuals (in all segments where another break is included) is sufficiently smaller than the sum of the squared residuals of the model with l breaks. After this analysis, the date of the break selected is the one associated with the said global minimum.

The authors then present the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) proposed by Schwarz (1978) and the LWZ proposed by Liu, Wu & Zidek (1997), the latter being a modification of the Schwarz criterion. Perron (1997) presents a simulation of the behavior of these two criteria. It is concluded that both criteria perform poorly in the presence of autocorrelation in the errors but have different powers when it does not exist. In such cases, when there is no autocorrelation but there is a lagged dependent variable, the BIC malfunctions when the coefficient of this variable is greater, and in these cases the LWZ is preferable (with the disadvantage of underestimating the number of breaks if there are any).

Bai & Perron (2003a) conclude by recommending the approach corresponding to the sequential application of the supFT ($l + 1|l$) test, using the sequential estimation of the breaks. According to them, this strategy works better than applying the BIC and LWZ criteria. In cases where it is challenging to apply this methodology, they recommend first carrying out the UDmax and WDmax tests to see if at least one break is present. If this is the case, then the number of breaks can be calculated using the Global L breaks vs. None test, using the global minimizers as the dates of the breaks.

There are many applications of the Bai & Perron test, especially in the specific case of oil, which is the subject of our article, the studies by Plante & Strickler (2021), who use the Bai & Perron methodology to determine the frequency and *timing of* structural breaks, to prove that the different types of oil are becoming increasingly homogenized. Weideman & Inglesi-Lotz (2017) apply this methodology to renewable energies in South Africa. Focacci (2022) studies the relationship between non-commercial investors and *spot* oil prices, determining the respective breaks with the Bai & Perron tests. Zarei, Ariff, Hook & Nassir (2015) study the evolution of interest rates using the same methodology. Xiong, Sun, Wang, Wang & Liu (2016) study the correlation between the price of crude oil and the *U.S. weekly leading index*. Shaeri, Adaoglu & Katircioglu (2016) determine the existence of breaks in equity returns to compare the exposure of the US financial and non-financial sectors to oil price risk. Finally, Tule, Ndako & Onipede (2017) use the methodology studied here to detect breaks in the Brent and WTI time series, so that these breaks do not jeopardize their conclusions about possible spillovers between oil shocks and the Nigerian bond market.

⁵ *Sequential $L+1$ breaks vs L test.*



The model: data and methodology

The aim of this article is to determine the existence of possible structural changes in the West Texas Intermediate (WTI) oil futures market between March 2004 and March 2024.

To do this, we will work on the closing prices of WTI futures contracts for various maturities and we will carry out the multiple break tests proposed by Bai & Perron (1998, 2003), with the aim of estimating any structural changes in the sample, for later analysis.

The timeframe chosen was intended to cover several significant events, both economic and financial, as well as geopolitical milestones that naturally resulted in various fluctuations in the oil markets.

These events include the onset of a severe financial crisis in 2007/2008 and subsequent recovery, the occurrence of the Arab Spring at the end of 2010 and a sharp drop in oil prices from 2014 onwards, driven by several factors, most notably an excess of supply over demand. In addition, 2016 brought the Brexit referendum and the first election of Donald Trump, while the end of 2019 marked the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, which, in 2020, caused a deep economic contraction due to the impacts of the disease, including confinement measures and restrictions on activities. More recently, in 2022, the invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces took place. In addition to these landmark events, we also must consider other factors such as the macroeconomic movements of economies, OPEC's production decisions and energy adjustment and transition efforts.

The sample consists of 5038 daily observations of the closing prices of WTI futures contracts with maturities of 1, 2, 6 and 12 days (hereinafter *Daily 1*, *Daily 2*, *Daily 6* and *Daily 12*, respectively).

The choice of WTI over Brent Crude (these are the two main benchmarks, respectively, for the North American and European markets), in a context where there is no significant difference in terms of liquidity between the two contracts, was based on WTI's greater volatility, due in part to storage dynamics and its greater sensitivity to overproduction problems. This makes WTI a more suitable choice for analyzing disruptive events, especially those that originate in the US or significantly impacted the country before spreading globally, such as the 2007/2008 financial crisis.

As mentioned, the methodology used is that of Bai & Perron (1998, 2003), which makes it possible to detect and locate multiple unknown break points. The *Global L Breaks vs. None Test* proposed by these authors analyses the hypothesis of the existence of at least one break (meaning a given optimized number l of breaks) in the time series under study, such that:

H_0 : There is no break in the time series

H_1 : There is at least one break in the time series

This test is described as sequential, since it works in such a way as to look for the existence of a break (and rejection of H_0) and once this is achieved, the sample is split in two at estimated break date and a new test is carried out on this new sub-sample. The sequence is only interrupted when a sub-sample is found that does not reject H_0 .



To avoid the problem, described earlier in this paper, of a previous inference of the number of breaks, the UDmax and WDmax statistics are calculated, which estimate the number of breaks present in the sample.

We thus have the following linear regression (with m breaks and $m + 1$ regimes):

$$y_t = x'_t \beta + z'_t \delta_j + u_t \quad , \quad t = T_{j-1} + 1, \dots, T_j \quad (1)$$

With $j = 1, \dots, m + 1$. For this model we have y_t as the observable dependent variable at time t ; $x_{(t)}$ ($p \times 1$) and z_t ($q \times 1$) are vectors of covariates and β and δ_j ($j = 1, \dots, m + 1$) are the corresponding vectors of coefficients; u_t is the disturbance at time t . The indices $(T_1, \dots, T_m)$, corresponding to the breakpoints, are treated as unknown (taking $T_0 = 0$ and $T_{(m)+1} = T$), in order to estimate the unknown coefficients of the regression together with the breakpoints when T observations in $(y_t, x_{(t)}, z_{(t)})$ are available. The authors also add in the same reference that the model is a partial structural change model since β is not subject to change and is estimated using the entire sample. When $p = 0$ we have a pure structural change model where all the coefficients are subject to change. Finally, it is also explained that for the model in question the variance of u_t does not need to be constant, and there can be breaks in it as long as they coincide with moments of breaks (changes) detected in the regression parameters.

The estimation is based on the OLS, and the sum of the squares of the residuals (SQR) is given by:

$$SQR = \sum_{i=1}^{m+1} \sum_{t=T_{i-1}}^{T_i} (y_t - x'_t \beta - z'_t \delta_i)^2 \quad (2)$$

There will be $\hat{\beta}(\{T_j\})$ and $\hat{\delta}(\{T_j\})$ estimates for each of the m breaks and $(T_1, \dots, T_m)$ denoted as $\{T_j\}$. Taking SQR by $S_T(T_1, \dots, T_m)$ we have the estimated breakpoints $(\hat{T}_1, \dots, \hat{T}_m)$, such that:

$$(\hat{T}_1, \dots, \hat{T}_m) = \underset{(T_1, \dots, T_m)}{\operatorname{argmin}} S_T(T_1, \dots, T_m) \quad (3)$$

Minimization is performed on all partitions $(T_1, \dots, T_m)$ such that $T_i - T_{i-1} \geq q^2$ (where q is the number of changes present in the sample). Thus, all the breakpoint estimators are global minimizers of the objective function and the regression parameters become least squares estimates associated with partition m , that is:

$$\hat{\beta} = \hat{\beta}(\{\hat{T}_j\}) \text{ and } \hat{\delta} = \hat{\delta}(\{\hat{T}_j\}). \quad (4)$$



This article will use the *Global L breaks vs. None* test, with the number of breaks determined by the *UDmax* and *WDmax* statistics.⁶

Results and discussion

Table 1 shows the main characteristics of the observations of the closing prices of the WTI futures that make up the sample.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the sample data.

Series	Average	Median	Maximum	Minimum	Deviation- Standard	Variance	Kurtosis	Asymmetry
Daily 1	70,47446	68,705	145,29	-37,63	0,3126461	492,45226	-0,3744491	0,3036176
Daily 2	70,79323	68,885	145,86	11,57	0,3065895	473,55737	-0,4481892	0,3385176
Daily 6	71,02392	69,005	146,85	24,73	0,2926012	431,33083	-0,3169087	0,3636459
Daily 12	70,45986	68,65	146,32	29,63	0,2822116	401,24338	-0,1477076	0,3886963

Source: Own elaboration.

As can be seen in the table, the series under study are platycurtic and positively asymmetric. By being platycurtic, we can see that these series have relatively flat price distributions and a lower probability of extreme prices, which indicates that they are stable and have a lower risk of major fluctuations. Positive asymmetry shows that prices tend to be above average, which leads us to assume that there is a potential for frequent growth (growth, it must be said, is usually moderate, since being platycurtic we see that values are concentrated around the average, with extreme values being rare).

The maximum and minimum indicate the highest and lowest closing prices of the WTI futures contracts that make up our sample, where the negative minimum value of 37.36\$ in the series of daily observations of contracts with a maturity of 1 day stands out, for reasons that will be discussed later.

On the other hand, as the days to maturity of the contracts increase, the variance and standard deviation decrease, indicating less volatility in the oscillations of the series as the days to maturity of the contracts increase.

The application of Bai & Perron's methodology led to the estimation of the regression model by OLS, which consists of a constant regressor that allows for serial correlation that differs between regimes, using covariance estimation by HAC⁷. A maximum of 5 breaks in the model were considered and a *trimming* percentage 15percent was applied (Bai & Perron, 2003b).

In the HAC options we set the *Lag Specification* to fixed, with the *Number of lags* equal to 1. The *Kernel* was set to *Quadratic-Spectral*, to allow for autocorrelation in the errors,

⁶ Perron (2005) summarizes the usefulness of this approach.

⁷ *Heteroskedasticity and Autocorrelation Consistent*. Guarantees the consistency of the regression in terms of heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation, ensuring that it meets the assumptions necessary for the Bai & Perron methodology.



the *Bandwith method* was set to *Andrews Automatic*, with an *offset* set to 0 and the specification of the equations was set to *close c*, where *close* was the name of the column where the closing prices of the futures contracts were recorded in each series and *c* was the constant regressor discussed in the previous paragraph.

After constructing the regressions, the tests were carried out. At this stage, the *Global L breaks vs. None* option was selected, with a *Trimming percentage* of 15, a significance level of 0.05 and a maximum number of breaks set at 5 (Bai & Perron, 2003b). The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the Global L breaks vs. None test applied to the sample.

Series	No. of breaks	Date of Breaks
Daily 1	4 (UDmax)	6/18/2007, 12/03/2010, 11/28/2014, 3/05/2021
	5 (WDmax)	6/18/2007, 12/03/2010, 11/28/2014, 11/28/2017, 3/05/2021
Daily 2	5	6/28/2007, 12/03/2010, 11/28/2014, 11/28/2017, 3/05/2021
Daily 6	5	6/15/2007, 12/02/2010, 11/28/2014, 11/28/2017, 3/05/2021
Daily 12	5	6/13/2007, 12/01/2010, 11/28/2014, 11/28/2017, 3/05/2021

Source: Own elaboration.

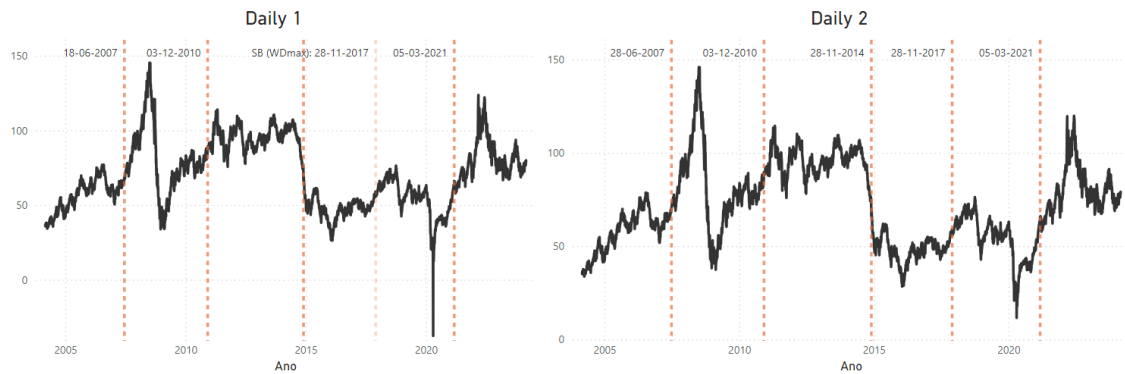
During the tests, the number of breaks was calculated sequentially using the *double maximum*, *WDmax* and *UDmax* tests. The criterion for choosing the number of breaks is the results of the latter tests which, except for the case described in the next paragraph, are convergent. This convergence gives us confidence in the results.

In the series of contracts with a maturity of 1 day, the *WDmax* and *UDmax* tests show different results in terms of the number of breaks. This divergence in the number of breaks indicated by each of the *double maximum tests* is not relevant to the analysis of the results, since it will be done on common dates between all the tests and the break found by the *WDmax* statistic and which is not found in *UDmax* (November 28, 2017) appears as a break date in all the other series. Even so, for a positively asymmetric platycurtic series such as the one we are discussing now, we assume that the unweighted nature of the *UDmax* statistic becomes more conservative and thus more suitable for a series with a lower frequency of extreme values.

In addition to the convergence in the results of the *double maximum tests*, it is important to mention that the dates identified for the breaks refer to the same days or the same short period. This circumstances gives us confidence that, in fact, one (or more) event(s) occurred that significantly affected WTI prices on those dates/periods. Before analyzing the possible causes, the results of the tests listed in Table 2 are presented graphically (Figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1 Observations of the closing prices of WTI futures contracts with a daily maturity of 1 and 2 days, and their respective breaks.



Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 2. Observations of the closing prices of WTI futures contracts with daily maturities of 6 and 12 days, and their respective breaks.



Source: Own elaboration.

Before analyzing the breaks found, we would like to comment on the observations made on April 20 and 21, 2020. Historic lows were reached on these days, including a value of -37.63\$ on April 20 in the case of daily observations of WTI futures with a one-day maturity. In the other series, although with values already in positive territory, the minimum values of the sample were found on April 20 and 21, 2020. This sample was caused by problems with WTI storage, which was under pressure due to the large reduction in demand caused by the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The fact that the issue has been solved in a short time may explain the absence of a drop on this date.

Table 3 identifies and aggregates the breaks detected and associates each of these breaks with contemporary events that may have had a causal relationship with them.



Table 3. Contemporary events at the time of the breakdowns.

Break	Contemporary Events
June 13-28, 2007	Turkish troops gather on the border with Iraq OPEC refuses to increase production Nigerian workers' strike
December 1st to 3rd, 2010	Indications of global economic recovery.
November 28, 2014	166th OPEC meeting Record US production Global economic slowdown and reduced demand for oil
November 28, 2017	173rd OPEC meeting Strong economy and increased demand for oil
March 5th, 2021	14th ministerial meeting between OPEC members and non-members <i>American Rescue Plan Act of 2021</i> Strong economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic

Source: Own elaboration.

The first break, in the second half of June 2007, coincided with several notable events for the oil markets, especially of a geopolitical nature, namely tensions between Turkey and Iraq, with the concentration of Turkish troops on the border with Iraq. A workers' strike in Nigeria, the largest oil producer on the African continent, with armed demonstrators storming oil production facilities, also contributed to the rise in oil prices. To add to all these factors, Salem El-Badri, the then secretary-general of OPEC, announced on June 14 that OPEC was refusing to increase production levels. All these cyclical factors, plus the impact of Cyclone Gonu at the beginning of the month, caused a sharp rise in the price of oil and, once these phenomena had dissipated, prices naturally corrected significantly downwards.

The break in the first few days of March 2010 was associated with signs of global economic recovery, which had an impact on confidence in the performance of economies. As a result, expectations of oil demand were revised upwards, which led to an increase in the price of oil.

In November 2014, there was a break on the 28th, the day immediately after the 166th OPEC meeting. At that meeting, the organization decided, against expectations that production would fall, to maintain production levels, appearing comfortable with low prices. This decision came in a context where oil prices were already under pressure from the biggest increase in production since records began in the US (*Energy Information Administration*, 2015), as well as a reduction in demand for oil that began in May, caused by a slowdown in the global economy, as Mead & Stiger (2015) explain.

The break on November 28, 2017, can also be linked to an OPEC meeting that took place on November 30 of that year. A break two days before the meeting reveals the expectation that economic agents had regarding the decision that would come out of the meeting. In fact, at the meeting held on November 30, 2016, a decision was made to reduce production (by around 1.8 million barrels per day) by the member countries for a period of 6 months, starting in January 2017, and then extended for a further 9 months, starting in July 2017. At the meeting on November 28, 2017, it was decided whether these production cuts would continue throughout 2018. The break in the run-up to this



meeting was due to expectations about the decisions that would come out of it, with the markets anticipating the extension of the reduction agreement for another 9 months and particular concern that Russia (OPEC's largest non-member partner) might not go along with this decision. This policy of reduced oil production and the uncertainty about its continuation, combined with a strong economy, justify a break on this occasion.

The last break found in our sample is on March 5, 2021, the day after the 14th ministerial meeting between OPEC members and non-members. This meeting was particularly important because it welcomed, and above all extended, the production reductions aimed at controlling oil prices after the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this reduction in oil supply, the economy was no longer the same fragile, shutdown economy that prompted production reductions in April 2020. March 2021 was a month of strong economic recovery after the shock of the pandemic, with a summer without major restrictions and vaccine distribution already underway. To further foster this recovery, the vote on the *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021*, a stimulus package worth 1.9 trillion USD, was also initiated on March 5, 2021, which had to be approved by the Senate on the 6th and passed into law on the 11th. The combination of a restrictive production policy and an expanding economy will have caused a structural break at the beginning of March 2021.

These results seem to point to the decisive importance of the evolution of demand and supply (and the corresponding market expectations in relation to this evolution) as determinants of the falls in the price of WTI futures contracts. Furthermore, the breaks appear to be more the result of a set of two, three or more relatively contemporaneous phenomena than the consequence of a particular statistic or isolated phenomenon and, on the other hand, there is evidence that truly unanticipated events, such as terrorist attacks, have a limited impact in the short term, i.e. in our case, they do not normally constitute structural changes.

A final comment on the conclusions we reached on the role of OPEC (and OPEC+) in setting prices, in line with much of the literature presented, in that it identifies its importance as a determinant of oil prices, but not necessarily as a direct and unique cause of breaks.

Conclusions

The overwhelming weight that fossil fuels continue to have in the world's energy supply and the reciprocal relationship between their most significant fluctuations and geoeconomic and geopolitical phenomena make it attractive and fundamental to understand the major forces behind the behavior, perhaps erratic or unexpected, of the oil price.

That's what we've tried to do in this article, not confining ourselves to presenting the main determinants of the oil price, but rather trying to identify singularities that may be associated with structural changes in the oil price, in other words, that may indicate causal relationships with them.

Based on a relatively long sample of more than five thousand daily observations between March 2004 and March 2024 of *West Texas Intermediate* oil futures prices and using the multiple break test methodology proposed by Bai & Perron (1998, 2003), we estimated



possible structural changes in the sample and identified events that are contemporaneous with them.

The changes in structure identified at various times seem to be associated with macroeconomic effects, particularly in contexts characterized by larger than expected movements in demand. It is interesting to note that all the breaks were related to a macroeconomic event that would influence the demand for oil in the same direction as the price of oil after the break.

We also found that, despite the influence of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries in setting oil prices, its decisions are more likely to be associated with a structural change when they coincide with a macroeconomic scenario favorable to such a movement.

Finally, we found that geopolitical events do not usually cause structural changes, especially if they are restricted to a single country and/or have a momentary impact.

From these conclusions one cannot naturally infer that the analyses that point to the existence of a wide range of factors that determine the price of oil are not valid, namely geopolitical tensions, variations in currency exchange rates, regulatory changes, the evolution of oil inventories, technological advances, speculation or market sentiment.

A different matter is considering that these factors can cause a reaction in prices strong enough to constitute a structural change: at this level, only macroeconomic events have resisted, as phenomena associated with the identified structural changes.

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ALTERAÇÕES DE ESTRUTURA NOS MERCADOS: O EXEMPLO DO PETRÓLEO

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Resumo

A importância dos combustíveis fósseis na oferta mundial de energia e a relação entre as suas flutuações e os fenómenos geoeconómicos e geopolíticos, tornam aliciante analisar as forças maiores por detrás do comportamento, amiúde inesperado, do preço do petróleo. É objetivo deste trabalho estudar os acontecimentos socioeconómicos contemporâneos a alterações de estrutura no preço do petróleo, que com elas possam indiciar relações de causalidade. Neste estudo é utilizada a metodologia de Bai & Perron para a deteção de alterações de estrutura. A amostra consiste em observações dos preços de fecho de contratos de futuros negociados nos EUA, West Texas Intermediate, correspondentes a várias maturidades. Três pontos são por nós identificados como essenciais sobre a formação do preço do petróleo. Em primeiro lugar, observa-se o impacto significativo de fatores macroeconómicos, especialmente os mais



relacionados com a procura, como principais impulsionadores de alterações de estrutura nos mercados de petróleo. Também é assinalada a influência da OPEP na determinação dos preços, realçando o seu papel proeminente no panorama global do petróleo, embora com menor impacto nas alterações de estrutura identificadas. Por fim, a pesquisa sugere que, num contexto mais amplo, eventos geopolíticos tendem, por norma, a não desencadear alterações estruturais significativas no mercado do petróleo.

Palavras-chave

Alterações de estrutura, futuros WTI, metodologia de Bai & Perron, petróleo.

Abstract

The importance of fossil fuels in the world's energy supply and the relationship between their fluctuations and geoeconomic and geopolitical phenomena make it important to analyze the major forces behind the often-unexpected behavior of oil prices. The aim of this paper is to study socio-economic events that are contemporaneous with structural changes in the price of oil, and which may indicate a causal relationship with them. This study uses the Bai & Perron methodology to detect structural breaks. The sample consists of observations of the closing prices of oil futures contracts traded in the US, West Texas Intermediate, corresponding to various maturities. We have identified three key points in the formation of oil prices. Firstly, we note the significant impact of macroeconomic factors, especially those more closely related to demand, as the main drivers of structural changes in the oil markets. The influence of OPEC in determining prices is also noted, highlighting its prominent role in the global oil landscape, although with less impact on the structural changes identified. Finally, the research suggests that, in a broader context, geopolitical events tend not to trigger significant structural changes in the oil market.

Keywords

Structural breaks, WTI futures, Bai & Perron methodology, oil.

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ALTERAÇÕES DE ESTRUTURA NOS MERCADOS: O EXEMPLO DO PETRÓLEO

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Os determinantes do preço do petróleo

Os combustíveis fósseis continuam a ter um peso esmagador na oferta mundial de energia, apesar dos progressos de fontes alternativas, nomeadamente os renováveis. Segundo dados da International Energy Agency (IEA), em 2021, o total agregado da oferta de petróleo, carvão e gás natural era cerca de 80% da oferta total de energia no mundo, o que representava apenas uma diminuição de 1 ponto percentual face ao observado em 1990. E, sem surpresa, de entre os combustíveis fósseis, o petróleo continua a ser o mais representativo, ainda que em recuo nos últimos anos (29% do total da oferta em 2021, 37% em 1990).

Embora estejamos hoje longe de assistir às disrupções nos países industrializados causadas pelo choque da oferta dos anos 70 do século XX ou sequer ao temor com que o mundo esperava pelos eventuais cortes de produção decididos, nas suas reuniões, pela Organização dos Países Exportadores de Petróleo (OPEP), a verdade é que a geoeconomia e a geopolítica continuam a ser muito condicionadas, e a condicionar, a evolução dos preços dos combustíveis fósseis, nomeadamente do petróleo.

Torna-se por isso fundamental perceber as forças maiores por detrás do comportamento, quiçá, amiúde, errático ou inesperado do preço do petróleo. Uma das abordagens possíveis passa pela identificação dos determinantes principais desse preço e sua evolução ao longo do tempo.

Liu, Ding, Lv, Wu & Qiang (2019) apontam três tipos de determinantes, nomeadamente os fatores políticos, os financeiros e a incapacidade de a oferta acompanhar a procura (particularmente devido a problemas de armazenamento insuficiente e de tempo de reação diferenciado, mais longo na oferta, que provoca crises de sobre ou de subprodução repentinas), determinante este que, aliás, é partilhado por mais *commodities*. Observam ainda a divergência entre os principais determinantes antes da crise financeira de 2007/2008, no caso fatores de procura e oferta, e aqueles que são os



determinantes do preço do petróleo no período pós- crise, onde o comportamento da procura e da oferta se revela importante, mas insuficiente, para explicar a evolução do preço do petróleo. Ding, Liu, Zhang & Long (2017) dizem-nos que os recursos petrolíferos têm características de uma *commodity* (como elemento produtivo) mas também características financeiras.

Pelo seu papel fundamental no mercado de petróleo desde a sua fundação em 1960, a ação e a importância da OPEP nos mercados petrolíferos tem sido alvo de numerosos estudos. Entre eles, Coleman, (2012) indica a quota de mercado desta organização como o principal determinante no preço do petróleo a longo prazo. Ben Salem, Noura, Jeguirim & Rault (2022) concluem que as decisões da OPEP, em conjunto com determinantes como o preço dos futuros, a guerra do Iraque e a crise financeira, tiveram impacto de curto prazo, enquanto outros fatores como o preço do ouro e a taxa de câmbio do dólar norte-americano (USD) têm impactos a curto e longo prazo. Demirbas, Omar Al-Sasi, & Nizami (2017) estudam o impacto, entre outros, das decisões produtivas da OPEP na volatilidade dos mercados e nas economias dos países produtores de petróleo. Quint & Venditti (2020), por outro lado, referem o papel determinante da OPEP e da OPEP+¹, argumentando ainda assim que os cortes produtivos verificados entre 2017 e 2020 tiveram um impacto menos significativo que o que aparentam, na ordem dos 4 USD por barril. Di Nino, Álvarez & Venditti (2020) constataam um papel essencial do *Price Targeting* desta organização na formação do preço do petróleo. Este trabalho discute duas estratégias principais: Em primeiro lugar, o *Market Share Targeting*, em que a OPEP tenta manter a sua quota de mercado contra os produtores não pertencentes a esta organização, sendo a segunda estratégia o *Price Targeting*, em que a OPEP visa estabilizar ou aumentar diretamente os preços do petróleo com as suas políticas. As conclusões deste estudo indicam que, embora a procura global continue a ser o principal fator que impulsiona os preços do petróleo, as ações de *Price Targeting* da OPEP também podem ter um impacto significativo na formação do preço do petróleo, especialmente durante períodos de instabilidade do mercado.

Smith (2009) refere o rápido crescimento económico da China e de outras nações em desenvolvimento como uma das determinantes do preço do petróleo. Outros fatores económicos, como o impacto de um período recessivo ou expansionista (Kilian, 2009), o retorno de obrigações ou o tamanho dos mercados de futuros petrolíferos (Coleman, 2012) ou a incerteza (Kang & Ratti, 2013), são também apontados. Garavini (2020) identifica o impacto da pandemia do COVID-19, devido à redução drástica da procura de petróleo motivada pelos confinamentos e demais restrições, bem como devido à guerra de preços entre a Rússia, a Arábia Saudita e a OPEP.

Coleman (2012) associa o preço do petróleo a longo prazo com a frequência de ataques terroristas no Médio Oriente e a presença de soldados americanos na região. Ozawa & Tardy (2022) e Karda (2023) explicam o cenário geopolítico e a crise energética que pairou pela Europa perante a dependência europeia de petróleo e gás russo. Yagi & Managi (2023) explicam o aumento do preço do petróleo motivado pela invasão da Ucrânia.

¹ Países membros da OPEP (Argélia, Angola, Congo, Guiné Equatorial, Gabão, Irão, Iraque, Kuwait, Líbia, Nigéria, Arábia Saudita, Emiratos Árabes Unidos e Venezuela) mais um conjunto de dez países que com eles tomam decisões conjuntas, nomeadamente Azerbaijão, Bahréin, Brunei, Cazaquistão, Malásia, México, Omã, Sudão e Sudão do Sul.



A relação entre fatores políticos e os mercados petrolíferos está bem documentada na literatura. Cheon, Lackner & Urpelainen (2015) estudam a dicotomia enfrentada pelos decisores políticos ao subsidiar produtos petrolíferos que, sendo uma medida politicamente vantajosa, pode causar distorções económicas e ser pouco eficaz no combate à pobreza. Arezki, Djankov, Nguyen & Yotzov (2022) estudam a relação entre os movimentos do preço do petróleo e a probabilidade de reeleição dos executivos incumbentes, concluindo que choques no preço de importação deste bem causam uma diminuição na probabilidade de reeleição. Dragomirescu-Gaina, Philippas & Goutte (2023) observam que os *tweets* do ex-presidente norte-americano Donald Trump sobre petróleo estão associados a uma maior atividade especulativa nos mercados de derivados energéticos.

Reportando-se aos aspetos financeiros associados à definição do preço do petróleo, Liu (2019), considera-os mais relevantes neste ativo do que na generalidade das *commodities*, devido à existência de instrumentos derivados associados ao petróleo (o que não se verifica em relação à maior parte das *commodities*) que o tornam mais sensível, por exemplo, à especulação. Para além da especulação, outro fator financeiro a destacar como determinante do comportamento dos mercados petrolíferos é a atenção² (e posterior comportamento) dos investidores em relação a esses mercados.

Com o surgimento de uma era cada vez mais digital, onde a informação flui mais rapidamente, é cada vez mais impactante a atenção dos investidores aos mercados, o que pode ser explicado do ponto de vista das finanças comportamentais, conforme definido por Liu *et al.* (2019). Estes mesmos autores citam Li, Ma & Zhang. (2015), que estudam a relação entre o índice de volume das pesquisas no Google (doravante “GSVI” do inglês *Google search volume index*) e os preços do petróleo, chegando à conclusão de que o mesmo índice representa as preocupações dos investidores não comerciais (sem interesse direto na *commodity* que estão a negociar - especuladores), havendo um mecanismo de *feedback* positivo entre o GSVI e a volatilidade deste mercado. Li *et al.* (2015) reportam ainda a capacidade do GSVI de prever os preços do crude a curto prazo. Na mesma linha Cepni, Nguyen & Sensoy (2022) desenvolveram duas medidas de atenção dos investidores baseada na função de notícias do terminal da Bloomberg (que é utilizado na sua maioria por investidores institucionais), comprovando a utilidade das mesmas para prever retornos em futuros de petróleo (embora tenham observado que a sua eficácia diminui com a maturidade dos contratos).

Antes de avançarmos para o *core* do nosso artigo, apresentação e modelização das alterações de estrutura no mercado do petróleo, uma palavra final, necessariamente resumida, para o que nos diz a literatura sobre os choques mais impactantes nesse mercado.³

Kilian (2009) analisa os impactos dos choques na procura e na oferta sobre o preço do petróleo, utilizando os preços *spot* de WTI. O autor concluiu que nem todos os choques afetam o preço desta *commodity* (e a economia como um todo) da mesma maneira, sendo o mais expressivo e persistente na atividade económica real o causado por um movimento brusco na procura agregada. Kang & Ratti (2013) corroboram as conclusões

² Atenção do investidor e sentimento do mercado definem-se como a atitude geral dos investidores em relação ao que esperam ser a evolução dos preços no mercado.

³ Define-se choques como a componente não antecipada de uma mudança substancial no preço do petróleo (Baumeister & Kilian, 2016).



de Kilian, na medida em que associam um choque de procura positivo e específico ao petróleo a uma maior incerteza na política económica, a qual também influencia os preços do petróleo.

No que diz respeito à relação entre a inflação e o preço do petróleo, Montoro (2012) estuda a relação entre choques no mercado petrolífero e a inflação, encontrando um *trade-off* entre estabilizar a inflação e estabilizar a produção na presença destes fenómenos.

Karali, Ye & Ramirez (2019) concluem que eventos verdadeiramente não antecipados (utilizam os ataques terroristas de 11 de setembro como exemplo) têm impactos de curto prazo, ao passo que os eventos que verdadeiramente marcam os mercados de forma mais permanente são as crises financeiras.

Já no que concerne aos diferentes agentes a operar nestes mercados aqui em estudo, Dedi & Mandilaras (2022) chegam à conclusão de que investidores diferentes reagem de diversas maneiras a choques: produtores e negociantes de *swap* reduzem as suas posições na presença de choques positivos no preço, enquanto gestores de carteiras têm o movimento contrário. Apesar destes movimentos, os mesmos autores afirmam que é fraca a evidência de que estas posições dos *players* afetem o preço do petróleo.

Alterações de estrutura: breve revisão da literatura

Após esta breve revisão da literatura sobre os determinantes do preço do petróleo, iremos agora analisar a forma como a literatura estuda a existência de alterações de estrutura em séries temporais.

Bai (1997) refere a muito comum instabilidade de parâmetros em modelos económicos, especialmente em séries temporais que se estendem a um período longo. Isto ocorre porque, num horizonte temporal maior, é muito mais provável que os dados sejam influenciados por fatores como mudanças de política. Outro autor com contributos seminais para o tema, Chow (1960), argumenta que sempre que uma regressão linear é usada para representar uma relação económica, podemos questionar se a relação se mantém para dois períodos temporais diferentes ou para dois grupos económicos diferentes. Por exemplo, será que o comportamento do consumo é hoje idêntico ao que era antes da Segunda Guerra Mundial? Segundo o autor, estatisticamente, estas questões podem ser respondidas ao testar se dois conjuntos de observações podem ser considerados como pertencentes a um mesmo modelo de regressão. Quando há, então, uma mudança repentina e permanente na relação entre os pontos que compõem uma série temporal, temos uma alteração de estrutura. O ponto em que este evento ocorre é chamado de ponto de quebra.

Ferreira, Menezes & Oliveira (2013) resumizam de forma clara no seu trabalho como as alterações de estrutura parecem afetar modelos baseados em séries temporais de natureza económica e financeira. Referem ainda que estas alterações podem refletir mudanças legislativas, institucionais, tecnológicas, políticas ou até choques macroeconómicos. Na mesma linha, Hansen (2001) afirma que alterações de estrutura podem ser decisivas em séries temporais e que inferências sobre relações económicas, previsões e recomendações políticas podem ser goradas se não se tiverem em conta as referidas alterações.



No que diz respeito aos testes à existência de alterações de estrutura, podemos sumariar em dois conjuntos: os testes à deteção de uma única quebra e os testes à deteção de múltiplas quebras.

No primeiro grupo, destaque para Chow (1960) que propõe um teste assente no pressuposto de que a eventual data de quebra é conhecida, o que, sem informação prévia, é difícil de sustentar. Assim, este mesmo teste só permite avaliar um possível *breakpoint* em simultâneo, oferecendo uma menor eficácia quando esse ponto é desconhecido ou tem de ser estimado (Gabriel, 2002).

Quandt (1960) desenvolveu o trabalho de Chow (1960), propondo um método conhecido como *Quandt Likelihood Ratio* (QLR), baseado no cálculo de estatísticas de teste de estabilidade de Chow para todos os possíveis pontos de quebra e analisando o maior valor resultante em termos absolutos, estimando o ponto de quebra por máxima verosimilhança e, em seguida, efetuando um teste de rácio de verosimilhança (*likelihood ratio*) (Gabriel, 2002). Em suma, Quandt parte do pressuposto da realização de um teste de Chow para todos os possíveis pontos de quebra da amostra e o ponto de quebra definido será o que maximiza o teste do rácio de verosimilhança.

O teste acima descrito é, também ele, de poder limitado, já que apenas testa a hipótese de que não houve mudanças contra a existência de uma mudança (ainda que, ao contrário de Chow (1960), não tenhamos que indicar *a priori* uma data específica para testar uma quebra nessa mesma data), ignorando a possibilidade de haver mais de uma quebra na mesma amostra. Esta abordagem foi basilar para vários outros testes (os chamados testes “sup”), que, segundo Casini & Perron (2018), culminaram no trabalho de Andrews (1993), que, embora limitado (como Quandt) à deteção de uma única quebra, teve o importante mérito de mostrar que o teste de Chow pode ser baseado em valores máximos dos testes de Wald e do multiplicador de Lagrange, para além da máxima verosimilhança, como ilustrou Quandt.

Andrews & Ploberger (1994) seguiram o trabalho descrito no parágrafo anterior, desenvolvendo uma distribuição para, entre outros casos, o teste do rácio de verosimilhança no qual Quandt (1960) se baseia, tornando-o viável. O estudo destes autores alicerça-se na construção de testes, que, como explica Gabriel (2002: 23) “*são construídos como uma média ponderada dos testes clássicos, podendo assumir duas formas distintas, consoante a potência é dirigida para alternativas mais próximas ou distantes dos parâmetros sob a hipótese nula*” (que é a não existência de alterações de estrutura).

No segundo grupo de testes, isto é, deteção de múltiplas quebras, vamos destacar os contributos de Bai & Perron, também porque seguimos a sua metodologia no nosso artigo, como veremos adiante.

Bai & Perron (1998) estabelecem à partida que o seu trabalho trata múltiplas alterações de estrutura que ocorrem num ponto desconhecido da amostra, numa regressão linear estimada pelo método dos mínimos quadrados (MMQ), sendo derivadas a taxa de convergência e as distribuições limite dos pontos de quebra estimados. Esta abordagem, conforme constata os dois autores, difere da restante literatura da época (nomeadamente a já revista no ponto anterior deste trabalho) na medida em que a mesma, como já vimos, trata apenas o caso de uma única mudança (um único ponto de quebra).



O estudo, para além de assentar num modelo linear estimado pelos MMQ, permite formas gerais de autocorrelação em série e heteroscedasticidade nos erros, bem como variáveis dependentes desfasadas, regressores com tendência e diferentes distribuições para os erros e para os regressores entre segmentos, conforme sumarizam os próprios autores no trabalho em causa. Trata-se de um modelo de mudança estrutural parcial, onde nem todos os parâmetros estão sujeitos a mudanças e, por outro lado, permite testes a múltiplas alterações de estrutura, caso não existam regressores com tendência.

No teste, a hipótese nula é a de não existência de alterações e a alternativa é um número desconhecido de alterações (pelo menos uma) até um determinado máximo, e um teste para a hipótese nula de l mudanças versus a alternativa $l + 1$ mudanças.

Bai & Perron (2003a) refina a aplicação prática da metodologia proposta em 1998, sugerindo métodos computacionais para estimar os minimizantes globais. É apresentado o teste⁴ supF da não existência de alterações de estrutura *versus* a existência de um determinado número l fixo de alterações (existirá sempre pelo menos uma). Uma limitação desta metodologia é que necessita da assunção de um número predefinido de l pontos de quebra, pelo que nos casos em que seja desafiante fazê-lo, pode tornar-se interessante executar a metodologia explicada no parágrafo seguinte.

Os autores apresentam então dois testes à hipótese nula da não existência de alterações contra um dado número de alterações com o limite superior M (os chamados *double maximum tests*), úteis para situações em que o investigador não quer ter de assumir previamente um dado número de alterações para tirar conclusões e assentes no cálculo de um UDmax e de um WDmax. A versão não ponderada do teste, a UDmax, estima o número de pontos de quebra utilizando a minimização global da soma dos resíduos quadrados. Já o teste de WDmax aplica pesos às estatísticas individuais para que os valores marginais implícitos sejam iguais antes de calcular o número de quebras (Perron, 2005). O já citado Perron (2005) explica a utilidade desta abordagem para determinar o número de quebras.

O último dos testes é o de l versus $l + 1$ alterações, chamado supFT ($l + 1|l$) que consiste na aplicação de $(l + 1)$ testes da hipótese nula da não existência de alterações de estrutura versus a hipótese alternativa de uma única mudança⁵. Os autores concluem numa rejeição a favor do modelo com $(l + 1)$ quebras se o valor global mínimo da soma dos resíduos quadrados (em todos os segmentos onde for incluído mais uma quebra) é suficientemente menor do que a soma dos resíduos quadrados do modelo com l quebras. Após esta análise, a data da quebra selecionada é aquela associada ao dito mínimo global.

Os autores apresentam seguidamente os critérios de informação Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), proposto por Schwarz (1978) e o LWZ proposto por Liu, Wu & Zidek (1997), sendo este último uma modificação do critério de Schwarz. Perron (1997) apresenta uma simulação do comportamento destes dois critérios. É concluído que ambos os critérios funcionam mal na presença de autocorrelação nos erros, mas têm potências distintas quando ela não existe. Nesses casos, quando não há autocorrelação, mas existe uma variável dependente desfasada, o BIC apresenta um mau funcionamento quando o

⁴ Teste *Global L breaks vs. none*.

⁵ Teste *Sequential L+1 breaks vs L*.



coeficiente dessa variável é maior, sendo preferível nesses casos o LWZ (com a desvantagem de subestimar o número de quebras se as existirem).

Bai & Perron (2003a) concluem recomendando a abordagem correspondente à aplicação sequencial do teste supFT ($I + 1|I$), utilizando a estimativa sequencial das quebras. Esta estratégia, segundo os mesmos, funciona melhor que a aplicação dos critérios BIC e LWZ. Em casos em que seja desafiante aplicar esta metodologia, recomendam realizar primeiro os testes UDmax e WDmax para averiguar se está presente pelo menos uma quebra. Se for esse o caso, então o número de quebras pode ser calculado utilizando o teste Global L breaks vs. None, utilizando os minimizantes globais como as datas das mesmas.

São muitas as aplicações do teste de Bai & Perron, destacando-se, no caso específico do petróleo, objeto de análise no nosso artigo, os estudos de Plante & Strickler (2021), que utilizam a metodologia de Bai & Perron para determinar a frequência e o *timing* de alterações de estrutura, a fim de provar que os diferentes tipos de petróleo se estão cada vez mais a homogeneizar. Weideman & Inglesi-Lotz (2017) aplicam BP03 às energias renováveis na África do Sul. Focacci (2022) estuda a relação entre investidores não comerciais e os preços *spot* de petróleo, determinando as respetivas quebras. Zarei, Ariff, Hook & Nassir (2015) estudam a evolução das taxas de juro com a mesma metodologia. Xiong, Sun, Wang, Wang & Liu (2016) estudam a correlação entre o preço do crude e o *U.S weekly leading index*. Shaeri, Adaoglu & Katircioglu (2016) determinam a existência de quebras nos retornos do capital próprio com o objetivo de comparar a exposição dos setores financeiro e não financeiro dos Estados Unidos ao risco do preço do petróleo. Por fim, Tule, Ndako & Onipede (2017) utilizam a metodologia aqui em estudo para detetar quebras em séries temporais de Brent e WTI, para que essas mesmas quebras não venham a pôr em causa as conclusões a que pretendem chegar sobre eventuais derrames entre choques petrolíferos e o mercado de obrigações nigeriano.

O modelo: dados e metodologia

O objetivo deste artigo é determinar a existência de eventuais alterações de estrutura no mercado de futuros de petróleo *West Texas Intermediate* (WTI) entre março de 2004 e março de 2024.

Para tal, vamos trabalhar os preços de fecho de contratos de futuros de WTI para várias maturidades e vamos realizar os testes a múltiplas quebras propostos por Bai & Perron (1998, 2003), com o objetivo de estimar eventuais alterações estruturais na amostra, para posterior análise.

O horizonte temporal escolhido pretendeu abranger vários acontecimentos significativos, tanto económicos como financeiros, além de marcos geopolíticos que naturalmente resultaram em diversas flutuações nos mercados petrolíferos.

Esses eventos incluem a instalação de uma forte crise financeira em 2007/2008 e posterior recuperação, a ocorrência da Primavera Árabe no final de 2010 e uma acentuada queda nos preços do barril de petróleo a partir de 2014, impulsionada por diversos fatores, com destaque para o excesso de oferta em relação à procura. Além disso, 2016 trouxe o referendo do Brexit e a eleição de Donald Trump, enquanto o final de 2019 marcou o início da pandemia de COVID-19, que, em 2020, causou uma profunda contração económica devido aos impactos da doença, incluindo medidas de confinamento



e restrições às atividades. Mais recentemente, em 2022, ocorreu a invasão da Ucrânia por forças russas. Para além destes eventos marcantes, também temos de ter em conta outros fatores como os movimentos macroeconómicos das economias, as decisões produtivas da OPEP e esforços de ajustes e transição energética.

A amostra consiste em 5038 observações diárias dos preços de fecho de contratos de futuros de WTI com maturidades de 1,2,6 e 12 dias (doravante *Daily 1*, *Daily 2*, *Daily 6* e *Daily 12*, respetivamente).

A escolha do WTI em detrimento do *Brent Crude* (são as duas principais referências, respetivamente, para o mercado norte-americano e europeu), num contexto em que não existe uma diferença significativa em termos de liquidez entre os dois contratos, baseou-se na maior volatilidade do WTI, devido em parte às dinâmicas de armazenamento e à sua maior sensibilidade a problemas de excesso de produção. Isto torna o WTI uma escolha mais adequada para analisar eventos disruptivos, especialmente aqueles que têm origem nos EUA ou impactam significativamente o país antes de se espalharem globalmente, como a crise financeira de 2007/2008.

Como referido, a metodologia utilizada é a de Bai & Perron (1998, 2003), o que permite detetar e localizar múltiplos pontos de quebra desconhecidos. O *Teste Global L Breaks vs. None* proposto por estes autores, analisa a hipótese da existência de pelo menos uma quebra (isto é, de um dado número l de quebras otimizado) na série temporal em estudo, tal que:

H_0 : Não se verifica a existência de qualquer quebra na série temporal

H_1 : Verifica-se a existência de pelo menos uma quebra na série temporal

Este teste é descrito como sequencial, já que funciona de forma a procurar a existência de uma quebra (e rejeição de H_0) e uma vez que o consiga, a amostra é dividida em duas na data de quebra estimada e feito novo teste a essa nova subamostra. A sequência só se interrompe quando encontrada uma subamostra que não rejeite H_0 .

Para se evitar a problemática, já descrita anteriormente neste trabalho, da inferência *a priori* de um número de quebras, são calculadas as estatísticas de UDmax e WDmax que estimam o número de quebras presente na amostra.

Temos assim a seguinte regressão linear (com m quebras e $m + 1$ regimes):

$$y_t = x'_t \beta + z'_t \delta_j + u_t \quad , \quad t = T_{j-1} + 1, \dots, T_j \quad (1)$$

Com $j = 1, \dots, m + 1$. Para este modelo temos y_t como a variável dependente observável no momento t ; x_t ($p \times 1$) e z_t ($q \times 1$) são vetores das covariáveis e β e δ_j ($j = 1, \dots, m + 1$) são os correspondentes vetores dos coeficientes; u_t é a perturbação no momento t . Os índices ($T_1, \dots, t_m$), correspondentes aos pontos de quebra, são tratados como desconhecidos (tomando $T_0 = 0$ e $t_{m+1} = T$), com o intuito de estimar os coeficientes incógnitos da regressão juntamente com os pontos de quebra quando T observações em



(y_t, x_t, z_t) estiverem disponíveis. É acrescentado ainda na mesma referência pelos autores que o modelo é de mudança estrutural parcial tendo em conta que β não está sujeito a mudanças e é estimado utilizando toda a amostra. Quando $p = 0$ temos um modelo de pura mudança estrutural onde todas os coeficientes estão sujeitos a mudanças. Por fim, é ainda explicado que para o modelo em causa a variância de u_t não necessita de ser constante, sendo que pode haver quebras na mesma desde que coincidam com momentos de quebras (alterações) detetadas nos parâmetros da regressão.

A estimação é feita com base no MMQ, sendo que a soma dos quadrados dos resíduos (SQR) é dada por:

$$SQR = \sum_{i=1}^{m+1} \sum_{t=T_{i-1}}^{T_i} (y_t - x'_t \beta - z'_t \delta_i)^2 \quad (2)$$

Serão $\hat{\beta}$ ($\{T_j\}$) e $\hat{\delta}$ ($\{T_j\}$) as estimativas para cada uma das m quebras e $(T_1, \dots, T_m)$ denotado como $\{T_j\}$. Tomando SQR por $S_T(T_1, \dots, T_m)$ temos os pontos de quebra estimados $(\hat{T}_1, \dots, \hat{T}_m)$, tais que:

$$(\hat{T}_1, \dots, \hat{T}_m) = \underset{(T_1, \dots, T_m)}{\operatorname{argmin}} S_T(T_1, \dots, T_m) \quad (3)$$

A minimização é efetuada em todas as partições $(T_1, \dots, T_m)$ tais que $T_i - T_{i-1} \geq q^2$ (sendo q o número de alterações presentes na amostra). Assim, todos os estimadores dos pontos de quebra são minimizantes globais da função objetivo e os parâmetros da regressão tornam-se estimativas de mínimos quadrados associados à partição m , isto é:

$$\hat{\beta} = \hat{\beta}(\{\hat{T}_j\}) \text{ e } \hat{\delta} = \hat{\delta}(\{\hat{T}_j\}). \quad (4)$$

Neste artigo será utilizado o teste *Global L breaks vs. None*, com o número de quebras determinado pelas estatísticas de *UDmax* e *WDmax*.⁶

⁶ Perron (2005) resume a utilidade desta abordagem.



Resultados e discussão

A tabela 1 apresenta as principais características das observações dos preços de fecho dos futuros de WTI que compõem a amostra.

Tabela 1. Estatística descritiva dos dados da amostra.

Série	Média	Mediana	Máximo	Mínimo	Desvio-Padrão	Variância	Curtose	Assimetria
Daily 1	70,47446	68,705	145,29	-37,63	0,3126461	492,45226	-0,3744491	0,3036176
Daily 2	70,79323	68,885	145,86	11,57	0,3065895	473,55737	-0,4481892	0,3385176
Daily 6	71,02392	69,005	146,85	24,73	0,2926012	431,33083	-0,3169087	0,3636459
Daily 12	70,45986	68,65	146,32	29,63	0,2822116	401,24338	-0,1477076	0,3886963

Fonte: Elaboração Própria.

Como se observa na tabela as séries em estudo são platicúrticas e assimétricas positivas. Ao serem platicúrticas percebemos que estas séries apresentam distribuições de preços relativamente achatadas e menor probabilidade de preços extremos, o que nos indica que as mesmas apresentam estabilidade e menor risco de grandes oscilações. A assimetria positiva revela-nos que os preços tendem a assumir valores acima da média, o que nos leva a assumir um potencial de crescimento frequente (um crescimento, diga-se, por norma moderado, já que ao serem platicúrticas percebemos que os valores se concentram em torno da média, sendo os valores extremos raros).

Os máximos e os mínimos indicam os preços de fecho mais altos e mais baixos dos contratos de futuros de WTI que compõem a nossa amostra, onde se destaca aqui o valor mínimo negativo de 37,36\$ na série de observações diárias de contratos com maturidade de 1 dia, pelos motivos que serão discutidos mais adiante.

Por outro lado, à medida que os dias de maturidade dos contratos aumentam a variância e o desvio-padrão diminuem, o que nos indica uma menor volatilidade nas oscilações das séries, conforme o aumento dos dias de maturidade dos contratos.

A aplicação da metodologia de Bai & Perron levou à estimação do modelo de regressão pelo MMQ, consistindo esse modelo num regressor constante que permite a correlação em série que difere entre os regimes, usando a estimação de covariância pelo HAC⁷. Foram consideradas até 5 quebras no modelo e aplicada uma percentagem de *trimming* de 15% (Bai & Perron, 2003b).

Nas opções do HAC definimos a *Lag Specification* foi como fixa, com o *Number of lags* igual a 1. O *Kernel* foi colocado como *Quadratic-Spectral*, para permitir autocorrelação nos erros, a *Bandwith method* foi definida como *Andrews Automatic*, com um *offset* definido em 0 e a especificação das equações foi definida como *close c*, sendo *close* o nome da coluna onde em cada série estavam registados os preços de fecho dos contratos de futuros e *c* o regressor constante abordado no parágrafo anterior.

⁷ *Heteroskedasticity and Autocorrelation Consistent*. Garante a consistência da regressão em termos de heteroscedasticidade e autocorrelação, fazendo com que a mesma cumpra os pressupostos necessários à realização da metodologia de Bai & Perron.



Após a construção das regressões, procedeu-se aos testes. Nesta etapa foi selecionada a opção *Global L breaks vs. None*, com uma *Trimming percentage* de 15, um nível de significância de 0,05 e um número máximo de quebras definido em 5 (Bai & Perron, 2003b). Os resultados estão apresentados na tabela 2.

Tabela 2. Resultados da aplicação do teste Global L breaks vs. None à amostra.

Série	N.º de Quebras	Data das Quebras
Daily 1	4 (UDmax)	6/18/2007, 12/03/2010, 11/28/2014, 3/05/2021
	5 (WDmax)	6/18/2007, 12/03/2010, 11/28/2014, 11/28/2017, 3/05/2021
Daily 2	5	6/28/2007, 12/03/2010, 11/28/2014, 11/28/2017, 3/05/2021
Daily 6	5	6/15/2007, 12/02/2010, 11/28/2014, 11/28/2017, 3/05/2021
Daily 12	5	6/13/2007, 12/01/2010, 11/28/2014, 11/28/2017, 3/05/2021

Fonte: Elaboração Própria

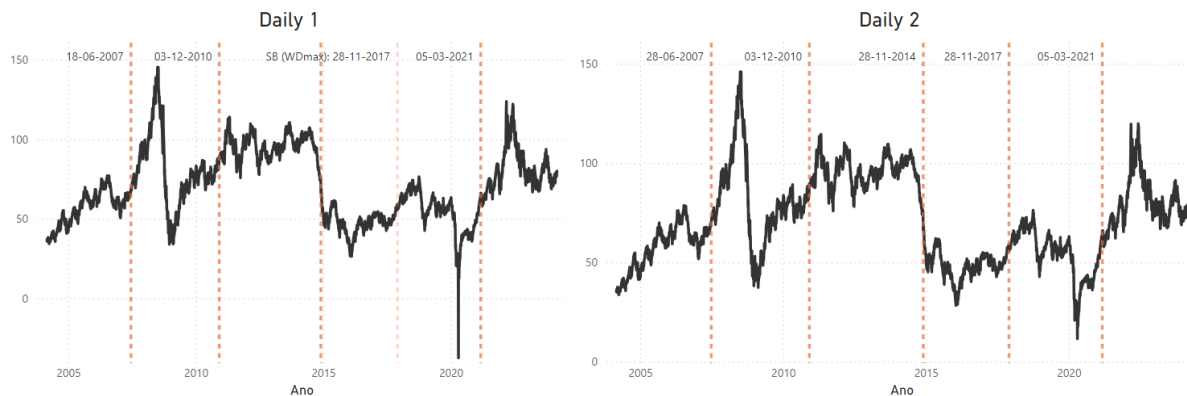
Durante a realização dos testes foi calculado o número de quebras de maneira sequencial e por meio dos testes *double maximum*, o *WDmax* e o *UDmax*. O critério para escolher o número de quebras são os resultados destes últimos testes que, com exceção do caso descrito no parágrafo seguinte, são convergentes. Esta convergência dá-nos confiança nos resultados.

Na série de contratos com maturidade de 1 dia, os testes *WDmax* e *UDmax* apresentam resultados diferentes em relação ao número de quebras. Esta divergência no número de quebras indicada por cada um dos *double maximum tests* não tem relevo para a análise dos resultados, uma vez que a mesma será feita às datas comuns entre todos os testes e a quebra encontrada pela estatística *WDmax* e que não é encontrada na *UDmax* (28 de novembro de 2017) consta como data de quebra em todas as outras séries. Ainda assim, para uma série platicúrtica e assimétrica positiva como a que estamos agora a discutir, assumimos que a natureza não ponderada da estatística de *UDmax* se torna mais conservadora e assim, mais adequada a uma série com menor frequência de valores extremos.

Além da convergência nos resultados dos testes *double maximum*, é importante mencionar que as datas identificadas para as quebras se referem aos mesmos dias ou a um mesmo curto período. Esta situação dá confiança para afirmar que, de facto, ocorreram um (ou mais) evento(s) que afetaram significativamente os preços do WTI nessas datas/ períodos. Antes de analisar as possíveis causas, apresentam-se graficamente os resultados dos testes listados na Tabela 2 (Figuras 1 e 2).



Figura 1. Observações dos preços de fecho de contratos futuros de WTI de maturidade diária a 1 e 2 dias, e suas respectivas quebras.



Fonte: Elaboração Própria.

Figura 2. Observações dos preços de fecho de contratos futuros de WTI de maturidade diária a 6 e 12 dias, e suas respectivas quebras.



Fonte: Elaboração Própria.

Antes da análise às quebras encontradas, um comentário a propósito das observações dos dias 20 e 21 de abril de 2020. Nestes dias foram atingidos mínimos históricos, tendo inclusive, no caso das observações diárias de futuros de WTI com maturidade de um dia sido registado o valor de -37,63\$ no dia 20 de abril. Nas outras séries, quer diárias quer mensais, embora com valores já em território positivo, foram encontradas nestes dias de 20 e 21 de abril de 2020 (e no mês de abril de 2020 no caso das observações mensais) os valores mínimos da amostra. Esta amostra terá sido causada por problemas na armazenagem do WTI, que devido à grande redução da procura causada pelas restrições impostas pela pandemia de Covid-19, terá estado sob pressão. O facto de o problema ter sido solucionado, entretanto, pode explicar a ausência de uma quebra nesta data.

Na tabela 3 estão identificadas e agregadas as quebras detetadas e associam-se a cada uma dessas quebras acontecimentos contemporâneos que, com elas, poderão ter tido uma relação de causalidade.



Tabela 3. Acontecimentos Contemporâneos ao período das quebras.

Quebra	Acontecimentos Contemporâneos
13 a 28 de junho de 2007	Tropas turcas concentram-se na fronteira com o Iraque OPEP recusa-se a aumentar produção Greve dos trabalhadores nigerianos
1 a 3 de dezembro de 2010	Indícios de recuperação económica global.
28 de novembro de 2014	166. ^a reunião da OPEP Produção recorde dos EUA Desaceleração económica global e redução da procura por petróleo
28 de novembro de 2017	173. ^a reunião da OPEP Economia forte e aumento da procura de petróleo
5 de março de 2021	14. ^a reunião ministerial entre membros e não-membros da OPEP <i>American Rescue Plan Act of 2021</i> Forte recuperação económica depois da pandemia de COVID-19

Fonte: Elaboração Própria.

A primeira quebra, na segunda metade de junho de 2007, coincide com vários acontecimentos assinaláveis para os mercados petrolíferos, especialmente de natureza geopolítica, nomeadamente as tensões entre a Turquia e Iraque, com a concentração de tropas turcas na fronteira com o Iraque. Também uma greve dos trabalhadores na Nigéria, o maior produtor petrolífero do continente africano, com invasões de instalações produtoras de petróleo por parte de manifestantes armados, contribuiu para o aumento do preço do petróleo. A acrescentar a todos estes fatores, Salem El-Badri, o então secretário-geral da OPEP, anunciou a 14 de junho uma recusa por parte desta organização em aumentar os níveis de produção. Todos estes fatores conjunturais, e ainda o impacto do ciclone Gonu, no início do mês, causaram forte acréscimo do preço do petróleo e, uma vez dissipados esses fenómenos, os preços corrigiram naturalmente baixa significativa.

A quebra encontrada nos primeiros dias de março de 2010, associa-se a indícios de recuperação económica global, o que terá impactado a confiança na performance das economias. Como consequência, foram revistas em alta as expectativas de procura de petróleo, o que acarretou um aumento do respetivo preço.

Já em novembro de 2014, temos uma quebra no dia 28, o dia imediatamente a seguir à 166.^a reunião da OPEP. Esta organização decidiu nessa reunião, contra as expectativas que iam no sentido que descesse a produção, manter os níveis produtivos, parecendo confortável com preços baixos. Esta decisão surgiu num contexto onde os preços do petróleo estavam já pressionados em baixo pelo maior aumento produtivo desde que há registo nos EUA (*Energy Information Administration*, 2015), bem como uma redução da procura de petróleo que terá começado em maio, causada por uma desaceleração da economia global, como bem explicam Mead & Stiger (2015).

A quebra de 28 de novembro de 2017 pode ser ligada, também, a uma reunião da OPEP, ocorrida no dia 30 de novembro desse ano. Uma quebra dois dias antes da reunião revela a expectativa que os agentes económicos tinham em relação à decisão que iria sair da reunião. Na verdade, na reunião realizada a 30 de novembro de 2016, foi decidida uma redução de produção (na ordem dos 1,8 milhões de barris por dia) por parte dos países-membros, durante o período de 6 meses, iniciados em janeiro de 2017, posteriormente



alargado por mais 9 meses, começados em julho de 2017. Ora, na reunião de 28 de novembro de 2017, decidir-se-ia se estes cortes produtivos se iriam manter durante todo o ano de 2018. A quebra encontrada na antecâmara desta reunião prende-se às expectativas em relação às decisões que dela iam sair, com os mercados a antever a extensão do acordo de redução por mais 9 meses e com a especial preocupação de que a Rússia (o maior parceiro não-membro da OPEP) pudesse não acompanhar esta decisão. Esta política de contração da produção petrolífera e a incerteza sobre a continuação da mesma, aliadas a uma economia forte justificam uma quebra nesta ocasião.

A última quebra encontrada na nossa amostra localiza-se no dia 5 de março de 2021, um dia depois da 14.^a reunião ministerial entre membros e não-membros da OPEP. Esta reunião teve especial importância, pois nela foram saudadas, e acima de tudo, prolongadas as reduções de produção destinadas a controlar os preços do petróleo depois da pandemia de COVID-19. Apesar dessa redução da oferta de petróleo, a economia já não era a mesma economia fragilizada e em *shutdown* que motivou as reduções produtivas em abril de 2020. Março de 2021 foi um mês de forte recuperação económica depois do choque da pandemia, antevendo-se um verão sem grandes restrições e com a distribuição de vacinas já em curso. Para fomentar adicionalmente essa recuperação, foi iniciada também neste dia 5 de março de 2021 a votação do *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021*, um pacote de estímulos no valor de 1,9 biliões de USD, que havia de ser aprovado no senado no dia 6 e passado a lei no dia 11. A combinação de uma política produtiva restritiva com uma economia em expansão terá causado uma alteração de estrutura neste início de março de 2021.

Estes resultados parecem apontar para a importância decisiva da evolução da procura e da oferta (e das correspondentes expectativas do mercado face a essa evolução) enquanto determinantes das quebras no preço dos contratos de futuros de WTI. Além disso, as quebras parecem mais o resultado de um conjunto de dois, três ou mais fenómenos relativamente contemporâneos do que propriamente consequência de uma determinada estatística ou fenómeno isolado e, por outro lado, há evidência de que eventos verdadeiramente não antecipados, como por exemplo ataques terroristas, têm um impacto limitado ao curto prazo, isto é, no nosso caso, não constituem, por norma, alterações de estrutura.

Um último comentário sobre as conclusões a que chegámos sobre o papel da OPEP (e OPEP+) na definição dos preços, em linha com muita da literatura apresentada, no sentido de identificar a sua importância como determinante do preço do petróleo, mas não necessariamente como causador direto de quebras.

Conclusões

O peso esmagador que os combustíveis fósseis continuam a ter na oferta mundial de energia e a relação, aliás recíproca, entre as suas flutuações mais significativas e os fenómenos geo-económicos e geopolíticos, tornam aliciente e fundamental perceber as forças maiores por detrás do comportamento, quiçá errático ou inesperado, do preço do petróleo.

Foi isso que tentámos fazer neste artigo, não nos confinando apenas à apresentação dos determinantes principais do preço do petróleo, antes tentando identificar fenómenos que



possam estar associados a alterações de estrutura no preço do petróleo, ou seja, que com elas possam indiciar relações de causalidade.

A partir de uma amostra relativamente longa de mais de cinco mil observações diárias, entre março de 2004 e março de 2024, dos preços de futuros sobre o petróleo *West Texas Intermediate*, e utilizando a metodologia de teste a múltiplas quebras proposta por Bai & Perron (1998, 2003), estimámos as eventuais alterações estruturais na amostra e identificámos acontecimentos que com elas são contemporâneos.

As alterações de estrutura identificadas, em vários momentos, parecem estar associadas a efeitos macroeconómicos, nomeadamente em contextos caracterizados por movimentos da procura mais amplos do que o esperado. É interessante observar que todas as quebras estiveram relacionadas com um acontecimento macroeconómico que influenciaria a procura de petróleo na mesma direção do preço do petróleo após a quebra.

Verificámos também que, não obstante a influência da Organização dos Países Exportadores de Petróleo na definição dos preços petrolíferos, as suas decisões são mais suscetíveis de estar associadas a uma quebra de estrutura quando coincidem com um cenário macroeconómico favorável a essa quebra.

Por último, constatámos que os eventos geopolíticos não são, por norma, causadores de alterações de estrutura, sobretudo se são restritos a um único país e/ou de impacto momentâneo.

Destas conclusões não pode naturalmente inferir-se pela não validade das análises que apontam para a existência de um vasto conjunto de fatores que são determinantes do preço do petróleo, nomeadamente, as tensões geopolíticas, as variações na cotação das moedas, as mudanças regulatórias, a evolução dos inventários petróleo, os avanços tecnológicos, a especulação ou sentimento do mercado.

Coisa diferente é esses fatores provocarem nos preços uma reação forte o suficiente para constituir uma alteração de estrutura: a esse nível, apenas os acontecimentos macroeconómicos resistiram, enquanto fenómenos associados às quebras de estrutura identificadas.

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ORGANIZAÇÕES TERRORISTAS JIHADISTAS & AGÊNCIAS ESTATAIS. RELAÇÃO SIMBIÓTICA E EFEITO MIMÉTICO DE TÁTICAS, TÉCNICAS E PROCEDIMENTOS (TTP)

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Resumo

Pretendemos efectuar uma reflexão crítica sobre os processos de planeamento – estratégico, operacional e tático – em organizações terroristas jihadistas, tendo por referente o “catálogo” de táticas, técnicas e procedimentos (TTP) de agências estatais – serviços de segurança e de inteligência –, designadamente quanto ao enquadramento das actividades de inteligência e contra-inteligência, e o seu papel, quer no planeamento, preparação e execução, com eficácia, de ataques terroristas, quer no processo de tomada de decisão terrorista. Este tipo de organizações revela grandes capacidades de aprendizagem e inovação – operacional e tática –, mimetizando técnicas e procedimentos de agências estatais, aprendendo e evoluindo com elas, tornando mais difícil identificar, localizar e rastrear, quer os seus membros, quer as suas operações.

Palavras-chave

Agências Estatais, Organizações Terroristas Jihadistas, Táticas, Técnicas e Procedimentos (TTP), Inteligência & Contra-Inteligência, Tomada de Decisão Terrorista.

Abstract

We intend to carry out a critical reflection on the planning processes – strategic, operational and tactical – in jihadist terrorist organizations, using as a reference the “catalog” of tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP) of state agencies – security and intelligence services –, namely regarding the framework of intelligence and counter-intelligence activities, and their role, both in planning, preparation and execution of terrorist attacks, and the terrorist decision-making process. This type of organisations shows great learning and innovation capabilities – both operational and tactical –, mimicking techniques and procedures of state agencies, and learning from them, making it more difficult to identify, locate and track both their members and their operations.

Keywords

Jihadist Terrorist Organizations, Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP), Intelligence & Counterintelligence, Terrorist Decision-Making.



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ORGANIZAÇÕES TERRORISTAS JIHADISTAS & AGÊNCIAS ESTATAIS. RELAÇÃO SIMBIÓTICA E EFEITO MIMÉTICO DE TÁTICAS, TÉCNICAS E PROCEDIMENTOS (TTP)¹

HERMÍNIO MATOS²

El mundo del terrorismo y el de los servicios secretos no están separados por un muro infranqueable que les impide fundirse en un único paisaje

Sergei Kovalev³

In likening secret operations to an octopus, the tentacles are made up of the chain of human relationships linking the direction of the operations to even the most remote agent. The muscles guiding each tentacle are, in turn, made up of the responsiveness, the discipline, which characterize each of the relationships in the chain. Of all these relationships (...) there is one which is at the very heart of secret operations. It is the critical relationship (...) between what are called the agent and the case officer. It is the agent who acts and who is directly in touch with the enemy, the "opposition." the agent is exposed and visible; he operates "outside." the case officer directs the agent. He is invisible and works only "inside." the relationship between these two is the bedrock of all secret operations.

Christopher Felix⁴

Introdução

A actividade de inteligência de um grupo autónomo, ou de uma entidade política organizada, dependia, numa fase ancestral, de formas rudimentares, e eminentemente amadoras e inábeis, de observação, registo e reconhecimento, baseadas em redes simples e informais de fontes humanas de informação, assentes, não raro, em relações familiares, tribais, ou clânicas, de pertença. Para Dvornik (1974, p. 3), "a inteligência não é uma invenção moderna. A sua história remonta a um passado muito distante,

¹ O presente artigo tem por base uma comunicação, com o título "Agências Estatais vs. Organizações Terroristas: reciprocidade e interdependência ao nível estratégico, operacional e tático – uma aprendizagem mútua", proferida no Seminário Internacional Crimes Transnacionais, Inseguranças Globais e Direitos Humanos, organizado pelo REDHIPAS (Rio de Janeiro, Brasil), no dia 6 de Outubro de 2022.

² O autor não adopta a grafia do Novo Acordo Ortográfico.

³ Kovalev (2000, p. 52); "O mundo do terrorismo e o dos serviços secretos não estão separados por um muro intransponível que os impeça de se fundirem numa única paisagem".

⁴ Felix (1963, pp. 46-47).



quase até aos primórdios das primeiras organizações de seres humanos, organizações que tinham uma semelhança com o que se pode chamar de Estados”.

A violência política organizada – actividade humana já patente em vários testemunhos bíblicos –, contempla hoje complexas e sofisticadas formas de organização, planeamento e *modus operandi*.

Actores não-estatais, como grupos insurgentes ou terroristas, que fazem uso reiterado da violência armada, são hoje ameaças potenciais aos Estados soberanos, com capacidade para afectar – política, económica, militar, e socialmente – a sua estabilidade e regular funcionamento institucional. Consta-se, assim, um (re)equilíbrio constante entre as capacidades de agências estatais e as de grupos ou organizações insurgentes ou terroristas, em especial no que concerne a táticas, técnicas e procedimentos (TTP)⁵ de acção operacional, visando mitigar, ou mesmo anular, a acção contraterrorista.

Não obstante esse factor de (re)equilíbrio poder ser observado em outras organizações criminosas, a nossa análise focar-se-á particularmente em grupos/organizações terroristas jihadistas (mas não apenas), excluindo da nossa análise o terrorismo de iniciativa individual, amiúde e equivocadamente denominado de “lobos solitários”⁶. Até porque, também nestes casos, é possível vislumbrar alguma acuidade e eficácia na preparação, planeamento, abordagem e execução de alvos, mercê da aquisição de conhecimentos – em técnicas de vigilância, segurança operacional e táticas de ataque – disponibilizados na Internet, em forma de manuais, por grupos e organizações terroristas jihadistas⁷.

Neste sentido, parece existir uma relação simbiótica entre agências estatais e organizações terroristas (jihadistas)⁸, que pode ser definida como a interacção – recíproca ou interdependente, voluntária ou forçada – entre duas entidades que, não obstante em campos diametralmente opostos, podem, dessa interacção, alternadamente, extrair benefício ou prejuízo próprio. O tema pode ser controverso, uma

⁵ Sigla de *Tactics, Techniques and Procedures* (TTP).

⁶ Ganor (2021a) refere que esta tipologia “(...) consists of terror attacks perpetrated without the operational involvement of terrorist organizations in initiating, planning, or executing the attack”. Não concordamos em pleno com Ganor, uma vez que o perpetrador tem, ou pode ter tido, em algum momento, pontos de contacto, quer com elementos de uma célula/grupo/organização, quer com propaganda, ideologia ou manuais de treino, disseminados através de plataformas digitais, que orientam, e inúmeras vezes determinam, o *modus operandi* (“assinatura” do grupo/organização) na execução de um ataque terrorista.

⁷ Cf. Matos (2016, 2021 e 2022) e Ganor (2021b).

⁸ Para Brachman (2009, p. 4), “Jihadismo é um termo desajeitado e controverso. Refere-se à corrente periférica do pensamento islâmico extremista, cujos adeptos exigem o uso da violência, a fim de expulsar a influência não-islâmica de terras tradicionalmente muçulmanas, a caminho do estabelecimento de uma verdadeira governação islâmica, de acordo com a Sharia, ou a lei de Deus”. Para Cook (2005, pp. 1-2), “Jihad, como outras palavras tiradas de um contexto religioso, tem uma longa história e um conjunto complexo de significados. Convencionalmente, é traduzida como “guerra santa”, mas esta definição, associada às Cruzadas medievais, é geralmente rejeitada pelos muçulmanos como sendo estritamente cristã. (...) Guerra de índole espiritual, é o significado primário e raiz do termo, tal como foi definido pelos juristas e académicos muçulmanos clássicos, e como foi praticado pelos muçulmanos durante o período pré-moderno, (...) cuja definição, dada pela nova edição da *Enciclopédia do Islão*, é que “na lei, de acordo com a doutrina geral e na tradição histórica, a jihad consiste na acção militar com o objetivo da expansão do Islão e, se necessário, da sua defesa”. Independentemente da sua conotação semântica, jihad e jihadismo são termos intimamente relacionados com grupos do ramo sunita, como o jihadismo-salafista, uma corrente fundamentalista que defende o regresso à pureza inicial do Islão, então professado pelo Profeta e seus seguidores. Nesta nossa análise, porém, o termo “jihadista” é usado no sentido amplo do termo, uma vez que, por exemplo, o Hamas (palestiniano) e o Hezbollah (libanês) não são movimentos/organizações terroristas jihadistas, mas sim de matriz islamista, sendo que o último pertence ao ramo Xiita do Islão.



vez que concebe a existência de um processo mimético, relacional e contínuo, de aprendizagem e (re)adaptação recíprocos, entre ambos os tipos de organizações.

Segundo Strachan-Morris (2019), “na literatura de inteligência e contra-insurgência, os insurgentes tendem a ser tratados como algo sobre o qual a inteligência actua, mas raramente, ou nunca, tratados como actores de inteligência por direito próprio”. Como escreveu Matchett (2013, p. 435), “a natureza pejorativa do estudo do terrorismo está repleta de riscos académicos. Argumente com muita veemência num sentido e você será acusado de ser um «securocrata» de direita e, no outro extremo, um apologista de esquerda”. Nesse sentido, a nossa análise não pretende ser um discurso encomiástico das capacidades e eficácia operacional de actores não-estatais – no caso, grupos ou organizações jihadistas –, no que concerne ao planeamento estratégico, operacional e tático de acções violentas, em especial nas áreas de inteligência e contra-inteligência, como processos determinantes para a tomada de decisão e sucesso das suas operações.

Shultz & Dew (2006, p. 10) estudaram quatro categorias de actores não-estatais violentos – insurgentes, terroristas, milícias e organizações criminais – que definiram como:

Actor não-estatal e grupo armado não-estatal referem-se a grupos que desafiam a autoridade dos Estados, desafiam o Estado de direito, usam a violência em operações não convencionais, assimétricas e indiscriminadas para alcançar os seus objectivos, operam dentro e através das fronteiras do Estado, usam capacidades secretas de inteligência e contra-espionagem e têm cismas entre facções que afetam a sua capacidade de operar com eficácia.

De acordo com Riedel (2011), grupos terroristas transnacionais – em especial os de matriz islamista-jihadista – têm demonstrado grande capacidade na condução de actividades de inteligência e contra-inteligência. O autor dá como exemplo o caso de David Headley, um cidadão norte-americano que, durante três anos, procedeu à recolha de informações e fez o reconhecimento dos alvos que seriam visados, mais tarde, pelo grupo terrorista paquistanês *Lashkar e-Tayyiba*, nos ataques terroristas em Bombaim, na Índia, em 2008.

Os serviços de inteligência são, amiúde, tidos como “a primeira linha de defesa de um Estado”; o mesmo se aplica a actores não-estatais violentos, sejam eles grupos terroristas, insurgentes ou criminais. Em ambas as perspectivas de análise, diríamos, são a primeira linha defensiva e ofensiva.

A espionagem – o acesso ou apropriação clandestina e ilegal de informação classificada – é uma actividade humana que envolve uma série de interacções. A neutralização de espiões envolve uma compreensão profunda das técnicas de dissimulação e engano – o tal “jogo de espelhos” concebido por Angleton, o enigmático e controverso chefe da contra-espionagem da CIA entre 1954-1974 (Matos, 2022, p. 267).

Tal como “profetizado” por Abu Musab al-Suri, o novo paradigma da jihad global é baseado no sistema, não já na organização. Um *modus operandi* que assenta na iniciativa individual, ou de pequenas células espontâneas, para planear e executar ataques



aleatórios, e cujo padrão, fragmentado e disperso, obsta à prevenção, monitorização e controlo eficazes por parte das forças e serviços de segurança, potenciado agora pela dimensão “cyber” do fenómeno.

Para Antinori (2015, p. 28; 2017^a, 2017b), é necessário submergir nas “múltiplas camadas da (ciber-)placenta”, onde a semente de uma nova e diferenciada alcateia (a “Geração-T”) prolifera⁹. A força da Geração-T resulta de um individualismo e identidade (ciber-)coletivos – não vinculados, como no caso de um membro de um grupo ou organização terrorista. O autor conclui que:

No futuro próximo, graças à capacidade cibernética e ao processo evolutivo, haverá uma séria ameaça de desenvolvimento da “Geração-T” (...), um fenómeno constituído por terroristas atomizados e disseminados e por terroristas cibernéticos, auto-organizados, cultivados no mesmo contexto, atacando por vários modi operandi, não apenas para criar medo e terror, mas para competir com outros e demonstrar o seu poder destrutivo, aumentando o nível de crueldade (ciber)mediada devido à necessidade de obter o melhor feedback das cibercomunidades (Antinori, 2015, p. 32).

Enquadramento Conceptual e metodológico

Pretendemos efectuar uma reflexão sobre os processos de planeamento estratégico, operacional e tático em organizações terroristas, tendo por referente o “catálogo” de táticas, técnicas e procedimentos (TTP) de agências estatais – serviços de segurança e de inteligência –, designadamente quanto ao enquadramento das actividades de inteligência e contra-inteligência, e o seu papel, quer no planeamento, preparação e execução, com eficácia, de ataques terroristas, quer no processo de tomada de decisão terrorista.

As fontes utilizadas, de domínio público, consistem em livros e monografias publicadas sobre esta área de estudos, publicações em revistas especializadas, e fontes jornalísticas e institucionais, impressas e online.

A nossa reflexão terá como matriz metodológica uma análise eminentemente dedutiva, tendo em conta que, a partir das fontes já referidas, é possível confirmar ou infirmar padrões de comportamento organizacional e operacional próprios das organizações terroristas. Em alguns casos, o método indutivo permite-nos efectuar um percurso epistemológico inverso.

A presente reflexão está dividida em (7) sete pontos: 1) uma breve introdução, onde são explanados o enquadramento histórico e a delimitação do tema em análise; 2) onde estabelecemos o enquadramento conceptual e metodológico; 3) onde é relevada a importância do uso de técnicas e procedimentos de ocultação, dissimulação e engano, por parte das organizações terroristas, como condição primordial para a sua segurança interna e operacional; 4) onde densificamos o conceito e as fases do planeamento estratégico, operacional e tático nas organizações terroristas; 5) alguns considerandos sobre o processo de decisão em organizações terroristas, e como este tem impacto

⁹ Que Antinori designa por “swarm wolf”.



directo na prossecução de outros objectivos das organizações, em particular nos níveis de planeamento e comando de operações terroristas; 6) o papel fulcral das actividades de inteligência e contra-inteligência nas organizações terroristas, onde se aborda a emergência do conceito de “inteligência jihadista”; e 7) onde é apresentada uma síntese conclusiva, mas não definitiva, sobre o tema em análise.

Optámos por traduzir as transcrições do texto original, em língua inglesa ou outra, entre aspas e/ou avançado destacado –, por forma a uma melhor compreensão do texto final, conscientes, quer da responsabilidade decorrente da “tradução”, quer do perigo de uma eventual perda de eficácia textual e semântica.

Após mais de seis décadas¹⁰ de estudo sobre o fenómeno terrorista, e dada a sua heterogeneidade – decorrente das mais díspares e voláteis circunstâncias históricas, culturais e políticas –, subsiste a impossibilidade da sua conceptualização. Não obstante a sua permanente actualização, traduzida em inúmeras definições, nenhuma logrou aceitação universal (Matos, 2021, p. 148). De modo a enquadrar conceptualmente a presente análise, passamos a operacionalizar alguns conceitos. Definimos terrorismo como

Uma técnica ou instrumento de acção usado contra alvos humanos – selectivos ou indiscriminados, através de meios especialmente violentos, ou sob a ameaça efectiva do seu uso –, ou contra alvos não humanos, como infra-estruturas críticas, físicas ou simbólicas, instilando um clima de terror e de insegurança que afecta não só os seus alvos primários, as suas vítimas imediatas, como também, por efeito psicológico, os seus alvos potenciais (a “audiência”), coagindo assim, de forma indirecta, por acção ou omissão, governos, organizações ou indivíduos nas suas decisões, e influenciando a opinião pública na prossecução dos seus objectivos, sejam eles de natureza política, ideológica, etno-separatista, criminal ou religiosa (Matos, 2011; 2016, p. 250).

Contraterrorismo como um conjunto de procedimentos, enquadrados por políticas públicas sectoriais e interministeriais, implementadas por um Estado com vista à prevenção e resposta ao fenómeno terrorista – independentemente da sua origem, tipologia e especificidades –, que se materializam através de instrumentos de acção, de cariz preventivo, defensivo e reactivo, e cuja interoperabilidade se processa segundo níveis diferenciados de análise e planos de intervenção, devidamente articulados (Matos, 2021; 2022, pp. 265-266).

Procuramos diferenciar grupo ou organização terrorista. Partimos de (5) cinco critérios de Bruce Hoffman (2006, pp. 35-41) que definem “grupo terrorista”: 1) a existência de objectivos políticos; 2) exercício da violência ou ameaça do seu uso; 3) alcance psicológico, para além das suas vítimas imediatas, 4) levado a cabo por organização estruturada; e 5) continuada por organização ou entidade não-estatal. A estes cinco

¹⁰ Se tomarmos por referência os primeiros estudos efectuados por autores como, entre outros, Thomas Thornton, Harold Nieburg, David Rapoport, Walter Laqueur, Martha Crenshaw, Yonah Alexander, Bowyer Bell, Paul Wilkinson.



critérios, Byman (2005, p. 8) acrescenta um sexto: o de visar preferencialmente “alvos não-combatentes”.

Mobley (2012, p. 7), define grupo terrorista como “aquele que usa o terrorismo como tática principal para alcançar os seus objectivos”, e grupo insurgente como “um actor não-estatal envolvido num conflito político-militar, visando o derrube de um governo, através de estratégia e táticas militares convencionais e não-convencionais, podendo fazer uso de táticas terroristas para alcançar os seus objectivos. Donde, não será fácil distinguir entre grupo terrorista e insurgente”.

A designação de “grupo terrorista”¹¹ para nomear um actor não-estatal violento parece ser a forma mais consensual na academia. Thackrah (2004, p. 122), no seu *Dictionary of Terrorism*, refere que “os grupos terroristas são geralmente pequenos, mas extremamente dedicados, ao ponto de morrerem pela promoção das suas crenças e ideias”. Para McCormick (2003, p. 474), “as diferenças de definição persistem (...) e a definição de grupo terrorista ou organização terrorista, em contraste com um grupo ou organização que às vezes emprega o terrorismo”, acrescenta ainda maior confusão conceptual pela sua abrangência. Na nossa análise, ambos os termos – grupo ou organização terrorista – serão usados como sinónimos, e o seu uso alternado, consoante o seu enquadramento.

Mobley (2012, p. 8) define contra-inteligência como “os processos – ou constelação de atividades, análises e tomadas de decisão – em que um grupo se envolve para evitar que os adversários adquiram informações precisas sobre as suas ações, pessoal e planos”.

Prunckun (2014, p. 33) vai mais longe na imaginação, e estabelece a seguinte analogia:

Se a espionagem fosse um jogo, aqueles que praticam o ofício da contra-espionagem [contra-inteligência] poderiam ser considerados os “guardiões” do jogo. Sem esses, o adversário teria carta branca para dominar o jogo e somar pontos sem fim. Sem a contra-espionagem, os objectivos da inteligência estariam totalmente à mercê de tais invasores.

Ocultação, Dissimulação e Engano

É lugar-comum afirmar que uma organização clandestina ou subversiva só sobrevive se, para o exterior, se mantiver suficientemente dissimulada e secreta, e, internamente, segura e eficaz no comando e controlo dos seus membros, oscilando assim entre um limbo existencial subterrâneo e uma metamorfoseada realidade paralela. Bowyer Bell (1995) designa-o por “mundo do dragão” – a capacidade de imersão num mundo clandestino, subterrâneo, inexpugnável e oculto: “o *Dragonworld* existe para alimentar o sonho, para permitir a campanha, para permitir que o rebelde persista: o subterrâneo

¹¹ Em 1985, a Rand Corporation publicou um estudo no qual os seus autores propunham um enquadramento conceptual e metodológico para a análise de grupos terroristas, tendo por base a análise de 29 grupos, segundo 150 características específicas, enquadradas em 10 variáveis de análise: 1) organização; 2) Liderança; 3) Demografia; 4) Ideologia, doutrina e objectivos; 5) Psicologia, mentalidade e processo de decisão; 6) Financiamento e logística; 7) Operações e *modi operandi*; 8) Comunicações; 9) Relações Externas; 10) Contexto de actuação e resposta estatal. (Cordes et. al.,1985)



deve ser escondido e o inimigo enganado por constantes e mutáveis artimanhas de cobertura” (p. 27).

Como escreveu Della Porta (1995, p. 116), “a escolha de passar à clandestinidade separou os grupos do seu ambiente social; num círculo vicioso, o seu próprio isolamento levou-os a escolher modelos organizacionais que pudessem protegê-los da repressão crescente, mas que, ao mesmo tempo, promoveram o seu isolamento”.

A contra-inteligência, defensiva e ofensiva, é responsável pela segurança interna da organização, blindando-a contra quaisquer ameaças externas.

Mobley (2012, pp. 8-17) preconiza três subprocessos na contra-inteligência: 1) negação¹² básica; 2) negação adaptativa; e 3) manipulação encoberta. No primeiro nível, o básico, é ministrada aos membros do grupo/organização formação e treino em áreas como contra-inteligência, comunicações e segurança operacional. O nível seguinte compreende um aprofundamento das áreas anteriores, visando a (re)adaptação aos métodos do oponente, em especial acções ofensivas de espionagem e contra-inteligência. No último nível, de maior complexidade, o recurso a manobras de negação, ocultação e engano (*Denial & Deception*), ou seja, de informações falsas ao oponente por meio de falsos desertores, agentes duplos e canais de comunicação comprometidos ou de fachada.

Neste sentido, a contra-inteligência (e a contra-espionagem) podem ser vistas como “a vertente aristocrática das operações secretas” (Rositzke, 1997, p.119).

Para Godson & Wirtz (2000; 2002), a negação – ou ocultação – e o engano (*D&D*) são termos usados para descrever um conjunto de operações de informação que um Estado empreende para atingir os seus objectivos. A negação refere-se ao bloqueio de informações que poderiam ser usadas por um oponente para conhecer a sua realidade, contexto e intenções; o engano, como o conjunto de acções – de informação, desinformação e contra-informação – tomadas por um Estado, com o objectivo de que o seu oponente apreenda uma realidade paralela ou inexistente. Embora sejam “atividades distintas, a negação e o engano estão na prática intimamente relacionadas e são expressas, frequentemente, num conceito único” (Godson & Wirtz, 2002; Matos, 2019 e 2022).

Para Daniel & Herbig (1982, p. 155), “o engano é a distorção deliberada da realidade com vista a obter uma vantagem competitiva”, que, na sua essência, pode ser usado em domínios tão díspares como o confronto político, económico ou militar.

Planeamento Estratégico, Operacional e Tático

Segundo Bütüner (2016, pp. xiii e 1), “o planeamento estratégico sistemático pode ser usado em cenários da vida real, mesmo por profissionais não qualificados. (...) Um plano estratégico delinea o caminho (...). Ajuda a estabelecer os seus objectivos e metas, bem

¹² O termo anglo-saxónico “*Denial*” perde eficácia semântica na tradução. “Negação” [ou ocultação] refere-se ao bloqueio (blindagem) de todos os canais de informação através dos quais um adversário pode conhecer a situação do seu oponente, impedindo-o assim de reagir atempadamente. A acção de “negação” refere-se, assim, a todos os métodos e técnicas utilizados para a salvaguarda e protecção de actividades e informações classificadas.



como o processo de tomada de decisão necessário para os atingir, numa visão prospectiva de longo prazo”.

Em organizações terroristas com estruturas de comando e controlo, comunicações, e inteligência, vigilância e reconhecimento (C3ISR)¹³, o planeamento estratégico sustenta o processo de tomada de decisão, permitindo à estrutura de topo enquadrar os seus objectivos, imediatos ou de longo prazo, de acordo com a sua história, ideologia e narrativas, recursos disponíveis, competências técnicas e/ou operacionais, segundo uma cultura de segurança, interna e externa, mantida pela acção permanente da sua inteligência e contra-inteligência.

Ilardi (2009, p. 246), a este propósito, refere que “funcionando como uma rede social ou cultural, a Al-Qaeda, tal como a maioria de outros grupos jihadistas, tem um mecanismo de verificação de segurança integrado que garante que o recrutamento, a promoção e a atribuição de tarefas se baseiam em demonstrações de devoção religiosa, lealdade e confiança. Estas medidas são, por sua vez, complementadas por uma série de práticas de contra-espionagem que enfatizam o engano, a ocultação e a camuflagem”.

De acordo com Mobley (2012, pp. 4-7), todo o grupo ou organização terrorista enfrenta dilemas de segurança no âmbito da contra-inteligência e contra-espionagem. As peculiaridades da acção clandestina ou subversiva, e as regras de sigilo que envolvem este tipo de organizações, podem, por um lado, resultar numa maior eficácia operacional e tática, e, por outro, constituir-se como factor de vulnerabilidade ou entropia funcional, em especial no âmbito do comando, controlo e comunicações. Neste sentido, Mobley (2012, Idem), estabelece três factores – estrutura organizacional, apoio popular e território controlado – com influência decisiva nas capacidades vs. vulnerabilidades, das estratégias de contra-inteligência de uma organização terrorista.

De acordo com Nance (2014, p. 87), um especialista com vasta experiência no contraterrorismo, “o terrorismo não é aleatório”. Os “ataques em vaga” – ataques sequenciais ou simultâneos –, ocorrem, geralmente, durante períodos mais longos e numa área alargada, por forma a suscitar uma aleatoriedade aparente, por um lado, e a dispersar e desorientar a resposta das forças policiais e de socorro, por outro, potenciando assim o caos e o medo e amplificando os seus efeitos mediáticos.

No processo de selecção de alvos, um estágio inicial do ciclo de acção terrorista, Nance (2014, p. 88) destaca a sua importância, afirmando que “é fundamental compreender o processo de selecção de alvos dos terroristas. Sendo um processo, é observável e previsível. O processo de selecção depende dos objectivos da liderança terrorista, da viabilidade do plano operacional, previamente avaliado pelo responsável operacional, da recolha de informações e das recomendações da célula de inteligência”. O comando responsável pelas operações no terreno, coadjuvado pela célula de inteligência, identifica e elege os alvos específicos a executar, desencadeando assim os demais níveis do processo de planeamento de um ataque – operacional e tático.

Cabe assim ao responsável pela selecção de alvos decidir sobre o valor – intrínseco e extrínseco – e a elegibilidade de um alvo específico, cuja execução obtenha elevados

¹³ Termo anglo-saxónico, de cunho militar, cuja sigla designa: C3ISR – Command, Control, Communication, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance.



níveis de eficácia e impacto, tendo por referente “três princípios básicos da ação tática (ou «leis da emboscada»): 1) velocidade; 2) surpresa; 3) grau de violência”. A selecção do alvo é enquadrada, *ab initio*, pela dicotomia “hard” vs. “soft”. Numa categorização mais abrangente, o autor propõe as seguintes tipologias de alvos:

- > Alvos de valor estratégico (*Strategic-Value Targets* – STRAT-VT): alvos com grave impacto nas capacidades de uma sociedade-alvo, em especial infra-estruturas críticas ou de informação nacional;
- > Alvos de Retorno Elevado (*High-Payoff Targets* – HPTs): aqueles que, danificados ou destruídos, contribuirão no imediato para a consecução dos planos estratégicos do grupo terrorista;
- > Alvos de Valor Elevado (*High-Value Targets* – HVTs): eliminados, danificados ou destruídos, contribuirão para a degradação da capacidade da sociedade-alvo de responder militar ou judicialmente;
- > Alvos de Valor Baixo (*Low-Value Targets* – LVTs): embora de elevada frequência, mas de baixo impacto, se danificados ou destruídos, contribuirão para o medo generalizado das populações da sociedade-alvo;
- > Alvos de Valor Tático (*Tactical-Value Targets* – TAC-VT), se danificados ou destruídos, degradarão a capacidade, das forças e serviços de segurança, ou militares, de responder às ameaças na área imediata do ataque;
- > Alvos de valor Simbólico (*Symbolic-Value Targets* – SYM-TGT): se danificados ou destruídos, ampliam o medo generalizado das populações-alvo;
- > Alvos de Valor Ecológico (*Ecological-Value Targets* – ECO-TGT): se danificados ou destruídos, podem obstruir o acesso a recursos naturais. (Nance, 2014, pp. 89 e 90-92)

Para Pluchinsky (2006, p. 370), cada ofensiva terrorista ou operação logística é única. Armas e táticas podem ser semelhantes, mas os ataques geralmente diferem no momento, nos objectivos, na experiência e capacidade dos terroristas, na segurança em torno do alvo, acessibilidade e envolvimento. Cada grupo tem o seu próprio código de conduta operacional, manual tático, lista de alvos, *modus operandi*, níveis de competência, ideologia e mundovisão. O autor preconiza (7) sete estádios sequencias no ciclo de acção terrorista:

- 1) “gatilho” – factor ou evento que motiva e justifica o ataque;
- 2) decisão e planeamento de ataque;
- 3) identificação da(s) tipologia(s) de alvo(s) a executar;
- 4) selecção do(s) alvo(s),
- 5) planeamento da operação;
- 6) execução do ataque;
- 7) avaliação pós-ataque.

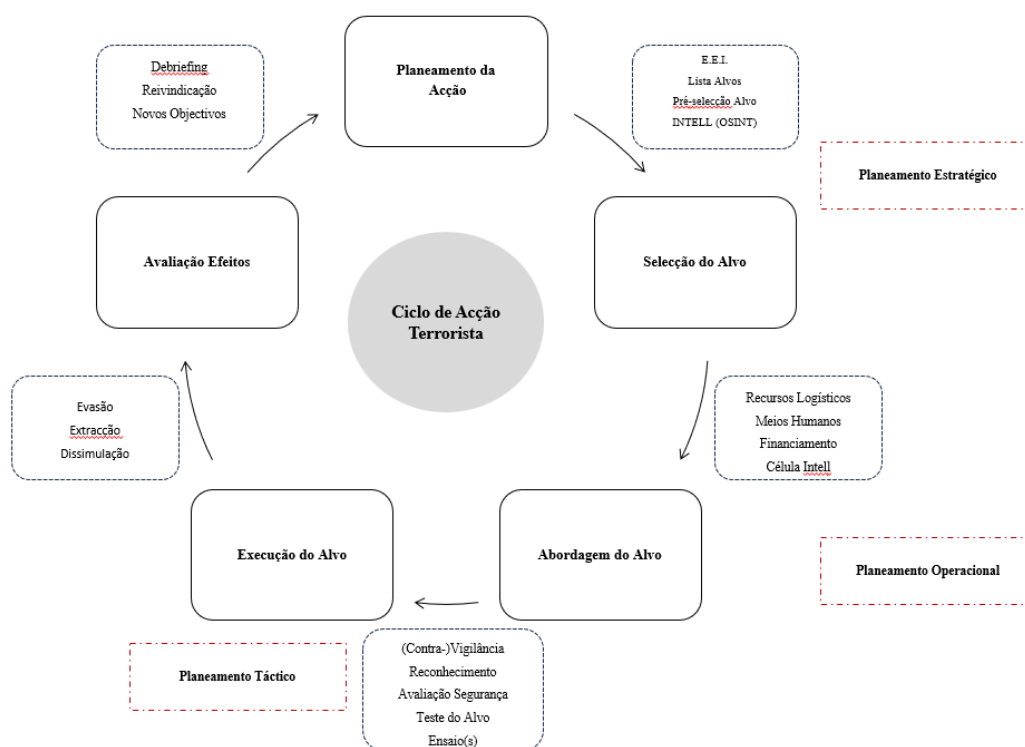


Drake (1998, p. 175), numa obra seminal, conclui que “embora os factores que influenciam a selecção dos alvos terroristas possam ser determinados, é mais difícil generalizar sobre a forma como eles interagem (...) porque, apesar das semelhanças superficiais, cada grupo terrorista é único no seu pessoal, na sua ideologia e no ambiente em que opera”.

Não muito diferente do proposto por Pluchinsky (2006), Drake (1998, pp. 175-178) admite a criação de um modelo que pode ser dividido em duas fases: 1) o processo pelo qual um alvo é seleccionado, e 2) o processo pelo qual os terroristas decidem se devem prosseguir com um ataque depois de terem seleccionado um alvo potencial. Esta primeira fase – a selecção de um alvo potencial – pode ser considerada como um processo pelo qual a liberdade de acção do terrorista é restringida pela influência de vários factores; a estratégia dos terroristas é limitada pelo ambiente de segurança (operacional), que lhes restringe a liberdade de acção, vista a necessidade de evitar a vigilância policial e a identificação e detenção dos seus operacionais, logrando assim a prevenção do ataque.

O ciclo de acção terrorista – ou “ciclo de ataque” –, em nosso entender, integra geralmente (5) cinco fases: 1) Planeamento da Acção; 2) Selecção do Alvo; 3) Abordagem do Alvo; 4) Execução do Alvo; 5) Avaliação de Efeitos. No decurso das cinco fases, e entre estas, podem ser elencadas outras acções-tipo, de natureza operacional ou tática, que configuram fases intermédias do ciclo, que podem ou não ocorrer, dependendo das capacidades do grupo, estrutura organizacional e especificidades do alvo, de composição e amplitude variáveis (Matos, 2016, p. 198).

Figura 1. Ciclo de Acção Terrorista



Legenda: [E.E.I.] – Elementos Essenciais de Informação Matos (2023; 2016, p. 198)



Processo de Decisão Terrorista

Para McCormick (2003, p. 473), o “processo de tomada de decisão terrorista” (TDM)¹⁴ pode ser explicado de acordo com três princípios teóricos: (1) teorias da estratégia, em que a decisão de emprego de terrorismo e outras formas de violência política é considerada uma escolha instrumental; (2) teorias organizacionais, em que as fontes da violência radicam na dinâmica interna do grupo terrorista; e (3) teorias psicológicas, nas quais essa decisão é explicada do ponto de vista do indivíduo.

Sobre a lógica das organizações clandestinas, Della Porta (1995, pp. 113 e ss.) refere que “existem duas explicações para a tomada de decisões em organizações clandestinas. Ou os grupos são considerados incapazes de ações estrategicamente orientadas, (...) ou presume-se que tenham objectivos ocultos, na maioria dos casos ligados a 'jogos sujos' no sistema de relações internacionais”. Della Porta estudou aprofundadamente o terrorismo de extrema-esquerda, de pendor marxista-leninista na Europa – em especial, as Brigadas Vermelhas e a Facção do Exército vermelho (RAF), também conhecido por Grupo Baader-Meinhof –, e em ambos os casos verificou a existência de um processo de tomada de decisão fortemente hierarquizado. Porém, em certos períodos de forte repressão de que eram alvo por parte do Estado, tiveram de descentralizar algumas das tomadas de decisão, em especial de ordem operacional e tática, por forma a evitar a localização e detenção dos seus membros.

O mesmo se verificou no contexto de organizações jihadistas, como a al-Qeda, até ao 11 de Setembro, ou o Daesh, até à queda de Baghuz, em 2019, que passaram de estruturas fortemente hierarquizadas e dependentes de um comando central, para uma descentralização horizontal que lhes conferisse, por um lado, uma maior imersão e clandestinidade, e, por outro, alguma capacidade operacional e tática para o planeamento e execução de ataques terroristas. A primeira, fê-lo através das suas extensões territoriais; O Daesh, a partir da dispersão dos seus membros e a sua integração, em outras regiões ou continentes, nas já existentes ou então formadas “Províncias” (*Wilayah*) do denominado “estado islâmico”, autoproclamado em 2014 por Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Todavia, importa não olvidar o factor “cadeia de comando” no processo de tomada de decisão terrorista: aos líderes, de topo e intermédios, responsáveis pelo planeamento estratégico, e operacional e tático, respectivamente, cabe a decisão de planear um ataque, a selecção de um alvo e o *timing* para a sua execução.

Nesse sentido, a importância de estudos centrados nos líderes das organizações terroristas pode, segundo alguns autores, levar à identificação do “código ou DNA da decisão”¹⁵ dos mesmos, permitindo uma maior capacidade de análise e prospectiva da(s) ameaça(s). A partir da teoria poli-heurística da tomada de decisão – de aplicação em variados contextos –, Mintz, Chatagnier & Samban (2020, pp. 2-5) concluem que

Grande parte dos estudos sobre a tomada de decisões terroristas sugere que esta pode ser amplamente entendida como o produto de cálculos racionais. Por outras palavras, as escolhas feitas pelos líderes das organizações

¹⁴ Terrorist Decision-Making.

¹⁵ O termo é de Mintz, Chatagnier & Samban (2020).



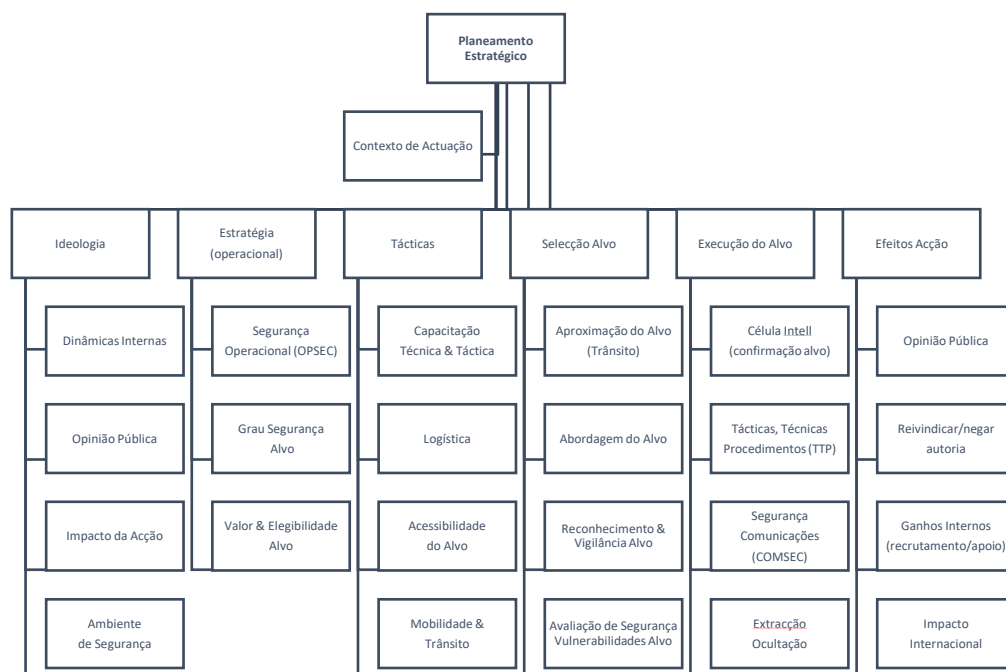
terroristas são o resultado de um comportamento orientado para a consecução maximizada de objectivos, onde os líderes escolhem a alternativa que produz o melhor de todos os resultados possíveis, esperados em todas as dimensões relevantes.

Em última análise, o proposto por Mintz, Chatagnier & Samban apresenta algumas semelhanças com o “código operacional” relevado por Nathan Leites em 1951, num estudo efectuado para a Rand Corporation, onde o autor analisa a estratégia política do bolchevismo – a partir dos escritos de Lenin e Stalin –, a partir da qual se podia extrair inferências quanto ao pensamento, sistema de crenças, narrativa e idiossincrasias dos seus líderes. Para Mintz, Chatagnier & Samban, “os terroristas podem ignorar grandes quantidades de informação relevante e, consequentemente, escolher alvos que não são os mais vulneráveis ou disponíveis” (p. 2).

McCormick (2003) considera que o processo de tomada de decisão terrorista pode ser avaliado, de modo abstracto, como um “sistema de controlo de verificação”, que visa identificar o curso de acção mais eficiente, atento os objetivos de segurança do grupo, por um lado, e a natureza do ambiente operacional, por outro. Dois factores que influenciam este processo são: 1) o grau de certeza das escolhas operacionais, que prosseguem fins estratégicos mais amplos e previamente delineados; e 2) capacidade de renúncia a ganhos imediatos, como forma de obtenção, a longo prazo, de fins estratégicos mais amplos.

Procedemos à esquematização do processo que, em nosso entender, percorre os diversos níveis de comando e planeamento de um ataque terrorista.

Figura 2. Planeamento de um ataque terrorista – níveis estratégico, operacional e tático



Fonte: Matos (2023), adaptado de Drake (1998); Matos (2016, 2022); Pluchinsky (2006)



No decurso do ciclo de acção terrorista, as células no terreno executam uma variedade de acções com vista ao reconhecimento do alvo: avaliação dos seus mecanismos e grau de segurança, planos de acesso e rotas de fuga, manobras de vigilância e contra-vigilância, ensaio ou teste do alvo – o que, em termos técnicos, se designa por reconhecimento hostil –, de cuja eficácia pode vir a depender o sucesso do planeamento e execução de um ataque terrorista.

De acordo com Stedmon & Lawson (2015) e O'Brien (2008), reconhecimento hostil e contraterrorismo são áreas recíprocas de pesquisa interdisciplinar, uma vez que, para a acção contraterrorista, o foco é compreender as intenções hostis dos terroristas e os meios pelos quais podem proceder à abordagem, reconhecimento, recolha de informação, vigilância e contra-vigilância sobre um alvo, enquanto ocultam a sua identidade e iludem a acção preventiva das forças e serviços de segurança.

Segundo O'Brien (2008), ao processo de obtenção de informações por parte dos terroristas deve corresponder um processo de sinal contrário, através do qual o contraterrorismo dissimula ou distorce a "imagem" que os terroristas têm do alvo, tornando-o elusivo e de mais difícil acesso e execução.

Alguns programas foram desenvolvidos para detectar e avaliar comportamentos e intenções hostis, tendo como variáveis de análise factos biológicos, fisiológicos, psicológicos e comportamentais (Eachus, Stedmon & Les Baillie, 2013, p. 703).

Inteligência e Contra-inteligência nas Organizações Terroristas

Algumas organizações terroristas de matriz islamista demonstraram já elevada competência nas áreas de inteligência e contra-inteligência, como mecanismos de segurança operacional e tática, de que são exemplos al-Qaeda, Daesh, Hezbollah, Hamas, Irmandade Muçulmana, entre outras. Fora do arco islamista, porém, outras organizações também o fizeram com elevada proficiência – como o (P)IRA, uma das mais antigas organizações terroristas ocidentais –, como se percebe pelo relato de McCallion (2020, p. 44):

Na tentativa de combater a crescente penetração da sua organização, tanto pelo MI5 como pela Secção Especial do RUC [16], o PIRA ["IRA Provisório"] formou unidades de segurança interna cuja única função era procurar e eliminar informadores suspeitos. Qualquer pessoa suspeita de fornecer informações aos britânicos estava sujeita a tortura e execução sumária. É uma ironia do destino que o membro do PIRA responsável pela segurança interna fosse, na verdade, um agente duplo do MI5. O IRA Provisório, bem como outras organizações terroristas republicanas, também começaram a treinar os seus membros em táticas básicas de contra-vigilância. Vigias, ou "dickers", eram implantados rotineiramente para tentar localizar equipas de vigilância adversária. Antes de as operações serem montadas, as ASUs (Active Service Units) também realizavam frequentemente acções ou

¹⁶ Royal Ulster Constabulary.



movimentações fictícias, na esperança de que fossem identificadas quaisquer unidades encobertas que estivessem a vigiá-los ou aos seus alvos.

Ou estoutro que Ilardi (2009) nos dá, em resultado de uma entrevista pessoal com Brendan Hughes, *alias* "The Dark", antigo chefe operacional do (P)IRA, relevando a importância da inteligência e contra-inteligência para a organização: "sem inteligência, esqueça isso...enviar uma pessoa com uma arma, sem uma boa base de inteligência, é criminoso. A inteligência é o coração da guerra. Sem isso, eles estão a caminhar no escuro".¹⁷

O terrorismo é, pois, uma ameaça perene. Enquanto técnica de acção violenta, é exercido de modo planeado, o que, no caso de grupos ou organizações minimamente estruturadas, implica o emprego de táticas, técnicas e procedimentos (TTP) há muito usados por agências estatais, espelhando frequentemente as suas estruturas, orgânica e *modus operandi*. Assim é no que se refere, *inter alia*, a questões de ordem militar, político-administrativa ou social. A inteligência e contra-inteligência – áreas em que este tipo de actores não-estatais melhor espelham essa analogia – assumem um papel primordial neste tipo de organizações, uma vez que determinam a sua segurança, coesão, longevidade e eficácia operativa (Matos, 2022).

No caso do terrorismo de matriz islamista, e em especial em grupos jihadistas, este tipo de actividades tem vindo a afirmar-se como um elemento-chave do seu código operacional. Alguns autores defendem a diferenciação entre a inteligência prosseguida pelos Estados e a "inteligência jihadista", pese embora o valor desta para ambos, e que Haberl (2023, p. 11) define como:

Inteligência jihadista é o processo de recolha e processamento de informações sobre actores e adversários nacionais ou internacionais, e seus agentes, com base em doutrinas militares islâmicas radicais, necessárias a um grupo para a sua segurança interna, a condução de actividades terroristas, para facilitar a implementação de objetivos e ideologias religiosas, evitar surpresas estratégicas e táticas e proteger agentes, processos e produtos da inteligência jihadista. (...) Em contraste com a versão governamental do ciclo de inteligência, podemos ver uma diferenciação muito clara quando se trata dos domínios da ideologia e da arte operacional. (...) O que a inteligência pode significar para um governo não é muito diferente do que significa para os grupos jihadistas.

Quando os grupos jihadistas recolhem informações, normalmente privilegiam fontes humanas.¹⁸ Em nada diferem de agências estatais que, embora conheçam bem o seu valor e alcance, as preterem em favor das variantes tecnológicas de recolha massiva de dados e informação.¹⁹ O primeiro, é um método de recolha pouco dispendioso e,

¹⁷ Brendan Hughes, *a.k.a.* "The Dark" (1948-2008); No mesmo sentido, Bowyer Bell (1994; 1995) e Bloom (2017).

¹⁸ Sobre este assunto, vide Matos (2022, pp. 267, 271-275).

¹⁹ Lowenthal (2006, p. 97) refere que "a espionagem fornece uma pequena parte do volume de informação recolhida. GEOINT e SIGINT produzem um maior volume de inteligência. Mas tanto a HUMINT como a SIGINT



seguramente, o mais antigo da história humana. Só através da HUMINT, dada a sua precisão, oportunidade e disponibilidade, é possível conhecer as intenções e os planos dos terroristas, seja penetrando a organização, seja através da manobra de infiltração. (Matos, 2022; Haberl, 2023, p. 21)²⁰

A actividade de HUMINT requer tempo para ser desenvolvida. Os oficiais do Serviço Clandestino da CIA, por exemplo, necessitam de aprender uma variedade de competências: línguas estrangeiras; conduzir, detectar ou iludir uma vigilância; habilidades de recrutamento e outros aspectos da “arte operacional” (*tradecraft*) da HUMINT; a capacidade de lidar com vários tipos de equipamentos de comunicação; treino com armamento diverso. Como todas as outras profissões, leva tempo para se tornar especialista. No caso da HUMINT, segundo aquela agência, pode levar até sete anos para se atingir maturidade técnica e operacional (Lowenthal, 2006, p. 95).

Para Lowenthal (2006, p. 94), a HUMINT envolve o envio de oficiais de informações do Serviço Clandestino (NOC)²¹ para países estrangeiros, onde tentam recrutar cidadãos estrangeiros para acções de espionagem. O ciclo de recrutamento de “agentes” (ARC)²² – ou processo de gestão de fontes humanas de informação – possui diversas etapas e uma terminologia própria. O ciclo tem cinco etapas: 1) Sinalização e captação; 2) Avaliação; 3) Abordagem e recrutamento; 4) Manipulação e controlo; 5) (Re)avaliação e/ou desactivação.²³

Para Rimington (2004, p. xiv), ex-directora do Serviço de Segurança britânico (MI5), “as fontes mais valiosas contra o terrorismo são os seres humanos, agentes de penetração de longo prazo, que permanecerão no local por um longo período e abrirão caminho para posições onde possam fornecer informações essenciais. Mas são as fontes mais difíceis de adquirir e, uma vez recrutadas, são muito difíceis de manter”.

A HUMINT apresenta também algumas desvantagens: não pode ser feita de forma remota, como no caso de diversos tipos de TECHINT; implica proximidade e acesso, o que pressupõe um confronto permanente com as capacidades de contra-espionagem do alvo. (Lowenthal, 2006, p. 97)

É muito difícil penetrar ou infiltrar uma organização terrorista com sucesso. “Os grupos terroristas geralmente recrutam a partir de bolsas diminutas de candidatos, de entre pessoas que se conhecem há anos. (...) talvez possa ser uma tarefa mais fácil infiltrar-se na Al Qaeda, que parece estar a recrutar jovens de todo o mundo para formação. Poderia

têm a grande vantagem de permitir acesso ao que está a ser dito, planeado e pensado. (...) Para alvos de inteligência em que a infraestrutura técnica pode ser irrelevante – como terrorismo, narcóticos ou crime internacional, onde a assinatura de actividades é pequena – a HUMINT pode ser a única fonte disponível.”

²⁰ Importa aqui diferenciar conceptualmente a manobra de “infiltração”, que se opera de fora para dentro da organização, da “penetração” de um alvo, que é conseguida quando um elemento que já pertence à sua estrutura organizativa, ou com este mantém relações funcionais, ou de acesso privilegiado, se dispõe a fornecer informações a partir do seu interior (Matos, 2012, p. 12).

²¹ Non-official cover.

²² Agent Recruitment Cycle.

²³ O recrutamento de agentes ocorre, em geral, em torno de uma matriz de “motivações” designada pelo acrónimo MICE: “Money”, “Ideology”, “Constraint” e “Ego”; uma matriz motivacional mais abrangente integra factores como amor, sexo, vingança, vaidade, culpa. O que importa, na aproximação e abordagem ao alvo de recrutamento, é identificar a existência de um ou mais destes factores – que, no caso, constituem vulnerabilidades, ou “portas de entrada” – e explorá-los com vista ao sucesso do processo de recrutamento (Denécé, 2008, p. 68; Matos, 2012, p. 17).



ser possível inserir uma fonte na fase de recrutamento, mas seria um processo lento...” (Rimington, 2004, p. xiv)²⁴.

Síntese Conclusiva

São muitos os exemplos bem-sucedidos do uso de inteligência e contra-inteligência por parte de algumas organizações terroristas. O seu uso proficiente, contudo, pressupõe que essas organizações tenham logrado já um nível sustentado de estruturação, liderança, comando, controlo e comunicações.

As operações terroristas são hoje mais sofisticadas e assentes em informações sólidas. A inteligência proveniente de fontes abertas – OSINT (*Open Source Intelligence*) – está disponível através da Internet, possibilitando a uma organização terrorista extrair fotos, mapas e outra informação relevante referente aos seus alvos. Isto permite um pré-planeamento dos alvos, e a sua eleição de entre uma lista de alvos possíveis, tendo em conta a sua localização, grau de segurança, acessibilidades e valor estratégico ou operacional. A este nível, a OSINT pode ser útil. Todavia, nas fases de aproximação e abordagem, será necessária informação só possível através do reconhecimento e vigilância física de um alvo.

Ao nível do planeamento estratégico, por exemplo, na al-Qaeda a cúpula da organização teve influência maior até aos ataques de Setembro de 2001. Após essa data, o exercício desse nível de planeamento foi descentralizado, nalguns casos, no comando local das suas extensões territoriais ou grupos afiliados, ainda que fosse auscultado o comando central da organização. Esta descentralização horizontal, porém, foi uma faca de dois gumes: por um lado, a capacidade de iniciativa operacional e tática, incluindo o processo de selecção de alvos; por outro, a emergência de excessos²⁵ de violência que causaram impacto negativo, não só na opinião pública internacional, como também entre a comunidade islamista global.

As marcas distintivas da “assinatura operacional” da al-Qaeda são a sua capacidade de penetração/infiltração de alvos; imersão em ambientes operacionais hostis, em resultado das suas capacidades em técnicas de ocultação, dissimulação e engano²⁶; controlo de comunicações seguras, chegando, numa fase posterior, ao simples contacto pessoal, por forma a evitar qualquer forma de rastreamento das agências de inteligência, em especial da sua cúpula dirigente. A toda esta cartilha operacional, acrescente-se uma ampla rede de apoio e de contactos nos países-alvo, que lhe permitiram, por um lado, assegurar o apoio logístico – casas seguras, documentação falsa, armamento e explosivos, viaturas, entre outros –, indispensável para o sucesso das operações; por outro, a capacidade para proceder a acções de reconhecimento, vigilância e contra-vigilância e manobras de ensaio ou teste dos alvos, exactamente com base nessa ampla rede de apoio.

²⁴ Rimington ilustra bem essa dificuldade quando refere que “os terroristas, tal como os espões, também se tornaram sofisticados e conscientes em matéria de segurança. Há muita informação disponível no domínio público sobre a vulnerabilidade à interceptação e rastreio de telemóveis, da Internet e de outros meios de comunicação, e sobre o que os satélites e outras técnicas de vigilância podem fazer. Mas têm de falar entre si, comunicar à distância e movimentar-se, o que os torna vulneráveis à recolha de informações técnicas” (p. xv).

²⁵ O maior exemplo é o da al-Qaeda no Iraque (AQ-I), grupo liderado por Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, entre 2004 e 2006, e que deu origem à famosa carta que al-Zawahiri dirigiu ao primeiro.

²⁶ Cf. Matos (2016; 2022)



O seu actual Emir, Saif al-Adel – ou Mohammed Salahuddin Zeidan²⁷ – teve um papel preponderante na génese e evolução da al-Qaeda, destacando-se em áreas como o treino militar²⁸, segurança da organização e protecção dos seus altos dignitários – em especial do seu anterior Emir, Osama bin Laden, sendo responsável pela formação do seu “corpo de bodyguards” –, e na área de inteligência e contra-inteligência. Saif al-Adel foi um oficial do exército egípcio, com o posto de tenente-coronel. Dada a sua longa experiência jihadista, com créditos firmados no Afeganistão, foi sempre visto como o sucessor natural de Ayman al-Zawahiri, após a morte deste, em Agosto de 2022, embora a sua nomeação só fosse confirmada já em 2023 (Soufan, 2017, pp. 47-53; 2021; Zoellner, 2023).

Para a al-Qaeda, “a defesa deve sempre preceder o ataque, para garantir que os planos possam ser executados com total confiança e certeza de sucesso” (Ilardi, 2009, p. 247). O seu *know-how* provém, em nossa opinião, da experiência acumulada de alguns factores: 1) resistência jihadista no Afeganistão; 2) conflito na Bósnia e Herzegovina; e 3) da experiência acumulada por bin Laden, entre 1992 e 1996, no seu “exílio” no Sudão, onde criou redes de influência jihadista e fontes de financiamento, legais e ilegais; 4) a experiência militar adquirida por alguns dos seus membros, como al-Adel ou Mohammed Atef²⁹, o chefe militar da organização entre 1996 e 2001.

Para lá das capacidades da al-Qaeda – ou mesmo do “moribundo” Daesh – em matéria de inteligência e contra-inteligência, outras organizações têm demonstrado grande capacidade de evolução e aperfeiçoamento das técnicas e procedimentos usados.

O Hamas, para além de investir vastos recursos em guerra psicológica (PSYOPS), de propaganda e desinformação, visando diversos públicos-alvo, tem desenvolvido eficazmente operações com recurso a agentes duplos.

Esta técnica, pouco estudada e do domínio da contra-inteligência, é extremamente útil no confronto assimétrico com actores estatais. Cria o efeito de “assimetria duplicada” (Flamer, 2022, 2023), replicando as fontes do oponente em seu favor. É um meio eficiente, de baixo custo, e que confunde as forças de defesa e de inteligência israelitas. Quando descoberto o seu papel de agentes duplos, não é possível ao actor estatal aferir da extensão e profundidade dos danos causados, tanto em matéria de informações, como de operações em curso, o que pode comprometer a segurança dos seus agentes e o sucesso das mesmas.

Destarte, podemos concluir que estas organizações terroristas demonstram grandes capacidades de aprendizagem e inovação – operacional e tática –, mimetizando técnicas e procedimentos de agências estatais, num processo adaptativo constante, tornando-as mais difíceis de identificar, localizar e rastrear, quer os seus membros, quer as suas acções violentas.

²⁷ Durante muito tempo, a biografia de al-Adel esteve ligada a um (aparentemente) seu homónimo, ex-coronel das forças especiais egípcias, mas de idade mais avançada.

²⁸ Coordenou o chamado “curso de comandos avançado”, onde ministrou matérias tão diversas como progressão tática, armas e explosivos, selecção de alvos, combate corpo-a-corpo, recolha de informação, vigilância e contra-vigilância, rapto e assassinato.

²⁹ Mohammed Atef [1944 (1951, 1956, 1958?) -2001], de nacionalidade egípcia, foi inicialmente lugar-tenente de Abu Ubayda al-Banshiri, o líder militar da al-Qaeda morto em 1996, data em que assumiu o lugar deste. Cf. <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/mohammed-atef>



À escala global, a al-Qaeda e o agora aparentemente “moribundo” Daesh, continuarão a ser ameaças potenciais e permanentes à segurança dos Estados. Na perspectiva contraterrorista, os Estados, individualmente, e a comunidade internacional, em conjunto, continuarão a prosseguir estratégias de alerta, prevenção e resposta à ameaça terrorista. Importa, ainda assim, não cair na armadilha de uma resposta cujo potencial e ímpeto ofusquem os critérios de proporcionalidade e legalidade, tão desejados num mundo livre e civilizado.

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A STATE SURROUNDED BY ENEMIES: THE HISTORY OF THE FORMATION OF ISRAEL'S GLOBAL SECURITY SYSTEM

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Abstract

The relevance of the research lies in Israel's long-standing conflict with hostile neighbours and the need for a robust global security system to ensure its stability and security. The aim of the study is to examine the development of Israel's global security system, exploring the current security challenges faced by the country, the strategies employed to counter potential threats, and the effectiveness of its security approach. The leading research methods are the historical and logical analysis, periodization, induction, deduction, comparison, and systematisation of approaches, which will help determine the history of the formation of Israel's security and its military-industrial complex. The study presents various approaches to the study and interpretation of the process of formation of Israel's global security system; analyses the works of historians, political scientists, and researchers dealing with the security of this country; describes the threat from neighbouring Arab countries and regional terrorist groups; focuses on various conflicts in which Israel was involved; suggests various methods and ways to avoid threats from Arab countries; describes current challenges to Israel's security; diagnoses parts of the systemic problems of Israeli security. The study's materials



are of practical and theoretical value for historians, political scientists, politicians, and diplomats, which will help them create optimal conditions for the development of their own country's security system. In addition, the information may be relevant for scholars and scientists who are interested in considering the historical significance of Israel as a country that independently defends its interests and is an important factor in the system of international politics.

Keywords

military conflict, Palestine, Arab-Israeli relations, Iran, Middle East.

Resumo

A relevância da investigação reside no conflito de longa data de Israel com vizinhos hostis e na necessidade de um sistema de segurança global robusto para garantir a sua estabilidade e segurança. O objetivo do estudo é examinar o desenvolvimento do sistema de segurança global de Israel, explorando os actuais desafios de segurança enfrentados pelo país, as estratégias utilizadas para combater potenciais ameaças e a eficácia da sua abordagem de segurança. Os principais métodos de investigação são a análise histórica e lógica, a periodização, a indução, a dedução, a comparação e a sistematização de abordagens, que ajudarão a determinar a história da formação da segurança de Israel e do seu complexo militar-industrial. O estudo apresenta várias abordagens ao estudo e à interpretação do processo de formação do sistema de segurança global de Israel; analisa os trabalhos de historiadores, cientistas políticos e investigadores que se ocupam da segurança deste país; descreve a ameaça dos países árabes vizinhos e dos grupos terroristas regionais; centra-se em vários conflitos em que Israel esteve envolvido; sugere vários métodos e formas de evitar as ameaças dos países árabes; descreve os actuais desafios à segurança de Israel; diagnostica partes dos problemas sistémicos da segurança israelita. Os materiais do estudo são de valor prático e teórico para historiadores, cientistas políticos, políticos e diplomatas, o que os ajudará a criar condições óptimas para o desenvolvimento do sistema de segurança do seu próprio país. Além disso, a informação pode ser relevante para académicos e cientistas que estejam interessados em considerar o significado histórico de Israel como um país que defende os seus interesses de forma independente e é um fator importante no sistema de política internacional.

Palavras-chave

conflito militar, Palestina, relações israelo-árabes, Irão, Médio Oriente.

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Introduction

Over the past two decades, Israel has established itself as a leading player in the international arena. Israel's foreign policy in the twenty-first century is well thought out and coherent. This is what allowed it to reach a high level of interaction with the world's leading countries. The state pays special attention to three areas: diplomacy, tourism, and religion. The multi-vector policy has led to active improvement of foreign and domestic issues. As a result, Israel has a high level of cybersecurity and significant security strategies. It is worth noting that one of the key threats to the security of Israeli citizens is terrorism. Such illegal and inhumane actions are typical for every continent of the world, but it is in the conflict-ridden Middle East that a large number of terrorist groups operate.

Of particular historical and political interest is Israel's experience in protecting its national security and countering terrorism (Tkachenko et al., 2024). A.V. Kucherenko (2019) describes the fight against terrorism in Israel as a key element of the policy. Among the main threats to Israel's regional security, the scientist identified the following: Palestinian Islamist Hamas; Islamic Movement of Israel (has 2 wings – South and North); Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which is a paramilitary Islamist organisation aimed at the destruction of Israel; "Al-Qaeda (terrorist organisation); Hezbollah (political party and paramilitary group); Syrian anti-government armed groups ("Army of Islam"). D. Menashri (2006) noted that the Islamic Revolution in Iran led to dramatic changes in the country's foreign policy outlook and its participation in the international arena. The country was and remains hostile to Israel. Iran was notable for its rejection of Zionism and the legitimacy



of the Jewish state. This attitude of Iranian politicians towards Israel has become an important factor in creating a strong security system. M. Furlan (2022) argues that Iran and Israel have been trying to strengthen their strategic position towards each other: Israel's attack on targets in Syria, and Iran's creation and development of weapons.

Scholars have explored an aspect of Israel's national success in cybersecurity through a critical look at the blending of military and civilian governance in the field of technology. Israel is a typical country that benefits from a highly interconnected military and industrial complex. Most studies indicate that high military spending negatively affects the economic aspects of countries. F. Cristiano (2021) noted that due to significant monetary investments, Israel's integrated management model has had a positive impact on companies in the global market in the field of cybersecurity. Israel's leadership in the security and cybersecurity system promotes international cooperation, especially with the United States (Arstanbekov et al., 2024). The research relevance is determined by the fact that the problem of Israel's security is not fully studied by scholars and requires further analysis. Since its creation, Israel has been forced to fight for its existence and effectively ensure the stability and peace of the State and its members (Bocheliuk et al., 2020). A.V. Gofman (2021) pointed out that the Jewish people see security as certain guarantees and certainty. The very origin of insecurity and hostility took place in 1948 when the State of Israel was established following United Nations (UN) Resolution 181 (2024). The Arab-Israeli conflict was born then, over disputes over territory and a just partition. R. Tarasiuk (2021) describes the situation with the countries in the Middle East as quite controversial, as each nation wants to emphasise its individuality.

The purpose of the research is to analyze the history of the formation of the global security system of Israel, studying the challenges of the country's modern security, methods of combating potential threats and the effectiveness of Israel's security strategy. The objectives of the article are as follows:

- To assess the impact of Israel's geopolitical position on its security strategy and role in international conflicts.
- To study the components of Israel's security system and assess its effectiveness in the face of modern threats.

Materials and Methods

The study utilized a comprehensive set of methods to analyze Israel's global security system. Theoretical methods were applied to examine political and historical literature, which included articles, monographs, and other scholarly works focused on the history of Israel's security system and its formation. This approach aimed to provide a deep understanding of military conflicts, particularly the disputes with Arab countries, and the evolving security strategies Israel employed. The goal of these methods was to generalize theoretical material and present a comprehensive overview of the challenges and evolution of Israel's security system over time.

The logical method played a crucial role in providing a systematic approach to studying the phenomenon. By applying deduction and the method of periodization, the study identified the historical stages in the development of Israel's relations with neighboring countries and its security system. This allowed the author to outline key periods that



significantly shaped Israel's security approach and its interactions with regional and global powers. Additionally, the systemic and structural method was used to organize and present events and historical facts in a coherent manner, ensuring that the analysis was both structured and comprehensive. This method helped to break down the complexities of Israel's security challenges and frame them within a larger geopolitical context.

The study used the method of comparison to examine various theoretical understandings of Israel's security system and its strategies for combating terrorism. By comparing different scholarly perspectives, the research was able to highlight key similarities and differences in the theoretical foundations surrounding Israel's defense mechanisms. This comparative approach provided insights into the effectiveness of Israel's security strategies and allowed for a deeper understanding of its military and diplomatic actions.

The method of periodization in this study was used to identify and analyze the main stages of the development of Israel's relations with other countries, in particular in the context of the formation and evolution of its global security system. Using this method, the author divided Israel's history into key periods that had the greatest impact on its security strategy and foreign relations. This made it possible to highlight important moments, such as the first military conflicts with Arab states, the creation and strengthening of the state of Israel, as well as the stages of development of relations with great powers such as the United States and the USSR.

The research also relied on diagnostic methods, which involved studying existing works by scholars, reviewing the results of scientific research, and gathering empirical facts. This approach was essential for collecting data on Israel's defense system, regional conflicts, and international relations. By grouping and analyzing this empirical evidence, the study was able to provide a clearer picture of the current state of Israel's security system and its challenges, ensuring that the research was both grounded in established scholarship and supported by real-world data.

The study of the problem was conducted in three stages. The first stage involved theoretical collection and analysis of existing approaches in history, political science and international relations on the history of the formation of Israel's global security system; the study of works devoted to this problem, its features, peculiarities and approaches to explanation; consideration of information from books, electronic articles, monographs, conferences, dissertations, which deeply and comprehensively reveal aspects and problems of Israel's political relations with its neighbours; the essence of Israel's leadership in the security and cybersecurity system, which contributes to the development of international cooperation, is shown; the main threats to Israel's regional security are identified; the relevance of this issue is revealed; brief reviews of scholars' research are presented and unexplored issues are identified; the problem, purpose, forms and methods (ways) of analysing this problem are highlighted, and a research plan is developed.

In the second stage, the research, analysis and design of tools to study the problem of the history of the formation of the global security system of the State of Israel were carried out; the features and aspects of this historical and political phenomenon were considered; the factors of the State's emergence and its historical development were identified; the process of international support for Israel was explained; the instability of



the Israeli security system in the past was substantiated; the largest military clashes with Arab states were presented; the results of the analysis were disclosed, which helped to identify the specifics of this problem; three main opposing groups in conflict with Israel were diagnosed; Israel's relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran were identified and their conflict was shown; the components of the country's security system were described; the conclusions drawn during the research work were systematised.

The third stage involves systematisation and classification of the material obtained in the course of analysing and studying scientific and theoretical works of scholars; substantiation of theoretical and practical conclusions and results of the study; a comparative analysis of studies and approaches aimed at studying the problem of Israel's political relations with Arab countries; systematisation of the main historical facts and data attesting to the US assistance in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; analyses Israel's diplomatic relations with Lebanon, Syria and Iraq; shows the importance of the Iron Dome technology for combating military threats; summarises and logically presents the results of the analysis of scholars' works and their contribution to political science; presents aspects of Israel's successful confrontations. Furthermore, the organisational principles of the country's national security strategy were described.

Results

Israel's Geopolitical Location and the Evolution of its Security Strategy in the Modern Context

Israel occupies a strategic and often contentious position, bridging the gap between the West and the East. Its unique geographical location has placed it at the crossroads of conflicting interests, with its borders serving as both a defense mechanism and a focal point for global geopolitics. The region has been home to the Jewish people for millennia, but due to a series of religious, political, and military conflicts, the Jewish population was displaced over centuries. The rise of the Zionist movement in the late 19th century was pivotal in fostering the return of Jews to their ancestral land. This movement gained momentum especially during the Enlightenment, when many European Jews began assimilating into broader European society, distancing themselves from their religious and cultural roots. The Holocaust, which began in the 1930s under Nazi Germany, marked a tragic turning point in Jewish history. Hitler's genocidal regime led to the systematic extermination of approximately six million Jews. Initially, proposals such as the plan to relocate Jews to Madagascar were suggested, but ultimately, the brutal Nazi campaign of eradication underscored the need for a safe haven. The trauma of the Holocaust catalyzed global support for the creation of a Jewish state, culminating in the establishment of Israel on May 14, 1948, following the United Nations Resolution 181 (2024), which called for the termination of the British Mandate in Palestine and the partition of the land into Jewish and Arab states.

Upon its declaration of independence, Israel was immediately surrounded by hostile Arab states that perceived its existence as a geopolitical threat. The subsequent Arab-Israeli conflict marked the beginning of a series of military confrontations, shaping Israel's defense and military strategies. Israel's resilience in the face of this external hostility can be attributed to both its internal unity and external support from global powers such as



the United States, the USSR, and Eastern European countries like Hungary, Poland, and Bulgaria. This support was driven by multiple factors, including the widespread influence of Zionism, the geopolitical importance of Israel as a bulwark against the Arab world, and the collective desire to provide a homeland for the Jewish people in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Israel's defense and security strategies evolved rapidly after the 1948 War of Independence, as the country faced continuous threats from neighboring Arab states. The ongoing conflicts, such as the Suez Crisis in 1956, the Six-Day War in 1967, and the Yom Kippur War in 1973, were critical in shaping Israel's military doctrines. Each of these conflicts not only secured Israeli territorial gains but also reinforced its strategic alliances, particularly with the United States, which has remained a cornerstone of Israel's security. Through these wars, Israel developed an advanced military-industrial complex, enabling it to maintain one of the most technologically sophisticated and effective defense systems in the world (Koen, 2017).

The rise of modern threats, including terrorism and regional instability, has further refined Israel's security strategy (Yevseiev et al., 2022). The Palestinian issue, particularly the status of Gaza, remains at the heart of Israel's security concerns. This issue not only fuels conflicts with neighboring Arab nations but also contributes to the broader instability in the Middle East. Iran, a regional power with strategic interests in challenging Israel's existence, has become a key adversary. Iran's pursuit of nuclear capabilities, coupled with its support for groups like Hezbollah and Hamas, has deepened the divide between the two nations. Israel's security policy, therefore, is shaped by its need to counter Iran's nuclear ambitions and its support for proxy militant groups, which Israel perceives as existential threats.

In addition, Israel's military strategy has adapted to new threats, including asymmetric warfare and cyber threats. The country's advanced technological capabilities, including its renowned Iron Dome missile defense system, have played a crucial role in mitigating attacks from Hezbollah, Hamas, and other militant groups. Israel has also become a global leader in cybersecurity, creating a robust defense against cyberattacks that could target critical infrastructure.

Israel's international role today is multifaceted, extending beyond military and defense matters. The country has established itself as a key player in international diplomacy, particularly through its alliances with Western powers like the United States and its growing relationships with former Arab adversaries, such as the UAE, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, following the normalization of relations under the Abraham Accords. This shift represents a significant change in the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East, highlighting Israel's strategic importance in regional stability and security. Israel's security strategy is not just a response to immediate threats but a complex, evolving framework shaped by its historical experiences, regional challenges, and global partnerships (Koen, 2017). Its role in contemporary geopolitics is firmly anchored in its defense capabilities, its alliances, and its strategic position in the Middle East, which continues to influence global security dynamics. The evolution of Israel's military and security strategies has made it a powerful, resilient state with a profound impact on both regional and global politics.



Formation of Israel's global security system

Israel, since its establishment, has faced numerous security challenges due to its geopolitical location and the ongoing regional conflicts. Over the years, Israel has developed one of the most advanced and effective defense systems in the world, largely driven by its military-industrial complex. The country's armed forces are equipped with state-of-the-art technology, including missile defense systems like the Iron Dome, designed to counter rocket and missile threats from hostile neighbors. Additionally, Israel has developed advanced cyber defense capabilities, contributing to its reputation as a global leader in cybersecurity.

The four major military confrontations that have defined Israel's defense strategy the War of Independence in 1948, the Suez Crisis in 1956, the Six-Day War in 1967, and the Yom Kippur War in 1973 highlight the central role of territorial disputes, particularly over the land allocated for the creation of a Palestinian state by United Nations Resolution 181 (2024). These wars shaped Israel's security policy and helped solidify its military doctrine. The disputes over Palestinian territories and the Gaza Strip remain core issues that continuously challenge Israel's national security (Vilks et al., 2024; Bilan et al., 2017).

A significant empirical factor contributing to the security threats Israel faces today is the ongoing issue of Palestinian statehood, which remains unresolved. This unresolved issue fuels hostility between Israel and various Arab countries, particularly in the context of territorial claims and the broader Arab-Israeli conflict. According to data from the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel has fought several conflicts with neighboring Arab countries, which have consistently opposed its right to exist. In 1948, the first Arab-Israeli war broke out, and Israel's survival was at risk, as it faced an alliance of Arab nations that sought to dismantle the newly established state.

In addition to traditional state-based adversaries, Israel now faces non-state threats such as the rise of radical groups. Iran, which plays a pivotal role in the Middle East, is a principal source of regional instability. It has consistently opposed Israel, and its nuclear ambitions have been a significant concern for Israeli security. Iran has also supported groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, which are designated as terrorist organizations by Israel. The empirical data on Iranian support for such groups indicates that they receive substantial funding and military support from Tehran, enabling them to continue operations against Israel. Turkey, a regional power, has increasingly engaged in confrontation with Israel, particularly over issues of geopolitical dominance in the Middle East. Although Turkey and Israel had strong diplomatic and military ties in the past, tensions have risen in recent years due to disagreements over Syria, the status of Jerusalem, and the treatment of Palestinians. These tensions have led to a growing divide between the two countries, with both sides increasingly engaging in military posturing and rhetoric.

Another emerging challenge comes from the Islamic State, which has expanded its reach beyond Iraq and Syria. Although IS does not directly pose a major existential threat to Israel, its affiliate groups, particularly "Wilayat Sinai" on the Egyptian Peninsula and the "Yarmouk Martyrs' Brigade" in Syria, operate near Israeli borders. These groups have carried out minor terrorist acts, but the overall threat from IS has been limited in comparison to other regional actors. However, the presence of these groups has



highlighted the volatility of Israel's security environment and the risks posed by transnational terrorist organizations.

The empirical data on terrorist activities against Israel confirms the ongoing nature of the security threat. According to reports from the Israeli Security Agency (Shin Bet), there have been hundreds of terrorist attacks in recent years, primarily from groups operating in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and neighboring countries. These attacks range from small-scale bombings to larger-scale coordinated assaults aimed at undermining Israeli security.

H. Shalizi (2015) concluded that this "state" sometimes attacks oil production facilities in Iraq and Syria, sells energy carriers, and weapons, and is engaged in theft of property. Outside of Iraq and Syria, the IS controls territories in Sinai, Afghanistan and Libya and has representation in Turkey, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan. G. Allison (2018) points out that Israel faces two IS affiliates on its immediate border: "Wilayat Sinai" on the Egyptian peninsula and the "Yarmouk Martyrs' Brigade" on the Syrian side. However, the IS does not pose a particular threat to Israel, conducting only minor terrorist acts.

Arab countries have very complicated relations with Israel due to religious and moral views and non-recognition of the existence of the state of Israel, as they consider these lands to be Palestinian (Zhukorska, 2024). It is worth noting that some countries find it unprofitable for economic and political reasons to oppose Israel, which destroys the unified position of the Arab world. In addition, all Arab countries that were members of the UN did not support United Nations Resolution 181 (2024), on the creation of two independent states near Palestine in 1947. This meant an aggressive attitude of the countries towards Israel (since 1948) when the Arab-Israeli conflict began to develop. After the official announcement of the establishment of the State of Israel, the Arab League (Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon) announced the deployment of its troops to Palestine, but in 1948 Israel won the war of independence, as it was supported by European countries and the United States. In addition, the unity of Arab countries was destroyed in the process of developing the Arab-Israeli conflict. For example, in 1967, the Six-Day War took place, where, after the defeat, Egypt and Jordan signed a ceasefire agreement with Israel. At the end of the war, the state of Israel established control over the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, and Egypt and Jordan were sharply criticised by the rest of the Arab world. At that time, the Arab League changed its position on Israel and began to put forward other conditions for political relations. An example is the creation of the Arab Peace Initiative, which agreed to end the Arab-Israeli conflict with the recognition of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israel's relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran are also rather specific. The following periods are worth highlighting here:

- Iran's vote against the UN Resolution on the partition of Palestine;
- in the 1950s, Iran de facto recognised Israel and opened a representative office in Tehran;
- after 1979, relations became more tense and reached the "nuclear" level (the peak of Israel's regional confrontation with Iran).



These relations between the countries have always been ambiguous, because before the 1979 revolution, Iran had good relations with Israel. After the normalisation of Israel's relations with certain Arab countries and due to changes in the regional geopolitical situation, Iran and Israel became enemies. A. Arnold et al. (2021) argue that Iran has begun to produce its nuclear weapons, having access to foreign models of such weapons. This state also supports radical groups and terrorist organisations in the Middle East (Hamas, Hezbollah).

E. Kuvonchbek (2022) points out that the Israeli security system has several components, each with its specific tasks. The first is the Israeli Armed Forces, which directly guarantee the security, sovereignty, and integrity of the state. The second area is law enforcement agencies (police and special services), which ensure the internal security and stability of the country. They can identify new threats and challenges to the country's security. The third component is the diplomatic service, represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which pursues a policy of preventive diplomacy and defends Israel's interests at the international level.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) was founded during the War of Independence of the State of Israel. The main threats are Iran, the Hezbollah group, and the Hamas movement, so it is important to provide the IDF with the strongest ground forces, which use advanced fighter aircraft and other aircraft technologies. Israel's law enforcement agencies maintain order in society and contribute to internal security (Apakhayev et al., 2017). In addition, such services can conduct intelligence activities and identify hidden threats and challenges. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially performs the following tasks: improving the country's foreign policy position and its international legitimation; taking preventive measures against Iran's nuclear programme; ensuring regional stability and strengthening mechanisms to prevent terrorist activities; and maintaining the alliance with the United States as the country's mainstay. It should be noted that it is the role of the United States that is important in ensuring Israel's security, as it is this country that provides systematic financial and technological assistance.

Discussion

Israel has established itself as a military and defence stronghold in the Middle East, which has a strong security system, as its existence is threatened by the Arab world. The study revealed the historical aspects of the formation of Israel's security and its interaction with Arab countries. The author proved the strength and resilience of the Jewish people, who are ready to fight for their land and existence. In addition, the tasks of the country's security system were demonstrated and the importance of the IDF was substantiated. Prospects for further work and research should be to identify possible processes for resolving the conflict between Arab countries and Israel.

As a result of regional challenges and problems in the Middle East (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), the Syrian refugee crisis), many Arab states rely on Israel for resources to fight terrorism, create intelligence and receive military support. M. Klein (2018) points out that Egypt is Israel's strongest ally. This is confirmed by the signing of a peace treaty in 1979. The two countries share common goals and can conduct military operations against ISIS. In addition, they have both restored diplomatic relations and embassies, and Egypt has enlisted Israel's support in their common commitment to



defeat Hamas (the Palestinian Islamic movement and political party). It is also worth highlighting the secretive relationship between Saudi Arabia and the Jewish state, where the common interest is to combat Iranian influence in the region. As a result of this need, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia are seeking to overcome the challenge of Palestinian statehood and propose normalising political relations. Jordan is also worth mentioning, as it faces serious terrorist threats at home and has enemies among its neighbours. It needs to have a partnership with a country that has the most effective forces in the field of technologies and methods of fighting terrorism. After the 1994 peace treaty, Jordanian-Israeli relations were shaky, but relatively recently Israel has donated attack helicopters and military equipment to Jordan, which has helped stabilise relations between the two countries. The present study reveals the phenomenon of Israel's military conflicts from a radically different perspective, pointing to the existing positive dynamics in relations with Arab countries.

An important issue of discussion is the Arab-Israeli conflict, which was considered by the author. According to historical data, it originated in 1967 or even with the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. A. Dowty (2020) notes that the first roots of the conflict can be seen in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century when there were constant clashes between religious and ethnic groups in Palestine. It has been proven that the existing Arab inhabitants considered the new Jewish settlers to be Europeans and had a negative attitude towards them. In addition, Jewish settlers wanted to minimise all obstacles to their settlement. This study demonstrates that the Middle East is still dominated by an irreconcilable conflict. B.A. Sandoval (2021) examined the current militarised response of the United States and Israel to Palestine, identifying the negative impact of this policy on the Palestinian and Israeli people, as well as the military-industrial complex that benefits from the US-Israeli relationship. It is also the military industry that profits greatly from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but despite billions of US dollars, Israel has not been able to build peace in the region. This research offers several alternatives to US and Israeli foreign policy towards Palestine and the military industry. According to the author, political influence and support for Israel should be focused on moving away from Israeli armed digital technologies and military capabilities and looking for other alternatives.

Yu.S. Skorokhod (2011) focused on the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. This study analysed the approaches of the parties to the conflict and the Security Council member states to resolve the confrontation. In July 2006, Israel launched a military action against Hezbollah. The reason was the launch of several rockets from Lebanon towards Israel and an attack on an Israeli patrol that resulted in the death of soldiers. Lebanon argued that Israel's actions were a manifestation of aggression and should be immediately resolved. The document did not demand the immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanese territory but only stated that the UN Security Council would make efforts to resolve the conflict. Moreover, the resolution allowed Israeli troops to remain in the occupied territory for a certain period. Most importantly, the resolution called for an end to the conflict and hostilities based on an immediate cessation of Hezbollah's activities and an Israeli offensive. The emphasis was placed on offensive actions, which is why Arab politicians believe that Israel had official permission to carry out military actions in southern Lebanon. The experience of the UN Security Council's settlement of the 2006 conflict between Israel and Hezbollah only proved the indecisive position of the Security Council members, who tried to adjust



events to their advantage and resolve the conflict following their interests. This experience only gives grounds for distrust in effective decision-making in the institutional sphere. The study partially reveals Israel's conflictual relations with other countries.

Israel's security challenges are not only defined by external threats but also by the complex dynamics within its own population and society. The interplay between internal social changes and national security concerns has profound implications for the country's stability and future (Maulenov et al., 2024; Alekseeva et al., 2023). Israel's population, characterized by a diverse mix of ethnic, religious, and political groups, plays a critical role in shaping its national security strategies. As Israel continues to grow both economically and demographically, it faces significant internal divisions, particularly between Jewish and Arab populations, as well as between different social classes. These divisions can undermine national solidarity, making it difficult to align strategic goals with available resources. Addressing these internal tensions is essential for ensuring that Israel's security strategies are not only effective but also inclusive and sustainable (Hunko, 2023). This complexity is compounded by Israel's ongoing territorial disputes and its need for defensible borders, which remain central to the national security discourse. Thus, understanding the social fabric of Israel and its internal cohesion is as crucial as addressing the external threats it faces.

Israel also faces major security challenges from Iran's aspirations for regional hegemony, as evidenced by the country's nuclear development (since 2003). The second deep problem is related to the Palestinians and regional conflicts. These conflicts affect Israel's identity as a Jewish democratic state that is facing internal social changes. Although the country is experiencing population growth and economic and scientific advancement, there are also divisions of national solidarity that are exacerbating social class divisions. Therefore, Israel needs to develop a national security strategy to find the right balance between national goals and resources. In addition, the cohesion of the nation, and the link between strategic goals and resilience are equally important. The problem of securing defensible borders has long been a major issue for Israel as a result of territorial conflicts and confrontations. The core of the state's national security strategy is revealed through the activities of the political leadership. The information presented here clarifies the principles and approaches to the strategic development of Israel's security system, which complements the data on tasks in this area.

Israel's conflicts with other countries should also be emphasised and considered in more detail. M. Berger (2020) notes that Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq have no diplomatic or friendly ties with Israel. The state of Israel occupied part of southern Lebanon for 15 years. In addition, tensions remain high between Israel and Hezbollah, a Lebanese Shiite militant group. There is also a long-standing enmity with Syria, as Israel annexed the Golan Heights in 1967. Although relations with Iraq are tense, strong alliances have been forged with the Kurds in northern Iraq based on trade. It is also worth noting the conflict between Iran and Israel, which arose in 1979 when a revolution overthrew the Shah of Iran. The majority of Iran's population is Shiite Muslims, so this country is the main threat against the backdrop of a growing alliance with like-minded United States and other Arab states. Turkey and Israel have unofficially had close military relations, but in recent years they have deteriorated as Turkey seeks to play a more prominent regional role. A.O. Khudoliy (2018) notes that there were also deeper differences between the countries over Iran, Israel's nuclear programme, and the issue of Israeli settlements in the West



Bank. All these issues created obstacles to the normalisation of relations. Relations with Iran in the last three decades have been built on certain principles of situational benefit. V.O. Mustipan (2020) points out that during the Iran-Iraq war, Israel supplied modern weapons to Iran. In addition, it refused to impose sanctions on Iran. These actions are taken not to harm the large Jewish diaspora in Tehran. At the time of the Islamic Revolution, their relations were quite friendly, then secretly partnered (until 1992), and from 1993 to the present day they have become hostile.

Israel's security strategy is based on a defensive approach aimed at ensuring the existence of the state, engaging in active political and military efforts, and creating an effective system to combat threats. G. Eisenkot and G. Siboni (2019) describe Israel's military strategy as offensive and based on continuous action and improvement. To gain military achievements, Israel needs to demonstrate its victory and succeed at the strategic level. The country has to use the concept of an "iron wall", which will be crucial for maintaining territorial integrity and security in the region. In the national command system, it is the Security Cabinet that is the supreme commander, with the Chief of the General Staff being slightly lower in rank. The Israeli General Security Service (Shabak) and the Mossad are subordinate to the Prime Minister, and the Police Commissioner must follow the orders of the Minister of Public Security. The authors of this study also highlighted the organisational principles of the country's national security strategy:

1. Improving the strength and resilience of the nation by serving national security and identifying the potential of the people.
2. Coordination of actions and efforts to develop national security, which will lead to a quick response and maximum flexibility to respond to various challenges.
3. Ensuring the process of deterring enemies by strengthening the national army and adapting it to the challenges of the present.
4. The determination to use significant military force if necessary.
5. Use of preventive measures during periods of calm (strengthening deterrence against enemies in the regional arena, limiting their actions, damaging their capabilities and communication channels).

The state of victory and convincing other countries of their strength is achieved when the enemy leadership realises that a confrontation with Israel will not be successful and will lead to the loss of assets and the status of the political leadership. Israel proves that it can defend itself in the following ways:

- by having a rapid military operation supported by all security organisations with the IDF on the offensive (military ground manoeuvres, operational and strategic attacks, confrontations, special operations, cyber strikes, psychological pressure);
- by using national defence capabilities to minimise damage to society;
- by creating international legitimacy for Israel's goals.



Such concepts influence clear strategic actions and indicate an effective security system for Israel as a country surrounded by enemies. This deepens the information considered on the components of the security system and its tasks.

I. Slesinger (2022) examined Israel's technologically advanced short-range missile defence system, the Iron Dome, which offers many opportunities to create a secure environment but also has limitations. This system uses algorithmic processing to quickly detect and intercept incoming missiles. It has gained a great deal of media coverage and discourse in the current conflict in Gaza. V. Tkachenko (2022) describes the Iron Dome by providing some facts: On 10 March 2012, the system destroyed 90% of the rockets fired from the Gaza Strip; in November 2012, the system intercepted and destroyed more than 400 rockets. In addition, it can hit aircraft at an altitude of up to 10 km. An important feature of this system is its targeting of specific threats and short-range missiles. This confirms the author's statement about Israel as a powerful country with an effective security system.

That is, Israel is a country bordering Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine, as well as the Gaza Strip, which poses a significant threat to the country's national and regional security. The guiding principles of the state's national security strategy are aimed at creating a domestic and international political coalition that would stop the enemy from achieving its goals. The State of Israel is characterised by actions that are coordinated with the relevant parties in the international space to achieve success in strategic and operational-military directions.

Conclusions

Israel is a country that has conflicting relations with many countries in the Middle East (Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan). Regional threats and challenges are becoming increasingly large-scale and inevitable. All this threatens the country's regional security. In addition, Israel's statehood is being challenged by the Palestinian problem and the Gaza Strip. All terrorist and hostile actions by other countries are aimed at destroying Israel's statehood for ideological reasons and dissatisfaction with the existence of Israeli statehood. The study shows that due to this situation, Israel has developed its strategic security system to ensure its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Although Israel has a strong defence system and a strong army, it should reassess its effectiveness, as hostile actors are rapidly advancing in their technological and military capabilities.

The author states that Israel adheres to the concept of avoiding prolonged wars and is trying to build up its military potential. The military strategy is also characterised by strong army strikes, transfer of hostilities to enemy territory and rapid achievement of goals. Only a deep discussion of national values, initiative and action can strengthen Israel as a democratic Jewish state. Strengthening the ties of diaspora Jewry is becoming a fundamental need for Israel's national security and power. The research materials are of practical and theoretical value for historians, political scientists, diplomats, sociologists, politicians, and international figures, which will help them create optimal conditions for the development of their own country's security system. In addition, the information may be relevant for scholars and scientists who are interested in considering the historical significance of Israel as a country that independently defends its interests and is an important state in international politics.



It is worth continuing the study and deepening it by analysing the historical development of Israel's security system in the process of dynamic improvement. The research conducted does not exhaust all aspects of this historical and political problem and requires further consideration of such issues as the possibility of resolving the conflict with the Arab states; the importance of international assistance and support for improving Israel's defence capabilities and its ability to fight terrorism.

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IROCRACIA EN LA GUERRA ENTRE RUSIA Y UCRANIA ANGERCACY IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

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Resumen

Los estudios más recientes en Relaciones Internacionales han dado un giro epistemológico donde se incluyen aspectos no tradicionales para explicar la política internacional. El involucramiento de las emociones permite ampliar los instrumentos de análisis y herramientas de comprensión sobre el comportamiento de los actores internacionales. A partir de la hibridación de la ira como emoción negativa con el régimen político autocrático, este artículo propone el concepto de la irocracia como una característica en las formas de gobernar y de interactuar de los líderes autoritarios. La propuesta se concentra en el caso de estudio de la invasión de Rusia a Ucrania de 2022. ¿Rusia y Ucrania son Estados iracundos? Esta investigación comprueba que la ira es un marco útil dentro de las Relaciones Internacionales para interpretar las acciones hostiles entre Moscú y Kiev. A través de la revisión de literatura especializada, se utilizaron fuentes primarias y secundarias para sugerir que, mientras Vladimir Putin es un irócrata al gobernar desde la ira, Volodymyr Zelensky gobierna con ira tras la agresión. Para afirmar lo anterior, la ira se entiende como una emoción negativa, experimentada subjetivamente como un estado de antagonismo hacia algo que se percibe como fuente de un evento adverso. La percepción de la amenaza o violación de la identidad existencial, activan la ira como mecanismo de respuesta y defensa, que eventualmente, se traduce en agresión contra el otro. Entonces, Rusia y Ucrania son Estados iracundos. Finalmente, este análisis pretende ofrecer algunas ideas que pueden servir para continuar el análisis de las Relaciones Internacionales desde las emociones, particularmente desde la ira..

Palabras clave

Irocracia, Rusia, Ucrania, emociones, Relaciones Internacionales.

Abstract

The most recent studies in International Relations have given an epistemological turn where non-traditional aspects are included to explain international politics. The involvement of emotions allows us to broaden the instruments of analysis and tools for understanding the



behavior of international actors. Based on the hybridization of anger as a negative emotion with the autocratic political regime, this article proposes the concept of angercracy as a characteristic in the ways of governing and interacting of authoritarian leaders. The proposal focuses on the case study of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Are Russia and Ukraine angry states? This research proves that anger is a useful framework within International Relations to interpret hostile actions between Moscow and Kiev. Through the review of specialized literature, primary and secondary sources were used to suggest that, while Vladimir Putin is an angercrat by governing from anger, Volodymyr Zelensky governs with anger after aggression. To assert the above, anger is understood as a negative emotion, subjectively experienced as a state of antagonism toward something that is perceived as the source of an adverse event. The perception of threat or violation of existential identity activates anger as a response and defense mechanism, which eventually translates into aggression against the other. Thus, Russia and Ukraine are angry states. Finally, this analysis intends to offer some ideas that may serve to continue the analysis of International Relations from the point of view of emotions, particularly from the point of view of anger.

Keywords

Angercracy, Russia, Ukraine, emotions, International Relations.

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IROCRACIA EN LA GUERRA ENTRE RUSIA Y UCRANIA **ANGERCRACY IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR**

CÉSAR NIÑO

Introducción

La decisión de un Estado de agredir a otro y las dinámicas del comportamiento de los actores que influyen en la seguridad internacional, están supeditadas a las emociones humanas, solo que poca atención han tenido en los estudios de las Relaciones Internacionales (RI) (Crawford, 2000). Su tratamiento tangencial en la literatura académica dentro de las RI supone un protagonismo de la generalización de la racionalidad como balance entre costos y beneficios de las acciones (Banton, 1995; Crawford, 2000).

Con base en lo anterior, Brent Sasley (2013) identifica tres enfoques que explican el papel de las emociones dentro de los campos de estudio de las RI. El primero asume al Estado como una entidad unitaria e indivisible que no tiene en cuenta las fuerzas exógenas que influyen en los tomadores de decisiones. El segundo enfoque se centra en el estudio del comportamiento de los líderes de un Estado (Brecher, Steinberg, y Stein, 1969). Esta perspectiva resalta en los análisis de la política exterior contemporáneos porque equipara las funciones estatales con las humanas (Wendt, 2004). El tercer enfoque, aborda las emociones al considerar a los Estados como avatares de convergencia dentro de lo biológico mental de los individuos y los intereses grupales para su interacción en el sistema internacional (Sasley, 2013; Steele, 2014). Entonces, los dos últimos enfoques funcionan como marcos para concebir a la ira como herramienta emocional explicativa del comportamiento de los Estados. Lo anterior reafirma la tesis de Rupert Brodersen (2018) de que hay un “giro emocional” en las RI.

La ira, para efectos de este artículo, se entiende como una emoción negativa, experimentada subjetivamente como un estado de antagonismo hacia algo que se percibe como fuente de un evento adverso (Novaco, 2017). La percepción de la amenaza o violación de la identidad existencial, activan la ira como mecanismo de respuesta y defensa, que eventualmente, se traduce en agresión contra el otro (Novaco, 2017; Butler, 2021). Es una emoción que no se puede conjugar como una acción, pero sí las determina.

Por consiguiente, para Alexander Wendt (2004; 1995), los Estados son producto de las construcciones sociales y estas a su vez, por imaginarios identitarios de las personas de una comunidad. Si los individuos de una sociedad experimentan y sufren emociones,



entonces los Estados también. Si lo anterior es cierto, la ira puede ser un marco explicativo del comportamiento de los Estados a través de sus líderes políticos. De ahí surge un cuestionamiento: ¿Rusia y Ucrania son Estados iracundos? El objetivo principal es, por tanto, comprobar que la ira es un marco útil dentro de las RI para interpretar las acciones hostiles entre Rusia y Ucrania.

Para responder lo anterior, este artículo está construido de la siguiente manera. En primer lugar, se analiza el papel de la ira en las RI contemporáneas. En esta sección, con algunos ejemplos tanto de finales del siglo XX como de inicios del XXI, se explica cómo la "diplomacia de la ira" ha estado presente en algunos acontecimientos en los que las potencias se han visto involucradas. La segunda sección se trata del caso de estudio de este artículo. Allí se sugiere que la guerra entre Rusia y Ucrania iniciada en febrero de 2022, se explica desde las iras en pugna. En tercer lugar, se propone el concepto de "irocracia" como una suerte de gobierno desde el estado de la ira.

Aproximación metodológica

Este estudio parte de un enfoque metodológico transdisciplinar que combina el análisis de fuentes primarias y secundarias, junto con la revisión de reportes oficiales, para examinar el papel de la ira como mecanismo político en el contexto de la guerra de agresión de Rusia contra Ucrania, iniciada en febrero de 2022. La investigación se nutre de documentos gubernamentales, declaraciones oficiales, discursos políticos, análisis de expertos y cobertura mediática, lo que permite una reconstrucción detallada de los eventos y las narrativas emocionales que han caracterizado este conflicto. Además, se incorporan reflexiones y hallazgos derivados de un proyecto previo sobre la política exterior rusa, centrado en la construcción discursiva del "enemigo" como herramienta de legitimación política.

El caso de la denominada "operación militar especial" lanzada por el gobierno ruso sirve como eje central para explorar cómo la ira —entendida como una emoción política— ha sido instrumentalizada para justificar acciones bélicas, movilizar apoyo doméstico y consolidar narrativas de confrontación. A través de una lectura transdisciplinar que integra perspectivas de las Relaciones Internacionales, la psicología política y los estudios de emociones, este trabajo busca ofrecer un marco analítico innovador para comprender el papel de las emociones en la política global contemporánea.

La ira en las Relaciones Internacionales contemporáneas

A través de la construcción epistemológica en las RI, las emociones, especialmente la ira, han estado presentes pero marginadas del foco teórico convencional. Esta ha pasado desapercibida como categoría analítica, incluso como forma de interacción en la política exterior y en los mecanismos mediante los cuales los Estados han hecho la guerra (Sasley, 2013).

El inicio del siglo XXI tuvo emociones marcadas que ameritan una especial atención desde las RI. Dominique Moïsi (2009), sugirió que la geopolítica contemporánea se caracteriza por un choque de emociones. Afirmó que Occidente, tras el 11 de septiembre de 2001, está gobernado por el miedo, mientras que Oriente experimenta humillación y odio, pero



en algunos casos, esperanza (Moïsi, 2009). Por su parte, Joslyn Barnhart (2020) apunta a que los Estados que sufren eventos humillantes tienen más probabilidades de involucrarse en conflictos armados con el propósito de restaurar su imagen e identidad, es el caso de Alemania tras la Primera Guerra Mundial y su explosión iracunda que conlleva a la Segunda.

El siglo XXI ha traído nuevas preocupaciones que se desmarcan de los cánones tradicionales de los enfoques teóricos de las RI. Mientras las clásicas perspectivas académicas mostraron que las guerras eran producto de motivaciones expansionistas (Clausewitz, 1989), ansias de control territorial (Rose, 1998), rivalidades entre la noción de amigo-enemigo (Schmitt, 2009; Eco 2011) y de equilibrios naturales dentro de un sistema internacional anárquico (Morgenthau, 1949), las nuevas aproximaciones sugieren que las emociones, como el amor (Hartnett, 2023) y especialmente la ira, tiene un protagonismo relevante en la seguridad internacional y la diplomacia. Esto porque las emociones son las que mueven las decisiones de los individuos en la conducción del Estado y forjan las interacciones de los actores en el sistema internacional.

Por un lado, Brent Sasley (2013) sostiene que los académicos recientemente han buscado explorar los efectos de los estados emocionales de formas más explícitas en la política internacional (Koschut, 2022), por ejemplo, Liane Hartnett (2023) sugiere que el amor desempeña una función de orden al proporcionar significado y propósito a los acuerdos políticos. Por otra parte, Daniel Drezner (2022) advierte que las naciones ansiosas, son naciones peligrosas. En efecto, a propósito de la ira, Drezner menciona que los autores clásicos como Tucídides, Hobbes o Maquiavelo la tuvieron en cuenta, pero de forma marginal en sus reflexiones filosóficas y de teoría política. Por otro lado, Todd Hall (2011), construyó el concepto de la "diplomacia de la ira". Esta entendida como la acción que los líderes políticos eligen en respuesta a una supuesta violación contra su identidad o existencia. Su análisis tuvo como caso de estudio la crisis diplomática del Estrecho de Taiwán (1995-1996). Allí explicó que, tras presiones de las élites políticas estadounidenses, el gobierno de Bill Clinton recibió de manera oficial al entonces presidente de Taiwán, Lee Teng-hui.

Lo anterior motivó la ira de la República Popular de China tras su estrategia diplomática de aislar a Taipéi del sistema internacional (Bi, 2010). Para Beijing, la invitación de Washington fue una violación y una agresión a los acuerdos de la política de "Una sola China". La ira de Jiang Zemin se tradujo en ejercicios militares y una fuerte retórica hostil sobre Taiwán y el resto de Occidente (Hall, 2011; Bi, 2010).

Para Kai He y Huiyun Feng (2009), Taiwán es uno de los puntos más peligrosos para la seguridad internacional tras el fin de la Guerra Fría. De hecho, según los autores, los estudiosos de la continua crisis entre Beijing y Taipéi la han explicado desde dos argumentos principales (He y Feng, 2009, p. 502). La primera es la teoría de la "diplomacia coercitiva" (Ross, 2000), que sugiere que la demostración de fuerza de China es una estrategia de disuasión para oponerse a la independencia de Taiwán. La segunda es el modelo "militar agresivo" (Scobell, 2000), que explica que las acciones militares de China contra Taiwán están impulsadas por líderes militares chinos de línea conservadora apoyados por el consenso de las élites civiles (He y Feng, 2009). En últimas, ambos enfoques convergen en una manifestación de ira como respuesta a la sensación de violación de la integridad de la idea china.



De esa manera, la diplomacia de la ira tiene su propia lógica, inercia y trayectoria que responde a una vulneración percibida (Hall 2011, p. 522). La ira se convierte en una herramienta sólida para explicar el comportamiento de algunos Estados a través de sus líderes (Brecher, Steinberg, y Stein, 1969; Banton, 1995), especialmente en la guerra (Hall, 2011). En ese sentido, las emociones subyacen a las creencias y a la toma de decisiones racionales (Agnew, 2014; Mercer, 2010). La diplomacia de la ira también puede constatar en varios ejemplos contemporáneos. Para empezar, la respuesta desproporcional y asimétrica de Estados Unidos tras los ataques terroristas del 11 de septiembre de 2001. Allí, George W. Bush asumió una violación a la identidad estadounidense y percibió una amenaza existencial que se tradujo en una respuesta iracunda (van Wyk, 2017): una guerra global contra el terrorismo que permitió la invasión a Afganistán de 2001 y posteriormente, con nuevos pretextos de armas de destrucción masiva, la intervención en Irak de 2003 (Asad, 2010). Otro caso relevante, está en las acciones que se llevaron a cabo por parte de Israel en la Segunda Guerra del Líbano de 2006 para definir un enemigo (Hall, 2011; Tzabag, 2013). Ese enemigo era asimétrico y sobre él se depositó la ira de Israel por medios militares (Tzabag, 2013).

El 7 de agosto de 2008, tropas de Georgia atacan a Osetia del Sur desatando la ira de Rusia. Moscú sintió vulnerada su seguridad a través de una violación a su soberanía por delegación, pues Osetia del Sur se había autoproclamado república prorrusa desde 1992 (Fawn, 2012). En esta oportunidad, el presidente georgiano Mijeíl Saakashvili, sintió ira por los movimientos separatistas y preparó la operación militar "Campo Limpio" contra Moscú para recuperar el territorio. Por su parte Rusia, bajo el liderazgo del presidente Dmitri Medvedev, lanzó un ataque sobre Georgia con la premisa de ser una "intervención legítima" (Karagiannis, 2013). Luego de cinco días, la ira de Moscú por medio de mecanismos militares se impuso sobre Tbilisi, evento que le sirvió para redefinir sus fronteras. Bajo los anteriores contextos, la ira se ha producido bajo la percepción de amenaza existencial y es vehículo de agresiones armadas para reestablecer las lógicas de identidad y configurar un imperativo moral (Brodersen, 2018).

Rusia y Ucrania: ¿Iras en pugna?

Ira rusa

La ira como emoción humana no distingue tendencia política ni ideológica (Reis-Dennis, 2019). Sin embargo, Peter Calvert (2000) aseguró que la ira tiene un protagonismo particular en los regímenes autoritarios porque es una motivación clave para diseñar la política y, a menudo, funciona para justificar el uso de la agresión física para crear un orden relativamente mejor (Calvert, 2000). Mientras que, en los regímenes democráticos, la ira paraliza la política y erosiona los niveles de confianza en las instituciones (Webster, Connors, y Sinclair, 2022). Lo anterior es la base para comprender que, a través de la ira, Rusia como régimen no democrático, ha construido su enemigo en Ucrania para redefinir su posición ontológica en el mundo (Niño, d'Auria, y Pinto, 2023).

El 24 de febrero de 2022, el presidente ruso, Vladimir Putin, anunció el inicio de la "operación militar especial". Se trató de un plan de agresión militar sobre Ucrania que, en principio, consistió en la conquista territorial de ese país y la caída del régimen de



Volodymyr Zelensky. La decisión del Kremlin de invadir a Kiev es el resultado de emociones mediante las cuales Moscú sintió violaciones y agresiones a su integridad. Las emociones desde Rusia se configuran bajo tres dimensiones. El miedo porque Rusia teme que Ucrania se una a la Organización del Tratado del Atlántico Norte (OTAN), rabia porque el gobierno de Putin está enojado por el apoyo ucraniano a los separatistas en el Donbás, y, finalmente, venganza porque Moscú quiere cobrar por el derrocamiento del presidente prorruso Viktor Yanukovich en 2014. Como respuesta, a través de mecanismos militares, la ira del gobierno ruso se tramita por medio de la decisión de agredir a Ucrania.

Elias Götz y Jørgen Staun (2022) subrayaron dos motivaciones de Rusia para atacar a Ucrania. La primera responde a un sentimiento de vulnerabilidad frente a Occidente, traducida en el acercamiento e intención de Ucrania por pertenecer a la OTAN. La segunda motivación tiene que ver con la idea de su derecho a un estatus de gran poder (Dunford, 2023). De tal suerte, Putin percibió la inercia de Ucrania hacia Occidente como una gran amenaza tanto para los intereses de seguridad de Rusia como para sus aspiraciones de estatus (Götz y Staun, 2022; Heisbourg, 2023). Producto de lo anterior, Moscú entró en ira y se radicalizó frente a la coexistencia con un actor que concibe como un otro a destruir (McFaul y Götz, 2020).

La ira de Rusia hacia Ucrania se puede rastrear en las desconexiones territoriales tras el fin de la Unión Soviética. Desde el régimen de Stalin, la visión sobre lo extranjero ha sido de prevención y de amenaza, por tanto, cuando Ucrania se independiza en 1992, se convierte en su enemigo (Melnikova, 2013; Niño, d'Auria, y Pinto, 2023). Un actor que materializa la ira del Kremlin incluso en la idea de asegurar oficialmente que Ucrania no existe (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2023). Tras el establecimiento de Ucrania como Estado independiente, surgieron grupos de extrema derecha que se inspiraron en el legado nacionalista previo. Durante las tres décadas siguientes, se produjeron divisiones y conflictos en torno a la orientación estratégica y geopolítica de Ucrania (Dunford, 2023; Mankoff, 2022). Una cuestión que vulneró las sensibilidades rusas, pues la ira actual de Putin se alimenta de una nostalgia imperial. En efecto, las formas del gobierno ruso para interactuar con Ucrania están determinadas por las toxicidades de Putin como autócrata. Ucrania es el actor referente y material en el que convergen las emociones más negativas del gobierno ruso contemporáneo, de hecho, el ascenso del *ruscismo* como práctica totalitaria, sugiere una sistematicidad en la reproducción de iras en aras de la destrucción del otro (Meyer, 2022; Reuters, 2022).

La operación militar especial de 2022 fue la respuesta a la sensación rusa de vulnerabilidad de la identidad imperial de Moscú que venía tomando forma desde 2014 (Doris y Graham, 2022). Una apuesta por la destrucción total como la que ocurrió en la toma de Grozni en 1999 (Pilloni, 2000). En mayo de 2014 el gobierno de Vladimir Putin invade y anexa Crimea a su territorio produciendo que grupos separatistas prorrusos reclamaran la creación de la República Popular de Donetsk y la República Popular de Lugansk (Barbashin y Thoburn, 2014). En julio de ese mismo año, los separatistas derribaron un avión civil sobre Ucrania con un sistema de misiles llamado *Buk TELAR* que fue suministrado por el Kremlin (Luxmoore, 2023; The Associated Press, 2023). Lo anterior motivó a que Ucrania solicitara el respaldo de Occidente, y en 2017 Washington, bajo la administración de Donald Trump, aprueba la primera venta de armas defensivas a Kiev, situación que se mantiene en 2023 bajo el gobierno de Joseph Biden (Garamone, 2023).



La ira rusa se agudizó en abril de 2019 cuando en Ucrania es elegido presidente Volodymyr Zelensky con la promesa de recuperar la zona del Donbás (Lynch, 2019). Por eso, a partir de ese momento, el gobierno de Putin asumió a la administración de Zelensky como la forma más concreta de vulneración de su proyecto político (McFaul, 2020; Grachev, 2005). Entre 2019 y 2021, Moscú acumuló tropas y armamento pesado en la frontera con Ucrania y dispuso del territorio de Belarús para abarcar mayor espacio militarizado. Solo hasta diciembre de 2021, Rusia hace públicas sus condiciones para reducir la tensión militar en la zona, que Ucrania desista de su intención de adherirse a la OTAN y que ésta retire sus tropas de Europa del Este. Las peticiones rusas no se cumplieron y tras eso, en febrero de 2022 Vladimir Putin reconoce la independencia de Donetsk y Lugansk para lanzar una invasión sobre nueve regiones en Ucrania (Presidencia de Rusia, 2022). Entonces, la tesis rusa es que Ucrania es un país dividido, y, por tanto, Rusia sostiene que su operación militar especial se basa en la necesidad de liberar las regiones prorrusas y traerlas de vuelta a donde pertenecían originalmente (Carment y Belo, 2022; Niño, d'Auria, y Pinto, 2023). Desde la invasión, la sistematicidad de los ataques sobre el territorio ucraniano ha mostrado la posición agresiva y ofensiva, especialmente sobre objetivos civiles, una muestra de un régimen iracundo.

La posición oficial de Rusia consiste en sostener que se debe eliminar todo tipo de configuraciones occidentales que perturben el sistema de valores espirituales y morales tradicionales rusos (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2023). Significa que la ira rusa pasa por Ucrania, pero no termina con la destrucción de ella. La ira de Moscú ha pretendido generar un miedo suficiente que desborde las fronteras ucranianas y atemorice a Occidente, por eso en marzo de 2022 los ataques rusos sobre la ciudad de Chernóbil que dejaron sin electricidad a la región recordaron la tragedia nuclear de 1986 (Tobias, 2022). Las acciones hostiles del Kremlin han provocado una masiva migración ucraniana sobre Europa, pero también ha habido una ira de la sociedad rusa por las agresiones de su gobierno. De hecho, se nota por primera vez que ciudadanos de un Estado agresor huyen de la guerra, migran porque su país ha invadido a otro y no porque sean víctimas de una invasión extranjera. Las cifras son comparables con la huida de personas dentro del marco de la Revolución Bolchevique de 1917 y del colapso de la Unión Soviética en 1991 (Ebel y Llyushina, 2023). La ira ciudadana es el resultado de una sensación de vulneración de la identidad y existencia tanto individual como colectiva por las acciones de un gobierno. De continuar así, la erosión de la identidad civil rusa puede llevar a la desaparición de la nación rusa: un Estado sin nación.

Tras la cumbre de la OTAN de 2023 en Lituania, en la que se acepta el ingreso a la organización de Suecia, la postura iracunda de Putin se incrementó. Su decisión de poner arsenal nuclear y desplegar grupos paramilitares en Belarús preocupa a Europa. Por eso, en julio de 2023 Polonia reaccionó y movilizó militares al este del país, hecho que produjo una reacción de frases públicas que se enmarcan dentro del sarcasmo y la ira de Putin: *"Rusia utilizará todos los medios a su alcance para defender a Belarús"*, *"Polonia busca invadir Minsk"*, *"desencadenar una agresión contra Belarús significaría un ataque contra la Federación Rusa"*, *"Los territorios occidentales de la actual Polonia son un regalo de Stalin a los polacos, ¿se han olvidado de esto nuestros amigos en Varsovia?...Se lo recordaremos"* (Roth, 2023).

En las frases dichas por Vladimir Putin, la ira se muestra en varios aspectos. Por ejemplo, el uso de palabras como "agresión", "amenaza" y "ataque" sugiere que Putin está molesto



por la situación actual. Además, el uso de frases retóricas como "¿se han olvidado de esto nuestros amigos en Varsovia?" sugiere que Putin está tratando de provocar a Polonia y hacer de la evidencia histórica un instrumento intimidatorio para una eventual agresión.

Ira ucraniana: defensiva y ofensiva

Ucrania es una nación en trauma y con una ira manifiesta por la supervivencia (Lyons, 2023). Su ira es el resultado de las acciones de un Estado ruso matoneador (Shevstosva, 2021) que ha sido capaz de invalidar el derecho a existir de Ucrania (Vidmar, 2015).

En esta oportunidad, la ira ucraniana es efecto del intento de sustracción de su identidad nacional e individual. Una inseguridad ontológica que pasa por comprender que, si Moscú deja de atacar, Rusia y su élite seguirán existiendo, pero si Ucrania depone las armas, ésta desaparece (Lyons, 2023; Snyder, 2022). El cálculo emocional del gobierno de Putin fue traumar a la nación ucraniana para tener una ventaja militar. Una estrategia de desgaste moral que haría que su enemigo sintiera su abstracción identitaria y cediera terreno para ser ocupado por las tropas del Kremlin. Sin embargo, ha sido todo lo contrario.

La nación ucraniana bajo el liderazgo del presidente Volodymyr Zelensky, ha logrado tramitar la ira en resistencia para la supervivencia. Hay una construcción de seguridad ontológica determinada que brinda la identidad de su lugar en el mundo (Browning y Joenniemi, 2017; Krickel-Choi, 2022). La superioridad militar rusa no ha sido directamente proporcional a la intención inicial de la operación militar especial, que Ucrania cayera en 72 horas. La explicación, entre otras, tiene que ver con la capacidad creativa de la resistencia ucraniana, que es más del círculo civil que del militar (Costello y Mironova, 2022). Mientras para Rusia la ira que justifica la invasión sobre Ucrania reposa en el gobierno del Kremlin, la ira ucraniana es colectiva, popular, ciudadana y se justifica a partir de su derecho a existir. Por ejemplo, en Melitopol, una de las ciudades más grandes capturadas por Rusia en marzo de 2022, Putin ordenó el secuestro del alcalde Ivan Fyodorov, de etnia rusa, para poner un delegado suyo al mando. La situación provocó reacciones violentas de la ciudadanía y en las calles la gente gritaba "*Libertad para el alcalde*" y "*Los soldados rusos son ocupantes fascistas*" al tiempo que ondeaban banderas ucranianas (Filseth, 2022). Aquel episodio mostró el inicio de resistencias ciudadanas y posturas colectivas que respaldaron las decisiones del gobierno ucraniano de luchar contra la agresión rusa.

Con base en lo anterior, poniendo el foco en la perspectiva de Ucrania, la ira que resiste es una configuración de geopolítica cotidiana (Wolfe et al., 2023). Durante los primeros seis meses de la invasión, la posición de Kiev era defensiva, pero a partir de agosto de 2022, dentro del marco de la batalla de Jersón, se convirtió en ofensiva. La resistencia e ira de los ucranianos ha impulsado avances tácticos en la recuperación de terreno invadido por Moscú. Pasar de la defensa al ataque significa la elaboración de un proceso lo suficiente motivador: la necesidad de pervivir. Desde el gobierno ucraniano ha habido una iniciativa de enviar aviones no tripulados para el reconocimiento y ataque dentro de Rusia (Psaropoulos, 2023). Esa situación ha provocado temores en el Kremlin por la capacidad destructiva y el pánico colectivo. La ira de Ucrania se ha convertido en el vehículo para sostener la ofensiva bajo el apoyo militar y moral de Occidente (República Federal de Alemania, 2023). El respaldo de las potencias de la OTAN es, entre otras, una



suerte de legitimación de la ira de Kiev, pues por primera vez, Rusia no tiene aliados en Occidente (Milosevich-Juaristi, 2023). No obstante, la ofensiva ucraniana no ha avanzado tan rápido como los líderes políticos han querido (Lopez, 2023).

El gobierno ucraniano sostiene que ha recuperado alrededor de 60 millas cuadradas de Jersón (Lopez, 2023). Tras el motín mercenario en Rusia del 27 de junio de 2023, algunas investigaciones han empezado a sugerir que de la ira ucraniana se puede sacar provecho para motivar una fractura en los frentes militares y dentro de la población civil, porque tanto militares como civiles, tienen familiares ucranianos. Lo anterior, puede generarle una sensación y emoción de optimismo a Ucrania, el tiempo atmosférico le favorece, pues aún tiene meses secos y soleados, y un suelo compacto antes de que las lluvias dificulten los avances militares (Lopez, 2023). El motín de Wagner evidenció las fisuras y debilidades del Kremlin y encontró vulnerabilidades en las defensas rusas de la frontera.

Entonces, atacar los símbolos provoca ira (Barnhart, 2020). A Ucrania, Putin le ha vulnerado muchos de sus símbolos, no solo aquellos relativos a su identidad nacional, historia o posición geográfica que ya son suficientes para experimentar dicha emoción. También, algunos físicos que comprometen la vida de ciudadanos, e incluso, la seguridad internacional (Austin, 2019). Entre ellos, está el ataque a la planta nuclear de Chernóbil, la voladura de la represa de Kajovka y la de Zaporíyia, ataque que también llevó a cabo Stalin en 1941, así como la peligrosa acción militar sobre la planta nuclear en Dniéper (Ahn, 2023), la más grande de Europa. Todo lo anterior, hace parte de los repertorios emocionales donde la ira cobra un especial sentido. En esta oportunidad, desde la orilla ucraniana, se muestran respuestas agresivas frente a la defensa por la existencia (Tidy, 2022).

Irocracia, el gobierno desde la ira

La ira, como emoción política, ha sido objeto de estudio en la motivación de la violencia étnica, la movilización del apoyo público y la toma de decisiones estratégicas. La ira es una de las cuatro emociones clave — junto con el miedo, el resentimiento y el odio — que pueden impulsar la violencia étnica (Schaller, 2005). Sin embargo, a diferencia de las otras tres, la ira no es instrumental, no busca un fin específico, sino que surge como un deseo de "arremeter" (Schaller, 2005; Seaton y Wu, 2023). Esta emoción se genera en contextos de jerarquías étnicas y cambios políticos, donde la percepción de injusticia puede llevar a un grupo a sentir resentimiento, miedo o, en casos de mayor intensidad, ira. En ese sentido, la ira puede dirigirse hacia objetivos variables y no necesariamente racionales, lo que la convierte en un factor impredecible en los conflictos étnicos. Es importante destacar que estas emociones, incluida la ira, no son meros impulsos irracionales, sino respuestas a interpretaciones de la realidad basadas en información y creencias (Schaller, 2005).

Para Seaton y Wu (2023) la ira desempeña un papel crucial en la formulación de políticas exteriores y la movilización del apoyo público. Los líderes políticos a menudo utilizan la ira para persuadir a la ciudadanía de respaldar acciones militares. Un ejemplo emblemático es el caso de la Guerra de Irak, donde el presidente George W. Bush empleó un lenguaje cargado de emociones negativas, como el miedo y la ira, para justificar la invasión en la lucha global contra el terrorismo (Rapoport, 2022). La investigación de Seaton y Wu muestra que la ira, puede ser más efectiva para movilizar el apoyo público



a acciones militares que las emociones positivas para iniciativas de paz (Seaton y Wu, 2023).

Por su parte, Mercer (2010) argumenta que la ira funciona como evidencia en la toma de decisiones, especialmente en contextos estratégicos. Los líderes políticos pueden interpretar sus propias emociones, como la ira, como indicadores de que su reputación o credibilidad están en riesgo, lo que los impulsa a actuar de manera decisiva. Con base en lo anterior, la ira puede influir en cómo se evalúan los costos y riesgos de una acción, así como en la interpretación de las señales de otros actores (Mercer, 2010; 2013). Por ejemplo, la ira puede llevar a un líder a descartar señales de advertencia o a sobreestimar la amenaza de un adversario.

La ira es una emoción movilizadora y una de las más frecuentes en política (Carver y Harmon-Jones, 2009; Fraccaroli, Druker, y Blyth, 2022). Dentro del marco de la guerra entre Rusia y Ucrania, la ira se convirtió en una emoción que responde a la intención de supervivencia, tanto para la idea de rusificar el antiguo espacio eslavo, como para marcar la existencia de Ucrania.

El gobierno desde la ira o la *irocracia*, es la forma de tomar decisiones con base en la emoción negativa y voluntaria de agredir al otro tras sentir vulnerada la propia identidad. Puede incluso afirmarse que hay *irócratas* capaces de conducir la ira como mecanismo de interacción política con la noción de imponer cosmovisiones absolutas. Sin embargo, el proceso de toma de decisiones a partir de la ira sugiere que el *irócrata* es el gobernante que ha hecho de la ira una forma de autoritarismo doméstico y expresión violenta sobre lo extranjero, mientras que el gobernante y el colectivo ciudadano que recibe la ira del otro gobierna con ira. Lo anterior quiere decir que mientras Vladimir Putin es un *irócrata* al gobernar desde la ira, Volodymyr Zelensky gobierna con ira.

La *irocracia* es una característica de las formas de gobernar de líderes autoritarios. Todo autócrata gobierna desde la ira y la muestra reprimiendo a sus gobernados y agrediendo a otros Estados cuando siente vulnerada o violada su identidad existencial. A diferencia de regímenes democráticos donde la ira de los gobernantes se degrada en el proceso de toma de decisiones por medio del imperio de la ley (McVeigh, 2021; Woody, 1968), en los autoritarios es la herramienta para darle forma a los abusos del líder tanto internos como externos. Es una manera de encontrar su lugar en el mundo. Pues si en un gobierno democrático donde las instituciones del sistema cumplen sus roles, el líder quiere abusar desde sus emociones, hay sanciones gracias al sistema de frenos y contrapesos (Corduneanu-Huci, 2019). Mientras que, en una dictadura, la ira del autócrata es una institución, una *irocracia*.

Los *irócratas* se permiten el uso de todo tipo de instrumentos por conservar su régimen. El estado de conservación de su autoridad sobre la ciudadanía reposa en mostrar una ira implacable sobre cualquier acción que se salga de los cánones autocráticos. Si la estabilidad de su régimen se ve amenazada por condiciones externas, validan formas de autoconservación, así sea con el empleo de fuerzas mercenarias (Liik, 2022), es el caso de la Rusia de Putin.



Tabla 1. Ejemplos de *irócratas* recientes

Irócrata	País	Agresión sobre población nacional	Agresiones sobre otros Estados
<i>Kim Jong-un</i>	Corea del Norte	Represión política, hambruna, trabajos forzados	Desarrollo de armas nucleares y amenaza a Corea del Sur, Japón, Estados Unidos y Australia.
<i>Vladimir Putin</i>	Rusia	Represión política, asesinato de opositores, destrucción de Chechenia.	Invasión a Ucrania, agresión a Georgia.
<i>Xi Jinping</i>	China	Represión política, vigilancia masiva, trabajo forzado	Intervención militar en Etiopía.
<i>Recep Tayyip Erdoğan</i>	Türkiye	Represión política, censura, trabajo forzado, represión política.	Intervención militar en Siria
<i>Saddam Hussein</i>	Irak	Represión política, trabajos forzados, desaparición forzada.	Guerra contra Irán, invasión de Kuwait.
<i>Idi Amin</i>	Uganda	Ejecuciones extrajudiciales, desaparición forzada, esterilización forzada.	Invasión a Tanzania
<i>Robert Mugabe</i>	Zimbabue	Represión política, hambruna, ataques sexuales.	Intervención en guerra civil de Mozambique
<i>Omar al-Bashir</i>	Sudán	Genocidio, política, desaparición forzada.	Guerra civil en Sudán del Sur
<i>Paul Kagame</i>	Ruanda	Genocidio, desaparición forzada.	Guerra civil en Congo-Kinshasa

Fuente: elaboración propia.

No obstante, algunos autores han sugerido que la manera sobre cómo se ha diseñado y mostrado la política exterior rusa desde febrero de 2022, es producto de un realismo duro (Flockhart y Korosteleva, 2022). Sin embargo, hay una gran diferencia entre el realismo como enfoque teórico que interpreta las acciones racionales en nombre del Estado para su supervivencia, y un comportamiento iracundo. El primero es un proceso lógico en un sistema anárquico por la búsqueda del interés nacional y la supervivencia asumiendo que los otros actores son fuentes de competencia (Morgenthau, 1949; Buzan, 1993), el otro, es producto de una vulneración de ego que se intenta pasar por interés nacional (van Wyk, 2017). La muestra está en que la ira de Ucrania no es una amenaza existencial para Moscú, mientras que la ira de Rusia es una amenaza para la existencia de Kiev.

Conclusión

Las emociones se han visto en las Relaciones Internacionales como subproductos irracionales de los procesos cognitivos y, hasta hace relativamente poco, permanecieron poco teorizadas en las cuestiones internacionales (Koschut, 2022). Las dimensiones emocionales no estuvieron priorizadas en las clásicas agendas de investigación sobre los procesos de elección racional ni en las lógicas de interacción política. De tal suerte, el giro epistemológico ha dado origen a su involucramiento para el análisis de los problemas



mundiales. En ese sentido, es relevante mostrar que la ira como emoción, es un instrumento valioso para el análisis dentro de los estudios de las RI. Para eso, la invasión de Rusia a Ucrania ocurrida desde febrero de 2022 se convierte en el estudio de caso que ejemplifica las formas de la ira. De hecho, tras el motín de Wagner de junio de 2023 contra la autoridad de Putin, produjo en el líder ruso una respuesta desde la ira que tuvo como consecuencia la muerte de Yevgeny Prigozhin.

En esta investigación, se mostró que la ira influye en las formas de interacción política. Con base en la guerra de agresión de Rusia a Ucrania, este artículo propuso un marco analítico novedoso, la *irocracia*. El concepto es producto de una hibridación de la ira como emoción negativa y ofensiva con el régimen político autocrático, es una característica en las formas de gobernar y de interactuar de los líderes autoritarios. Es por eso que, mientras Vladimir Putin es un *irócrata* al gobernar desde la ira, Volodymyr Zelensky gobierna con ira tras la agresión.

Finalmente, este documento sirve para dar pistas sobre nuevas líneas de investigación dentro de marcos disruptivos en los estudios de las Relaciones Internacionales. Hacer una lectura de las maneras sobre cómo la ira permite ciertas tensiones internacionales, produce nuevos marcos interpretativos para explicar las posiciones de los gobernantes y los embates globales.

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ANALYSIS OF NEW APPROACHES TO CRIMINAL LIABILITY FOR EVADING MILITARY CONSCRIPTION IN UKRAINE IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Since the start of the full-scale invasion, Ukraine has been actively transforming its social system, renewing its political leadership in various areas, and improving its legislation to reflect the current situation. However, due to active mobilisation processes carried out by the authorities and the internal convictions of many persons liable for military service, the problem of avoiding military service arises. This includes crossing the state border both legally and illegally. Additionally, it is important to analyse how these changes are reflected in the international arena, including the migration of conscripts and their attempts to evade service abroad, as well as the reaction of EU countries. Given these aspects, it is crucial to assess how changes in Ukrainian legislation and mobilisation practices affect global security challenges, including the allocation of military resources, defence strategies, and international defence cooperation. The study employs systematic analysis and synthesis, formal legal and dialectical methods, and legal document analysis as scientific knowledge tools. Furthermore, this research explores Ukraine's approach to mobilization within the framework of international human rights standards, particularly the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), international extradition treaties, and relevant case law from the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR).

Keywords

Military conscription; mobilization; criminal liability; electronic summonses; evasion of military conscription.

Resumo

Desde o início da invasão em grande escala, a Ucrânia tem vindo a transformar ativamente o seu sistema social, a renovar a sua liderança política em várias áreas e a melhorar a sua legislação de modo a refletir a situação atual. No entanto, devido aos processos de mobilização ativa levados a cabo pelas autoridades e às convicções internas de muitas pessoas sujeitas ao serviço militar surge o desafio de o evitar. Isto inclui a travessia da fronteira do Estado, tanto legal como ilegalmente. Além disso, é importante analisar a forma como estas mudanças



se refletem na cena internacional, incluindo a migração de recrutas e as suas tentativas de evasão do serviço militar no estrangeiro, bem como a reação dos países da UE. Tendo em conta estes aspetos, é crucial avaliar a forma como as mudanças na legislação ucraniana e as práticas de mobilização afetam os desafios da segurança global, incluindo a atribuição de recursos militares, as estratégias de defesa e a cooperação internacional neste domínio. O estudo utiliza a análise e a síntese sistemáticas, os métodos jurídicos formais e dialéticos e a análise de documentos jurídicos como ferramentas de conhecimento científico. Além disso, esta investigação explora a abordagem da Ucrânia à mobilização no âmbito das normas internacionais de direitos humanos, em particular a Convenção Europeia dos Direitos do Homem (CEDH), os tratados internacionais de extradição e a jurisprudência relevante do Tribunal Europeu dos Direitos do Homem (TEDH).

Palavras-chave

Alistamento militar; mobilização; responsabilidade penal; citações electrónicas; evasão ao alistamento militar.

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ANALYSIS OF NEW APPROACHES TO CRIMINAL LIABILITY FOR EVADING MILITARY CONSCRIPTION IN UKRAINE IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

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1. Introduction

The full-scale invasion brought a number of changes to Ukraine's rule-making, ranging from the introduction of martial law to changes in mobilisation processes. The more these mobilisation processes expanded and multiplied, and the more stringent the requirements became for all those subject to mobilisation, the more frequent were cases of evasion of mobilisation by various means. Accordingly, criminal liability for evading mobilisation was strengthened, and a huge number of amendments relating directly to mobilisation processes are still under consideration, with a particular focus on punishment for evading mobilisation.

Undoubtedly, the analysis of new approaches to criminal liability for evading conscription in Ukraine requires consideration of both the domestic legal framework and broader global security challenges (Nedozhogina, 2019). Ukraine is facing unprecedented external and internal security issues due to the circumstances on the battlefield. The constant need to maintain a strong defence of the country and the fight against a powerful state that has been accumulating resources, including human resources, for war for years requires strong decisions and adaptation of legislation to the current reality.

Given the topic of the study, it is important to understand the current legal framework that is designed to regulate military conscription in Ukraine. It's about the Laws "On Mobilisation Preparation and Mobilisation", "On Military Duty and Military Service", etc., as well as about the legal acts directly regulating the issue of liability for evasion of mobilisation, in particular the Criminal Code of Ukraine. The recent legislative changes that are directly aimed at combating mobilisation evasion also require significant attention (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 1993; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 1992; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2001).



It is also important to note that the challenges facing Ukraine in terms of the security of its territorial integrity go far beyond its borders and are gaining momentum globally. The situation on the frontline clearly demonstrates the ability to deter the aggressor, but this requires weapons, equipment and human resources. In general, the war between two countries that are initially on unequal terms leads to geopolitical tensions and creates new threats to global security in general. Cyber warfare and terrorism are becoming more widespread, manifesting themselves both globally and directly in Ukraine (Ilbiz & Kaunert, 2021). Taken together, this has a direct bearing on conscription and compliance with the relevant legislation.

Given the topic of the research, human rights are also an important aspect to be covered. That is, the analysis of new approaches to criminal liability for evading military conscription in Ukraine in the context of global security challenges is based on the consideration of certain human rights implications. This includes issues related to refusal and evasion of mobilisation, as well as the potential introduction of electronic summonses, which create additional obligations and problematic aspects. The balance between national security interests and individual rights and freedoms is a complex aspect of policy-making in this area (Midhio et al., 2024).

Given the interconnected nature of security threats, international cooperation and partnerships play a vital role. This is manifested not only in the provision of armed and financial assistance, but also in advice on how to improve existing legislation. An assessment of Ukraine's cooperation with other countries and international organisations on issues related to mobilisation and security can shed light on broader trends and best practices.

By considering these various factors, stakeholders can gain a comprehensive understanding of the complexities involved in addressing conscription evasion in Ukraine in the context of global security challenges. Such an understanding is necessary to develop effective policies that balance national security imperatives with respect for individual rights and international norms (Rakha Pratama, 2023).

With this in mind, the purpose of the study is to analyse and explore current approaches to criminal liability for military conscription evasion in Ukraine in the context of global security challenges. Particular emphasis should be placed on innovations such as electronic draft notices and changes in age criteria, which are important in the context of modern technologies and their impact on law. It is also important to analyse how these changes are reflected in the international arena, including the migration of conscripts and their attempts to evade service abroad, as well as the reaction of EU countries. A detailed analysis of the ethical challenges and legal dilemmas faced by both individuals and the state in the area of criminal liability for draft evasion in an armed conflict remains appropriate. Certainly, taking into account these aspects, it is quite rational to provide conclusions on how changes in Ukrainian legislation and mobilisation practices affect global security challenges, including the allocation of military resources, defence strategies and international defence cooperation.



2. Methodological Framework

Taking into account the purpose set, in order to achieve it, the following methods of scientific knowledge were used: the method of systematic analysis and synthesis, formal legal and dialectical methods, and the method of analysis of legal documents. The method of systematic analysis was used to analyse and study modern approaches to criminal liability for evading conscription for regular military service in Ukraine in the context of global security challenges. The author also analysed in detail the innovations that are being considered in detail by members of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine as a necessary component for strengthening mobilisation. Particularly important are such innovations as electronic summonses and changes in age criteria, which are quite relevant in the context of modern technologies and their impact on law. A detailed analysis of the ethical challenges and legal dilemmas faced by both individuals and the state in the area of criminal liability for draft evasion in the context of armed conflict was required.

The synthesis method, together with the analysis method, was used to examine the data on how such changes are reflected in the international arena, including the migration of conscripts and their attempts to evade service abroad, as well as the reactions of EU countries. The formal legal method was used to provide an explanation of the concept of "conscription evasion" and its manifestations. The dialectical method was used to explain how changes in Ukrainian legislation and mobilisation practices affect global security challenges, including the allocation of military resources, defence strategies and international defence cooperation. The method of legal document analysis was useful in understanding the basis of criminal liability for evading military conscription. Taken together, these methods actively contributed to the quality of the research.

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Military Conscription: Current Status and Evasion of Military Conscription

Since 2014, when the annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea took place, Ukraine has been on the path of countering Russia's hybrid tactics, which, accordingly, requires well-thought-out and coordinated actions, as well as a comprehensive approach to improving the current legislation.

It should be noted that all the actions taken by the Ukrainian authorities in response to Russia's armed aggression have a comprehensive impact on global security challenges. After all, changes in legislation and approaches to military conscription during mobilisation directly affect the allocation of military resources, which include both human and material resources. This may include the mobilisation of reserves, redeployment of military units and equipment to strengthen the country's defence capabilities. Moreover, changes in legislation, which will be discussed in more detail below, can affect the overall defence strategies and direct them towards a more adaptive and effective defence of the country against threats from an external aggressor. This may include the development of new strategies for combating armed conflict, increasing combat readiness and responding to new security challenges. It is also important to note that updated mobilisation practices also affect international cooperation in defence matters, first and



foremost. Practice shows that Ukraine actively cooperates with foreign partners to improve defence strategies, which affects the increase of combat defence capability (Veebel, 2020).

In turn, the current full mobilisation strategy contains several dimensions: first of all, the military dimension, technological, economic and social dimensions. Taken together, this serves as the basis for Ukraine to overcome the challenges that arise in the course of a large-scale war with a very strong aggressor. The Full Mobilisation Strategy adopted by Ukraine is a comprehensive approach that recognises the need to use all aspects of national power to effectively counter Russian invasion and protect its sovereignty (Sanders, 2023).

In general, the strategy of total mobilisation, by its very nature, is the use of a certain kind of all available technological capabilities to ensure the preservation of the territorial integrity of the state and its defence. Such technological capabilities include the development and improvement of means and mechanisms for protecting against cyber attacks, the development and improvement of various types of weapons, including mastering the latest types of enemy destruction, as well as the use of modern technologies to monitor and understand the directions of Russian activities (Sorongan, 2022). It is also important to note that the strategy of full mobilisation also implies strong political and state leadership, significant diplomatic efforts in various directions, the creation of international political alliances, advocacy for sanctions against Russia and raising awareness of the war (Midhio et al., 2024). It is important to emphasise the fact of war, not an operation, as the aggressor state's leadership has said. For general understanding, the implemented full mobilisation strategy was a rapid response and comprehensive approach to the Russian full-scale invasion. It was a basic necessity to implement a multidimensional and coordinated response to the current realities.

It is no secret that Russia is waging an active hybrid war against Ukraine. This hybrid warfare involves the use of various military and non-military means (Veebel, 2020). Most of these means have never been used in combination in the world, making Russia's war against Ukraine a completely new kind of war with much more harmful consequences. However, on the other hand, the fact that the Ukrainian military is repelling dangerous attacks with the help of its allies speaks volumes. Of course, the most important thing at the moment is Ukraine's victory in the war with Russia, but this requires all sorts of technological, technical, military and human resources. And let's not forget the economic situation of the state against the backdrop of constant defence spending and maintaining internal stability in society. Moreover, Ukraine has suffered significant economic losses on various fronts, including the loss of industrial centres in the East and Crimea, direct losses from the war, the cessation of trade in some areas, and punitive measures by Russia, ranging from import bans to economic sanctions against individuals. All these problems also led to the decline of the Ukrainian economy: GDP fell from \$183 billion in 2013 to \$91 billion in 2015 and to \$153 billion in 2019. In the first year after the massive invasion on 24 February 2022, the Ukrainian economy lost 30-35% of GDP (Midhio et al., 2024).

That is why, given the difficult conditions in which Ukraine is currently living, the need for active mobilisation orders is quite logical and appropriate. However, there are far from being isolated cases, or even frequent cases, of mobilisation evasion. In general,



for the purposes of the study, it is important to note that evasion from military service is considered to be the improper fulfilment of the obligations stipulated by the Law of Ukraine "On Mobilisation Preparation and Mobilisation" (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 1993). However, in order to fully understand whether liability arises in a particular case, it is worth focusing on understanding the process of evasion as such.

The ways of evading military conscription are as follows:

- Refusal to be called up for military service in accordance with the mobilisation process;
- Failure to appear at the Territorial Centre for Recruitment and Social Support to undergo a medical examination upon a call;
- Directly escaping from the place of conscription or military unit;
- Refusal to participate in training or evading it in any way (Evasion from mobilisation, 2024).

Article 18, paragraphs 1 and 2, of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantees everyone the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. No one shall be subjected to any coercion which would impair his or her freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his or her choice. At the same time, Article 9 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms provides for the right of everyone to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has repeatedly emphasized that the state has the right to check whether a man is fit for military service. However, Ukrainian courts profess the position that exemption from military service on the basis of religious beliefs is not possible. For example, on July 26, 2024, the Okhtyrka City District Court of Sumy Region issued a verdict in case No. 583/3259/24. A member of the Religious Center of Jehovah's Witnesses in Ukraine, who had undergone military training and received a military specialty while studying at the university, refused to receive a military call-up. He explained this by his religious beliefs. The court noted that no religious beliefs can be a basis for evading mobilization of a citizen of Ukraine, recognized as fit for military service, in order to fulfill his constitutional duty to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state from military aggression by a foreign country. Given his religious beliefs and constitutional duty to protect the Fatherland during his service, he could be involved in repairing equipment, building fortifications, transporting the wounded, transporting cargo and performing other functions not related to the use of weapons (Polishchuk, 2024; Council of Europe, 2018).

It is important to note that persons who are not subject to conscription during mobilisation are not liable for evasion from conscription. An example is a situation where a citizen who is 20 years old and has not performed military service or studied at a military department cannot be held liable for evading mobilisation, as he or she is not subject to mobilisation by law. In general, in the context of the study, liability for evading military conscription can be of two types: administrative and criminal. According to Article 211-1 of the Code of Ukraine on Administrative Offences, there is liability for failure to report to the Territorial Centre for Recruitment and Social Support when called upon (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 1984).



Speaking in more detail about criminal liability, it is important to point out the following points. According to the special laws "On Mobilisation Training and Mobilisation" and "On Military Duty and Military Service", persons who evade conscription for mobilisation, call-up for regular military service, registration for military service or special (check-up) training are criminally liable in accordance with the law (Criminal liability for evasion from conscription..., 2024). Criminal liability is incurred in accordance with Articles 335, 336, 336-1, 337 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, for more (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2001):

- evasion of conscription for regular military service or military service for officers is punishable by restraint of liberty for up to three years;
- evasion of conscription for military service during mobilisation, for a special period, or for military service by conscription of persons from among reservists during a special period - is punishable by imprisonment for a term of three to five years;
- evasion from performing civil defence service during a special period (except for the reconstruction period) or in case of targeted mobilisation - shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of two to five years;
- evasion of a conscript, person liable for military service, or reservist from military registration after being warned by the relevant head of the territorial centre for recruitment and social support is punishable by a fine of three hundred to five hundred tax-free minimum incomes or correctional labour for up to one year;
- evasion of a person liable for military service or a reservist from training (special) training - is punishable by a fine of five hundred to seven hundred tax-free minimum incomes, or correctional labour for a term of up to two years.

Another critical aspect often overlooked is why Ukraine has not opted for a general mobilization despite encouragement from some international partners. The reluctance to declare full-scale mobilization stems from multiple factors, including economic constraints, political considerations, and societal resistance. Economic Factors: A general mobilization would disrupt key industries and workforce stability, further weakening Ukraine's wartime economy. Political Considerations: A broader mobilization could lead to increased domestic discontent, particularly among citizens who are unwilling or unprepared to serve. Military Strategy: Ukrainian officials may view targeted, phased mobilization as more effective than a sudden, large-scale conscription, ensuring that forces are properly trained and equipped before being deployed.

Understanding Ukraine's mobilization policies requires analyzing them alongside international examples of wartime mobilization strategies (Chmykh, 2020).

3.2 Electronic summonses and changes in age criteria, which are important in the context of modern technologies and their impact on law

On 30 January, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine submitted an updated draft law on mobilisation to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. It was registered under the number 10449. This is the second attempt by the Verkhovna Rada to pass the draft law. In general, the draft law contains the following main changes:



- Reduction of the conscription age from 27 years to 25 years;
- Providing a 90-day leave of absence for persons released from captivity;
- Involvement of local self-government bodies, local state administrations, civil-military and military administrations, enterprises, institutions and organisations in the mobilisation process;
- Involvement of the national police in the mobilisation process;
- Exclusion of regular military service as a type of military service and dismissal of all regular military service personnel from the reserve.

The possibility of discharging from military service those servicemen who have served continuously during martial law for 36 months;

- Introduction of basic military training and mobilisation for Ukrainians under the age of 25;
- Providing persons convicted of crimes with the right to be released from serving a sentence with probation in exchange for military service during mobilisation (Changes to the conscription..., 2024).

As for the reduction of the conscription age from 27 to 25 years, according to the comments of parliamentarians, this decision is due to several reasons. Firstly, it is a quantitative increase in the number of potential conscripts. And this does not raise any questions. From a different perspective, the difference of 2 years is insignificant at first glance, but in terms of modern technology and societal development, it is significant. The improvement of weapons and various military equipment encourages many servicemen to quickly master these innovations and apply them on the battlefield. Changing the age criteria may open the door to more young people who, having grown up in the digital age, may have a deeper understanding and faster learning curve in these areas. However, the first reason is the most obvious.

An important topic for discussion and a relatively resonant moment for the population was the issue of electronic summonses to the Territorial Recruitment and Social Support Centre, which will potentially be sent to the electronic office of a conscript, reservist or person liable for military service. However, the introduction of electronic summonses prompts considerable reflection in terms of human rights and responsibilities (Draft law on mobilisation..., 2024).

In general, the provision on the introduction of electronic summonses is quite logically linked to the emergence of new obligations, which are detailed in the draft law and are required to be fulfilled by all persons liable for military service, conscripts and reservists. These obligations include the following (How they want to change..., 2024):

- To be registered in the electronic cabinet;
- Update their data through the relevant administrative service centre, or through an electronic cabinet, or it can be done in person at the TRC within 60 days from the date of mobilisation or within 20 days from the date of its extension;



- It is necessary to report changes in health status, address of residence or stay, changes in marital status, email address and telephone number, place of work, position and education - such notification of changes must be made within seven days to the authorities where such persons are registered for military service.

In other words, if the above-mentioned points on the introduction of electronic summonses are adopted, citizens will have 20 days to clarify all the necessary data. This is an important point. It is worth noting the problematic aspect that the draft law does not specify a time limit within which citizens must register an electronic cabinet. At the same time, however, it is proposed to give the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine certain powers to determine such a procedure. What does this mean? If this is adopted, citizens' fulfilment of their obligation to register e-offices will directly depend on the Government's adoption of the relevant bylaw Summonses online and at checkpoints (How they want to change..., 2024).

There is also a parallel story with the introduction of electronic summonses in Diia. To be more precise, this story has been going on since the Cabinet of Ministers approved the updated rules of military registration by Resolution No. 1487 of 30 December 2022 (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2022). This resolution regulates the creation of an electronic register of persons liable for military service and remote military registration. These statements became the basis for further discussions and concerns among the population. However, the resolution does not mention sending summonses through the state application "Diia" or online registration. The issue has already become a hot topic (Efremov, 2023).

As part of this study, it is worthwhile to investigate in more detail the topic of electronic summonses and whether it is possible to introduce them in a comprehensive manner from the legislative point of view and taking into account the access of all citizens to electronic resources.

In general, one important point is that it is technically possible to send electronic summonses through Diia. After all, Diia is a state reference and information system that provides services remotely. It is a kind of tool for simplifying many aspects of life and effective communication with the state. However, it is not an application that transmits any form of coercion. As of today, Diia already sends notifications of fines, proceedings and court decisions. Drawing an analogy with notifications of the opening of enforcement proceedings, Diia does not replace the procedure for serving court decisions, fines and other procedural documents required by law.

As far as the legislative aspect is concerned, Ukraine is not currently ready to introduce electronic summonses. The form of the summons, as well as the procedure and conditions for its delivery, are clearly defined at the legislative level. Currently, the so-called "regular" summonses can only be served to persons liable for military service in person, and they must also sign for the service. It is clear that the existing alternatives to the delivery of such notices, such as telephone calls, e-mails, oral notices, etc. are illegal and violate the rights of persons liable for military service (Efremov, 2023).

This was confirmed in the case law of the Supreme Court even before the outbreak of a full-scale war, namely the Supreme Court's ruling of 28 January 2020 in case No.



759/5435/16-к, which states the following: if there is no evidence of service of a call-up notice to a person liable for military service in the manner prescribed by law or if there is no record of refusal to receive it, then the person is not guilty of evading military service or mobilisation (Supreme Court, 2020).

It is also important to note the Supreme Court's ruling of 14 December 2021 in case No. 761/8429/16-к, which stated that a person liable for military service must receive a call-up notice and mobilisation order in person. The court considers an improper notification of the need to report to the military registration and enlistment office when the summons does not contain information about a specific time, place and year (Supreme Court, 2021).

The Supreme Court's position after the start of the full-scale invasion is currently unavailable, as similar cases are currently being considered by the courts of first instance. This can be used to judge the speed of justice in wartime. In other words, from the point of view of the current legislation and the spirit of law, a citizen must fulfil his or her military duty to the state in person, and these relations do not allow for mediation or representation, including by sending electronic subpoenas.

In other words, electronic summonses can theoretically be launched in Diia, but this process will violate the constitutional rights of citizens. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine may introduce a number of amendments to the existing regulations, but MPs will face a number of problematic issues, including:

- How can a phone number be confirmed to belong to a particular citizen? After all, starter packs can be bought literally in every store, and many citizens have several mobile numbers.

- "Proper service of a summons" - what can be considered as such? According to the new draft law, it is stated that the calls will be sent through an electronic cabinet, and the day of its delivery will be the day when the military commissariat receives a notification of its delivery. However, it does not specify what to do when a citizen has not seen the call. Analysing the text of the document, this is not a reason for failure to appear at the military registration and enlistment office. That is why this point is problematic. In general, the options are as follows: either the fact that the document was sent by the military commissar (which is already prescribed and is completely illegal), or authorisation in the Diia app, or opening the call-up by the person liable for military service in the app (Mobilisation in Ukraine..., 2024; Yaroshenko et al., 2022).

- What will be the reason for persons liable for military service to use their phones and install the Diia app directly?

Let's assume that these issues are resolved, but one very important aspect remains: the violation of the constitutional rights of persons liable for military service. After all, not all citizens actively use mobile phones, and this can be either a conscious choice or the result of certain religious beliefs. If electronic summonses are introduced, the state must commit itself to providing every person liable for military service with a smartphone and access to the Internet. And given the current economic situation, this point remains quite problematic. And failure to comply with it with the parallel introduction of electronic summonses is illegal. Therefore, the issue of evading military conscription will be quite problematic.



3.3 Migration of persons liable for military service and their attempts to evade service abroad, as well as the reaction of EU countries to the extradition of persons liable for military service to Ukraine

The issue of criminal prosecution of persons who crossed the state border after 24 February 2022 remains quite controversial and problematic. In general, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine proposes the following step: those citizens who, although they went abroad to evade military conscription, repented and returned to Ukraine within six months, and voluntarily reported the fact of committing a crime to the State Border Guard Service, will not be held criminally liable. This is an original way to take a 6-month "holiday" abroad.

The relevant draft law number 10453 was registered in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Draft Law on Amendments to the Criminal Code of Ukraine..., 2024). In general, this draft law, in addition to the above, also proposes to strengthen criminal liability measures specifically for illegal crossing of the state border and to introduce criminal liability for illegal border crossing during mobilisation. The proposed sanction in this case is imprisonment for a term of 3 to 5 years. If the offence is committed repeatedly or by a group of persons, the penalty is imprisonment for a term of 5 to 8 years. Imprisonment for up to 12 years may be imposed on persons who attempt to illegally cross the border using weapons and violence (The Verkhovna Rada proposes..., 2024).

Against the backdrop of the active intensification of mobilisation, the issue of returning men liable for military service to the country is also being discussed. The authorities have repeatedly mentioned such plans, but now this issue is gaining momentum. Earlier, Defence Minister Rustem Umerov "invited" Ukrainian men who had travelled abroad to come to recruitment offices on a voluntary basis. Also, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy stated that all men of conscription age should stay on the territory of Ukraine - they should either pay taxes or fight. Those who went abroad should return (Zelenskyy said that all men should either work or fight, 2024).

However, it's important to note that, as of today, there is no mechanism for the return of men of military age to Ukraine, regardless of whether they left legally or illegally. And the "extradition of evaders", which has been repeatedly mentioned in the Verkhovna Rada, is an impossible process against the background of the position of many European countries, which are not yet ready to extradite Ukrainian citizens. It's better to analyse in more detail the positions of some European states on the above-mentioned issue of "extradition of fugitives". For example, in Austria, a statement was made at the state level that extradition of men of military age is impossible. This statement also applies to men who arrived in the country after the start of the full-scale invasion. The local Ministry of Foreign Affairs called this situation a direct attack on their statehood. According to the latest data, there are 14,000 Ukrainians fit for military service in Austria (Forced return of men from abroad?..., 2024).

As for Germany, the figures are much more impressive, as there are almost 200,000 Ukrainian men of mobilisation age living in the country, but, like Austria, they will not extradite them. They believe that extradition of conscripts against their will is a direct violation of human rights. And given the provisions of the German Constitution, a person must join the armed forces only of their own free will. It was also noted that such actions



would reduce the number of workers in the country, which would affect the economic situation in the country. This was the basis for the refusal to extradite persons liable for military service (The German government..., 2024).

In turn, Hungary is also against the extradition of men from the country. This position is categorical, as all refugees in the country are considered to be under reliable protection and their lives are not in danger. Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Szemien said that every refugee is a free person, and a free person can decide for himself whether to return to Ukraine or stay in the European Union (Forced return of men from abroad?..., 2024).

In the Czech Republic, in early autumn, it was clearly stated that the issue of forced return of men was not on the agenda. Minister of Justice Vladimír Ržepka referred to the European Convention, which excludes extradition for evading military service, desertion or disobedience to command orders. However, it was also noted that only a Ukrainian court can request the extradition of a particular person liable for military service. An example is if it is established that a citizen has deliberately forged documents in order to be exempted from service or has purchased a so-called "white ticket" of medical unfitness for a bribe. In this case, extradition is possible (Forced return of men from abroad?..., 2024).

Estonia initially confirmed its intention to help Ukraine with the mobilisation of citizens, provided that the two countries conclude an agreement. However, after a while, it was noted that Estonia was not going to send people to the frontline by force. Moreover, it was noted that it was a matter for the Ukrainian authorities to appeal to those liable for military service abroad to express their desire to return (Will Estonia extradite Ukrainians for mobilisation, 2024).

Poland has also stated that there will be no forced deportation of men. Whether or not to return is a matter for each citizen, and therefore no one will force anyone to do so (Will conscripts be returned to Ukraine..., 2023).

3.4. Analysis of the ethical challenges and legal dilemmas faced by both individuals and the state in the area of criminal liability for conscription evasion in the context of armed conflict

The issue of criminal liability for conscription evasion in armed conflict presents a complex set of ethical problems and legal dilemmas for both individuals and the state. With regard to ethical challenges for individuals, it is important to point out the issue of conscientious objection. It is not uncommon for individuals to oppose mobilisation and conscription on religious or moral grounds. For them, conscription raises questions of personal integrity and moral responsibility. They may refer to their ethical beliefs, which primarily prohibit them from injuring or even killing someone in war, which is quite common during hostilities (Evasion from mobilisation, 2024).

This also includes the issue of personal security, which prevails over the duty to protect the territorial integrity of the state. This raises ethical questions about the balance between self-preservation and societal obligations, especially in situations where people may perceive the conflict as unjust or morally questionable (Total war..., 2022).



For many people, evading military service is a logical phenomenon, as they fear harming others. This kind of ethical dilemma involves a process of weighing the potential consequences of participating in war, including the possibility of harming either civilians or experiencing traumatic experiences personally. As for the ethical challenges for the state, first of all, there is the issue of respect for human rights, as each new bill affects human rights in one way or another. That is why the state needs to strike a balance between the interests of state protection and respect for the rights of persons liable for military service.

The issue of equality and fairness in the distribution of the burden of military service among citizens is also often raised. It is only logical to ask how some people can be fairly forced to risk their health and life when others have the possibility of exemption from service or can evade it in various ways (Sanders, 2023). The state also bears the burden of understanding that inducement and coercion to mobilise can backfire on society. Therefore, conscription evasion is often a form of dissent against policies or actions that are perceived as unjust or immoral, prompting the state to reconsider its military commitment.

One of the major concerns regarding the criminalization of military conscription evasion in Ukraine is its compatibility with fundamental human rights protections, particularly in the context of international law (Council of Europe, 2018). Ukraine's requests for the extradition of conscription evaders have raised significant legal and ethical concerns in EU countries, many of which refuse such extraditions due to potential human rights violations outlined in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

Key Human Rights Concerns:

- Right to a Fair Trial (Article 6, ECHR): Extradited individuals must be guaranteed a fair trial, including adequate legal representation and impartial court proceedings.
- Prohibition of Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (Article 3, ECHR): The extradition of conscription evaders to Ukraine could expose them to inhumane conditions, including arbitrary detention and potential mistreatment.
- Non-Refoulement Principle (under international law): States are prohibited from extraditing individuals if there is a risk that they will face persecution, ill-treatment, or a denial of their fundamental rights.

Several ECtHR rulings have set important legal precedents in this area. Cases concerning conscientious objectors and military service evasion have determined that states must ensure protection for individuals who refuse conscription based on legitimate moral or religious grounds.

Additionally, while the article references Ukrainian domestic laws, it does not sufficiently discuss international legal instruments governing extradition and military service-related human rights issues, such as:

- The European Convention on Extradition
- UN Human Rights Council opinions on conscientious objection



- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which guarantees freedom of thought and conscience (Article 18) (Fulei, 2015; Council of Europe, 2018; Council of Europe, 2022).

In terms of legal dilemmas, in general, the legal framework on conscription evasion requires states to establish penalties for non-compliance, which is currently being actively pursued. However, adopting a law and making many amendments is one thing, and implementing its provisions is quite another, requiring significant resources. This is especially important to consider when individuals evade conscription in various ways, such as fleeing the country or falsifying documents (Total war..., 2022).

The process of draft evasion is closely intertwined with international human rights principles and standards, including the right to conscientious objection and the prohibition of arbitrary detention. As part of its obligations, the state must ensure that its conscription policy complies with international standards and respects fundamental human rights. Legal dilemmas can arise with regard to the selective prosecution of conscription evaders, especially when enforcement measures disproportionately target certain groups based on factors such as socio-economic status, ethnicity, or political affiliation. This calls into question the fairness and impartiality of the legal system (Evasion from mobilisation, 2024).

4. Conclusion

The discussion surrounding criminal liability for conscription evasion in Ukraine is deeply intertwined with international human rights principles, legal precedents, and geopolitical considerations. Although Ukraine confronts valid security issues, all actions must adhere to international law, especially concerning human rights safeguards for persons subject to extradition or compulsory conscription.

Evasion from military conscription is considered to be the improper fulfilment of the obligations stipulated by the Law of Ukraine "On Mobilisation Training and Mobilisation". However, in order to fully understand whether liability arises in a particular case, it is worth focusing on understanding the process of evasion as such. The ways to evade military conscription are as follows: refusal to be called up for military service in accordance with the mobilisation process; failure to appear at the Territorial Recruitment and Social Support Centre for a medical examination upon a call; direct escape from the place of conscription or military unit; refusal to participate in training or evasion in any way.

In general, in the context of this study, there are two types of liability for evading military conscription: administrative and criminal. Speaking in more detail about criminal liability, it is important to point out the following points. In accordance with the special laws "On mobilisation training and mobilisation" and "On military duty and military service", persons who evade conscription, call-up for regular military service, registration for military service or special (check-up) training are criminally liable under the law. Criminal liability arises in accordance with Articles 335, 336, 336-1, 337 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine.



Important potential innovations could include reducing the conscription age from 27 years to 25 years. In terms of numbers, this is a direct increase in the number of potential conscripts. And this does not raise any questions. From a different perspective, the difference of 2 years may seem insignificant at first glance, but given modern technology and the development of society, it is significant. The improvement of weapons and various military equipment encourages many servicemen to quickly master these innovations and apply them on the battlefield. Changing the age criteria may open the door to more young people who, having grown up in the digital age, may have a deeper understanding and faster learning curve in these areas.

An important topic for discussion and a relatively resonant moment for the population was the issue of electronic summonses to the Territorial Recruitment and Social Support Centre, which will potentially be sent to the electronic account of a conscript, reservist or person liable for military service. In theory, electronic summonses can be launched, but this process will violate the constitutional rights of citizens. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine can make a number of changes to existing regulations, but parliamentarians will face a number of problematic issues, the most important of which is the interpretation and regulation of the proper delivery of the summons. Assuming this and other issues are resolved, there is still one very important aspect that remains: the violation of the constitutional rights of persons liable for military service. After all, not all citizens actively use mobile phones, and this can be either a conscious choice or the result of certain religious beliefs. If electronic summonses are introduced, the state must commit itself to providing every person liable for military service with a smartphone and access to the Internet. And given the current economic situation, this point remains quite problematic. And failure to comply with it with the parallel introduction of electronic summonses is illegal.

The issue of criminal prosecution of persons who crossed the state border after 24 February 2022 remains quite controversial and problematic. In general, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine proposes the following step, when those citizens who, although they went abroad to evade military conscription, repented and returned to Ukraine within six months, and voluntarily reported the fact of committing a crime to the State Border Guard Service, will not be held criminally liable. This is an original way to take a 6-month "holiday" abroad.

The relevant draft law, No. 10453, has been registered in the Verkhovna Rada. In addition to the above, this draft law also proposes to strengthen criminal liability for illegal crossing of the state border and to introduce criminal liability for illegal border crossing during mobilisation. Against the backdrop of the active intensification of mobilisation, the issue of the return of men liable for military service to the country is also being discussed. However, as of today, there is no mechanism for the return of men of military age to Ukraine, regardless of whether they left legally or illegally. And the "extradition of evaders", which has been repeatedly mentioned in the Verkhovna Rada, is an impossible process in view of the position of many European countries, such as the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, etc., which are not currently ready to extradite Ukrainian citizens.

Expanding the study to include a deeper analysis of human rights violations, relevant ECtHR case law, and international treaties on extradition will enhance its legal credibility.



Additionally, addressing the strategic rationale behind Ukraine's reluctance to enact full-scale mobilization will provide a more balanced and nuanced perspective on the country's military policies.

It is important to summarise that the process of draft evasion is closely intertwined with international human rights principles and standards, including the right to conscientious objection and the prohibition of arbitrary detention. As part of its obligations, the state must ensure that its conscription policy complies with international standards and respects fundamental human rights. Legal dilemmas may arise with regard to the selective prosecution of conscription evaders, especially when enforcement measures disproportionately target certain groups based on factors such as socio-economic status, ethnicity, or political affiliation. This calls into question the fairness and impartiality of the legal system.

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THE BORDERS OF ASIA: THE LIMITATIONS OF THE WESTPHALIAN MODEL

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Abstract

European expansion throughout the world brought with it the spread of its model of the sovereign state, born in the Peace of Westphalia (1648), through which the international community relates to each other. In Asia, however, this model has shown less capacity for adaptation since it was applied to a continent that had its own system of relations, the so-called "tributary system." This, combined with the lack of legitimacy of some borders drawn by imperialism and the rise of the great Asian powers, has turned enormous territories, sometimes recognized as sovereign (for example, the two Koreas or Sri Lanka), into mere frontiers or transition areas between neighboring great powers. This article explains the causes of this situation and the particular circumstances of those territories that have become "Asia's frontiers".

Keywords

China; Japan; India; Asia; Westphalian System; Tributary System; Asian Frontiers; International Relations.

Resumen

La expansión europea por todo el mundo llevó aparejada la difusión de su modelo de estado soberano, nacido en la Paz de Westfalia (1648), a través del cual se relaciona entre sí la comunidad internacional. Sin embargo, ese modelo ha mostrado en Asia una menor capacidad de adaptación al aplicarse sobre un continente que poseía sistema de relaciones propio el llamado "sistema tributario". Ello, combinado con la falta de legitimidad de algunas fronteras dibujadas por el imperialismo y con el auge de las grandes potencias asiáticas ha convertido a enormes territorios, en ocasiones reconocidos como soberanos (por ejemplo, las dos Coreas o Sri Lanka) en meras fronteras o áreas de transición entre las grandes potencias colindantes. Este artículo expone las causas de dicha situación y las circunstancias particulares de aquellos territorios convertidos en "fronteras de Asia".

Palabras clave

China; Japón; India; Asia; Sistema Westfaliano; Sistema Tributario; Fronteras de Asia; Relaciones Internacionales.



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THE BORDERS OF ASIA: THE LIMITATIONS OF THE WESTPHALIAN MODEL

RAÚL RAMÍREZ RUIZ

1. Introduction

Borders are a line on the map, however, this categorical and basic statement became debatable while I was researching the writing of the manuscript of the book *History of Contemporary and Contemporary Asia* (Universitas, 2017). The objective of that book was very clear. The aim was to study the history, culture and current affairs of Asia through the great Asian powers, China, Japan, India and, as a set comparable to the above, the countries of Southeast Asia. But, we soon saw that there were countries that were left out of that general framework. For example, where to frame Pakistan? and Nepal?, etc...

At that time, this idea emerged: "the borders of Asia". Gigantic regions and even sovereign states that appeared before us as huge empty spaces, in the shadow of history, and in dispute. When we asked ourselves about the essence of these countries, the intuitive concept arose that the Asian borders were not really a line on the map, but that we could consider enormous extensions of territory as such: Transition zones between the Asian State-Civilizations or between them and the West. How was it possible that even sovereign states appeared to us as mere areas of transition? How in Asia, supposedly, the continent of promise, of the future of Humanity? How in the twenty-first century, the era of globalization?

Reflecting on this idea, we turn to the readings and theories that will explain the configuration of this twenty-first century. The works Robert D. Kaplan, who highlights the prominence of geography to understand contemporary reality; John Mearsheimer, the prophet of "realism" in international relations; Henry Kissinger, the best dissector of the "World Order" and the functioning of the "Westphalian" nation-states; Samuel P. Huntington, the visionary who announced how "culture", and not economics or ideology, would be the engine of future history and Francis Fukuyama, the disciple of the former, who dazzled the Western elites in the "happy nineties" by announcing the global liberal-democratic paradise and who has evolved towards positions in which he highlights how "identity" has become the structural axis of politics in the 21st century.

On the other hand, to understand this particular circumstance of Asian geography we should also try to remember the laws of history, remembering as the Annales school pointed out that history moves in cycles of different durations, but also as Professor Zhu



Zhenghui, from East China Normal University, pointed out, that history does not repeat itself, it is not circular, but "it moves in a spiral", because "all generations know what happened in the past, and avoid, as far as possible, repeating the same mistakes" (Ramírez Ruiz, 2016, pp. 141-168).

2. General theoretical framework for understanding "the frontiers of Asia"

Let us begin, then, with the laws of history. Braudel (Braudel, 1976), within the Annales school, founded in 1929 (Trevor-Roper, 1972, pp. 468-479) made a definitive contribution to the way in which he perceives history with the concept of varied temporal lengths. First, he defined the periods of "*longue durée*," a slow, barely perceptible geographical time of "enabling and constraining environments." Second, the "*conjonctures*" or "intermediate cycles", a faster wavelength i.e. systemic changes in demographic statistics, the economy, agriculture, society and politics. These are impersonal collective forces that are often limited to no more than a century. And thirdly, "*l'histoire événementielle*", the shortest cycle, the daily vicissitudes of politics and society.

These spaces that we are going to define with "borders of Asia" are the result of cycles of "*longue durée*" that make up the basic structures, largely hidden, in which human life develops and explain permanence as mere spaces of transition and friction of enormous territories in Asia. Not even the "*conjoctures*" of about a century in duration are useful to us. What was the Soviet Union if not a "juncture" in the history of Russia?

The second factor that we have to take into account is the geography itself. Robert D. Kaplan (Kaplan, 2017) states that geography is the backdrop of human history and a map is only the spatial representation of human divisions (Kaplan, 2017, p. 59). Despite cartographic distortions, geography reveals both the realities and the long-term evolutions of a nation, government, or state (Mackinder, 1942, p. 90). That is why Kaplan speaks of the revenge of geography (Cohen, 1980, pp. 79-83). In the "happy nineties of the twentieth century" with the worldwide expansion of the process of globalization, the most accurate definition of which is described as "*the growing interdependence of all the countries of the world, caused by the increase in the volume and variety of transactions in goods and services of international capital flows, and the generalized and accelerated dimension of technologies, economic, political, technological, social, and cultural exchanges*" (Fukuyama, 2019, p. 112). They made people believe that distances were disappearing and that geography, together with all the ethnic, religious and economic conditions that it implied, had ceased to be a determining factor. It was at that moment that Francis Fukuyama's optimistic theory of the "end of history" (Fukuyama, 2019) appeared. In it, he argued that the global expansion of participatory democracies with division of powers, free market and human rights as the universal moral basis, signaled the end point of the sociocultural evolution and political struggles of humanity.

However, as the twenty-first century progressed, nationalist, sectarian and ethnic conflicts erupted everywhere. As Kaplan says, "in this way we were sent back to the demoralizing basic principles of human existence, of nations and states, according to which, instead of the constant improvement of the world that we had imagined, we



returned to the struggle for survival was restricted by geography (Kaplan, 2017, p. 60). Fukuyama, as history showed that his theory had failed, justified this failure with three basic reasons. First, that it was not understood: the term "End" had a Hegelian-Marxist sense, which meant that it was "completion" but "goal" or "objective". That is, development or modernization. In addition, secondly, two unforeseeable problems appeared. On the one hand, the difficulty of developing a modern and impersonal State. And on the other, the possibility that a modern liberal democracy would decline or regress. No one wanted to see that he insisted that neither nationalism nor religion were about to disappear as forces in world politics (Fukuyama, 2019, pp. 14-15).

What Fukuyama fails to acknowledge in his *"excusatio non petita"* is that as his theory decayed, he reinforced his former teacher's theory of the "Clash of Civilizations." Samuel Phillips Huntington became one of the most controversial intellectual figures of the early 21st century when he launched his theory that what globalization was really bringing was not the end of borders but the beginning of a confrontation between the Western system, with the Islamic and Asian ways of thinking and government. His hypothesis is based on the fact that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or economic, but cultural. Nation states will continue to be the most powerful actors on the international stage, but the major conflicts of global politics will occur between nations (or groups of nations) of different civilizations. The conflict between civilizations will be the next phase in the evolution of conflict in the modern world" (Kaplan, 2019, p. 235).

This dynamic has led to a reinforcement of the "realist" vision in international relations, to the point that John Mearsheimer's *"The tragedy of the Great Power Politics"* (Mearsheimer, 2001) is considered one of the three great works of the post-Cold War period, along with Fukuyama's "End of History and the Last Man" (1992) and Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations and the Reconfiguration of the World Order" (1996) (Betts, 1996). 2010, pp. 186-194).

"Realism" is based on the recognition of the most absolute, uncomfortable, and deterministic realities of all: those of geography (Mackinder, 1942, pp. 15-16). That is why it is consciously immoral because it focuses more on interests than on values in a world, it reflects the correct way in which states really behave behind the façade of their rhetoric of values. This school of thought denies the possibility of perpetual peace, since the state of anarchy in the international system guarantees insecurity regardless of the individual mode of action of each State. Mearsheimer ascribes himself to what we might call "offensive realism" because he denies the existence of the so-called "powers of the status quo": all the great powers permanently take the offensive, although they may take obstacles that prevent them from expanding their territory or their influence. Therefore, and it is important to understand the balance of powers that the "borders of Asia" signify and the role of the current great hegemonic power, the United States, the "central objective of American foreign policy only, and to prevent the rise of a similar power in the Eastern Hemisphere" (Kaplan, 2017, pp. 241-253).



3. Asia: The conception of its states, borders and sovereignties

Let's stop for a moment and review what has been said so far. In the previous pages we have explained how in Asia there are a series of extensive territories (sovereign or not) that function as "borders" or transitional spaces between the great civilizational states that are located there. We have pointed out that this responds to long-term historical dynamics and how globalization, far from blurring particularisms, is reinforcing them. Finally, we have affirmed, like Huntington, that the sovereign nation-state remains the main historical subject. Therefore, now, in order to continue to outline this concept of "the borders of Asia" we must stop, for a moment, on another important point. The application of the concept of nation-state and international order in Asia.

Henry Kissinger affirms that the Peace of Westphalia outlined what a modern sovereign state is and the way in which they relate to each other. This agreement was based on a system of independent countries refraining from interfering in each other's internal affairs and controlling each other's ambitions through an overall balance of power. Each state was assigned the attribute of sovereign power over its territory. Division and multiplicity became the hallmark of a new system of international order (Kissinger, 2021, p. 15).

But at the other end of the Eurasian landmass, China was the center of its own concept of order, hierarchical and theoretically universal. This system had been applied for millennia and was based, not on the sovereign equality of states, but on the unlimited power of the emperor. In this concept there was no sovereignty in the European sense because the emperor exercised his dominion over *Tianxia* "all under heaven". It was the summit of a definite and universal political and cultural hierarchy, radiating from the center of the world over the rest of humanity. It was classified for the rest of humanity into varying degrees of barbarism based on knowledge of Chinese writing and institutions. From this perspective, China had to lead the entire world until it achieved the desired goal of "harmony under heaven" (Ramírez Ruiz & Pinto Salvatierra, 2024, pp. 219-242).

With the preponderance of the West, the Westphalian system has been consolidated and imposed on the whole world to the point of being what we now colloquially call "the world community". The system of States now encompasses all cultures and regions. Its institutions have provided a neutral framework for the interactions of diverse societies, regardless of their respective values.

In Asia, the sovereign state model has been fully adopted: historical, and often historically antagonistic, peoples are organizing themselves as sovereign states and organizing their states as regional groups. Sovereignty, obtained in many cases not long ago from colonial rule, here acquires an absolute character. The goal of state policy is not to transcend the national interest but to pursue it energetically and with conviction.

But, even so, the weight of the own, previous models persists, giving a special configuration, not perceptible at first glance to the existing international order in Asia. Hierarchy, not sovereign equality, was historically the organizing principle of Asia's international systems. This is the key point to understand this concept of the "borders of Asia". Power was demonstrated in the deference shown to a ruler and to the structures of authority that, once their supremacy was recognized, not in the drawing of specific borders on a map (Kissinger, 2021, pp. 180-181).



Empires projected their power, requesting the alignment of smaller political units. For peoples existing at the crossroads of two or more imperial orders, the path to independence often consisted of nominally declaring themselves subordinate to more than one foreign sovereign (Ibid., pp. 225-237).

Whether the historical diplomatic systems of Asia were based on the Chinese or Hindu model, the monarchy was an expression of divinity with a kind of paternal authority; it was believed that the superior countries should receive tangible tokens of tribute from their inferiors (Pye, 1985, p. 184). In practice, this formal submission was applied with remarkable fluidity and creativity.

Against this backdrop of subtle and diverse legacies, the network of Westphalian sovereign states on the map of Asia offers an oversimplified picture of regional realities.

4. What is Asia?

Before moving forward, we must once again ask ourselves a question that hovers over the whole approach to the "borders of Asia", and this is none other than: What is Asia?, what are we talking about when we talk about Asia? According to the classic definition, Asia is the largest and most populous continent on the planet, with approximately 44 million square kilometers (30% of the emerged territory) and with its 4,000 million inhabitants, 60% of the human population. It is bordered to the north by the Arctic Ocean and to the south by the Indian Ocean; the Urals to the west and the Pacific Ocean to the east.

But this definition leads us to remember Otto von Bismarck and say that Asia is only "a geographical expression". Well, one of the most basic characteristics of Asia is its multiplicity. The term Asia attributes a misleading coherence to a very diverse region. Until the arrival of the modern Western powers, no Asian language had a word to define "Asia"; none of the peoples that today constitute the almost 50 sovereign Asian states conceived of themselves as inhabiting a single "continent" or region that presupposed solidarity with all the others (Bowring, 1987, p. 1-4).

Asia is an immense continent where it is difficult to delimit spaces, cultures and civilizations. This geography has defined different geo-historical, cultural and regional groupings, modified and differentiated, even more, by their respective colonial legacies. In such a way that Asia is configured in five geo-historical areas:

East Asia -or Far East-, made up of China, Mongolia, the two Koreas, and Japan. South Asia, made up of India and its borders. South-East Asia, which comprises diverse peoples and countries with very different ethnic, cultural and colonial heritages. Central Asia, which is part of the Russian-Soviet world. Southwest Asia, made up of the Arab and non-Arab Islamic countries of the Near and Middle East (Ramírez Ruiz et al., 2017, pp. 16-17).

The mere enumeration and description of these five geographical, cultural, and historical blocks reinforces our previous statement "Asia is just a geographical concept." In view of the above, we could say that there is a Geographical Definition of Asia that covers the continent described on the maps, from the Urals to the Pacific, from the Arctic to the Indian Ocean and Indonesia. A Cultural Definition that would subtract from that definition



the European nations of Asia, that is, basically Russia, Armenia and Georgia. And, finally, an Essential Definition that would reduce Asia to the areas, civilizations and nations born and developed on the margins of the Mediterranean world. That is, the areas of diffusion of Confucian-Buddhist and Hindustani culture would be included as "cultural Asia". We should exclude the Arab, Persian and Turkish world, which has been called the ex-Soviet Middle East and Central Asia, as its culture, fundamentally Muslim, is strongly linked to Mediterranean culture and tradition (Ramírez Ruiz et al., 2023, pp. 23-24).

Because, in essence, when we refer to Asia, almost unconsciously, we are talking about the civilizations and peoples that were born and developed disconnected from Western civilization, that is, from that born in the Mediterranean. There is a short strand of thread that connects the Mediterranean to the Indian world, but nothing like it to Confucian civilization. Therefore, we consider Asia in the regions of East Asia or the Far East, South Asia and Southeast Asia: China, Japan, Korea, India, Viet Nam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and the Philippines; as well as states that are located on "its borders" such as Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan and, even Pakistan.

Therefore, in this article we are going to present which are those territories and states that we define as borders between the great civilizational nations of East and South Asia: China, Japan, India and Southeast Asia. As well as between this Asian world and the West. There are four "border lines" that we are going to present: The Borders of China and India; The Borders with India (and China); The borders of China and Japan; China's borders with Southeast Asia (and the West) and The borders of China and Russia.

5. The borders of Asia

5.1. The borders of China and India

Of all the conceptions of world order in Asia, China has produced the most enduring, the most clearly defined, and the furthest of Western ideas. The idea of China's central position in the world order is still so entrenched today that China is looking for ways to redefine "Everything Under Heaven" (Mancall, 1968, p. 63). From their perspective, the world order reflects a hierarchy, not a balance between sovereign and equal states (Palacios & Ramírez-Ruiz, 2011, pp. 26-31).

The drama of China's encounter with the developed West was the impact of the great powers, organized as expansionist states, on a civilization that initially saw the signs of the modern state as a humiliation. The "rise of China" to twenty-first-century supremacy reestablishes historical patterns (Kissinger, 2021, p. 225). But China's participation in aspects of the Westphalian international structure is experienced by China as a contradiction since it has not forgotten that it was forced to accept this model that is absolutely contrary to its tradition. Therefore, he hopes that sooner or later the system will evolve and this will allow him to review the rules to play the central role he believes corresponds to him (Ramírez Ruiz & Pinto Salvatierra, 2023, pp. 237-238). China does not consciously seek to build an empire, but as it strengthens it generates needs that lead it to expand. For the time being, it has established beneficial relations with its



neighbors and has an ultra-realistic foreign policy (Wu & Lansdowne, 2008, p. 267) that tends to Finlandize East Asia (Ross, 2010).

The borders of China and India are, quite possibly, one of the "hottest" spots on the planet. These two nations have been separated for millennia by the immense natural border that is the Himalayas, but time and technology have made them neighbors and rivals (Myint-U, 2011, pp. 77-78).

In theory, the border between the two powers is the McMahon Line. That is, on the border route agreed between the Raj of India and the puppet state of Tibet (1912-1950), which China has never recognised and which India assumes. But this is not the real border. This is the "line on the map", along the Himalayan ridges, around which Chinese and Indian soldiers periodically confront each other, unarmed, to prevent the incident from spilling over (Ramírez Ruiz et al., 2017, pp. 123-127).

The border but India is four large regions on both sides of the Himalayas that create, perhaps, the most unstable continental area in the world: the conflict regions: Tibet, Xinjiang, Kashmir and the Indian Northeast. And the small Himalayan buffer states: Nepal and Bhutan.

5.2. Conflict regions

Tibet

The conflict in Tibet is based on a problem of transmitting Western concepts to a space where they had not existed, nor until the twentieth century, had they been necessary: sovereignty.

Tibet was first assimilated into Chinese power during the Yuan Dynasty in the 13th century. Since then, with lapses, the power installed in Beijing has intuited that Tibet was part of its "*Tianxia*" administration. After a power vacuum, again in the 18th century the Qing sent a commissioner to Lhasa to take over the government. Not without local resistance, Chinese sovereignty was effective until the decline of the dynasty. China's central power was dramatically weakened by the defeat, the Sino-Japanese Wars, and the Boxer Rebellion. Taking advantage of the power vacuum, in 1904, the British occupied Lhasa and in 1906, they turned Tibet into a British protectorate. In 1912 they immediately recognized their independence, which was maintained until 1950. In 1950 the PLA "liberated" Tibet. India did not intervene. In 1951, the Plan for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet was drafted, a kind of autonomy accepted by the Dalai Lama (Ramírez Ruiz, 2018, pp. 187-188). In June 1956, Tibet revolted. China suppressed the rebellion in 1959 and the Dalai Lama had to flee to India.

In 1965 China dispossessed the lamas of land ownership and introduced compulsory secular education. It was only the first step in the drama that was the Cultural Revolution. Over the years, rebellions continue to be periodic, and China is unable to assimilate the region through demographic overflow, which is its traditional method, due to the inability of the *Han population* to adapt to the heights. Even so, China's dominance over the territory is unquestionable. India gives refuge to dissidents, and maintains tension, but lacks the capacity to go further.



Xinjiang

The Xinjiang Autonomous Region is the People's Republic of China's other border and problematic region with India. Like Tibet, the effective dominance of Chinese power over it throughout history has been intermittent and scarce, but it has always been within its strategic plans. Aware of the importance of the Silk Road, the Chinese have always intended to advance on their oases that gave access to Central Asia, since the Han Dynasty (206 BC - 220 AD).

The traditional name of the region, East Turkestan, is due to the fact that the majority people in the area are the Uyghurs, a people with Turkic roots, related to Uzbeks and Kazakhs with whom they share Sunni Islam. Therefore, we could have considered this region as the "border between China and Russia" because it is the natural and cultural continuity of Soviet Central Asia and Russia/USSR was the power that pressed on it during the time of the century of humiliation. However, the implosion of Russian power and the atomization of Soviet power into the dysfunctional *Central Asian "tanes"* states meant that the new determining power in this area was India. In fact, the 1962 war between China and India was caused by China's desire to control Askai Chin, a stony region that allows direct communication between Xinjiang and Tibet.

The Uyghur insurgency, almost without external support and strongly repressed, and the colonization *that has* been concentrated in modern Chinese-style cities, are building a dual society with serious dangers of falling into a de facto ethnic apartheid (Rodríguez Merino, 2016, pp. 29-54). The *Han* plus Chinese Hui Muslims have already caught up with the Uyghur natives in percentage. The tension will continue and this unites the destinies of Tibet and Xinjiang with those of the next conflictive region, Kashmir, as scenarios of the latent conflict between China and India (Ruiz Arévalo, 2024, pp. 1068-1082).

Cachemira

On the other side of the Himalayas is Kashmir. Indian Kashmir is integrated into the federal state of *Jammu and Kashmir*. A region of 222,236 km² and eleven million inhabitants, around 80% of Iranian ethnicity and Muslims.

Kashmir was an integral part of original Pakistan. In fact, the "k" in the acronym with which the country's name was formed corresponds to the initial letter of its name. However, the high strategic value, on the control of the rivers and against China, pushed Nehru to annex his homeland to the Union of India. The successive wars and the sustained tension between India and Pakistan have Kashmir as one of their root causes. Historical Kashmir, after the 1947 war, is divided between Pakistan and India by the "line of control" and part of the territory has been annexed by China. Both Hindustani states consider the entire territory as their own and China, from the other side of the Himalayas, supports Pakistani claims. The Muslim insurgency is constant and makes Indian rule insecure.



The Far East of India: Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura

The insurgent movements in northeastern India are secessionist in nature, caused by the ethno-religious differences of its inhabitants with the majority of the Hindustani population and by a sense of physical separation from the rest of the country. In fact, this area of the Union, which occupies 254,947 km², is only linked to the rest of India through the "*chicken neck*" corridor, a narrow passage 24 kilometers wide that separates Nepal from Bangladesh.

The insurgency in East India stems from the demand for independent states in the tribal areas of Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura and in Assam (non-tribal area) (Kaplan, 2017, p. 318). The separatist movement first started in Nagaland in the 1950s, and from there spread to Mizoram in the 1960s, to Manipur in the 1970s, to Tripura and Assam in the 1980s. The insurgents operating in these areas have received financial aid, training and weapons from the secret services of Pakistan and Bangladesh. The separatists of Nagaland and Mizoram also received Chinese support between 1968 and 1979. The Nagas and the Mizos, mostly Christians (mainly Baptists), receive help from Western Baptist missionary organizations.

The separatists of Manipur, Tripura and Assam are mostly Hindus but consider themselves ethnically distinct from the rest of the Indians. The failure of successive governments in New Delhi and the federal states to curb large-scale illegal immigration of Muslims from Bangladesh is another reason for the existence of separatist movements that fear that the Islamic religion and the Bengali language will become the majority in their own country.

5.3. The Himalayan States: Nepal and Bhutan

Nestled in the middle of the Himalayas, lie two small states, Nepal and Bhutan, separated by the Indian state of Sikkim. Located on the border line of the two Asian giants, they are becoming pieces of diplomatic "play" and influence of both powers. Their cultures are a crossroads between Tibetan and Hindu and in them, the political influence of India has always predominated. In recent years, however, China's strategic advances are weakening that historic *status quo*.

Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal

Nepal, despite being so close to the Indo-Gangetic heart of India, always knew how to play with the Chinese counterweight so as not to be absorbed by its neighbour and periodically sent tributes to Beijing (Kissinger, 2021, pp. 217-225). The modern Nepalese nation has been configured as such since the unification of the regions under the direction and influence of the Gurkha king Prithvi Narayan, in 1768.

In 1816, through the Treaty of Sugauli, it became a dependent state of the British. After the Nepalese Gurkhas helped the English crush the Sepoy mutiny in 1857, their incorporation into the British system was accelerated, safeguarding their independence from the Raj. In 1948 it achieved independence and fell under the influence of India.



In May 1991, Nepal held its first elections and in 1996, the Maoist-inspired Communist Party of Nepal launched an armed insurrection. On June 1, 2001, Crown Prince Dipendra murdered his parents and other members of the royal family. The instability ended up causing the overthrow of the monarchy in 2008 and the constitution as a democratic Federal Republic in 2015, with a very strong weight of Chinese influence (Raj Gautam, 2022, pp. 19-22).

Bhutan

Bhutan is a small constitutional monarchy in the Himalayas (about forty thousand square kilometers and eight hundred thousand inhabitants) of Sino-Tibetan language. The origins of the country date back to the eighth century with the introduction of Buddhism by the Tibetans. In the 17th century, the Tibetan warrior Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal unified the country. It was incorporated into the Raj in British India after the "Bhutan War" (1864-1865). In 1907, Ugyen Wangchuck was unanimously elected as crown king by an assembly composed of Buddhist monks, government officials, and heads of prestigious families. Immediately, the British government recognized the new monarch, so a treaty was signed by which the United Kingdom was in charge of the country's foreign affairs (Rosillo Rodríguez, 2021, pp. 63-95).

On August 8, 1949, after independence, a similar treaty was signed but with India, by which it undertook to maintain the country's international relations. Stability is its main feature, but it is nestled next to Arunachal Pradesh which would leave it surrounded by China in the event of border changes on the MacMahon Line.

5.4. The borders of India (and China)

When British power collapsed in India, the Raj fractured at its border marks. To the west with the regions around the Indus and to the east with East Bengal Pakistan was formed. At the southern tip of the subcontinent, the island of Ceylon, never incorporated into the Raj, became the state of Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, the heart of the British Empire remained within the nascent Union of India.

British imposition transformed a civilization without defined borders into a modern state. Diversity was the great characteristic of the Hindustani world, castes, races, languages, religions, rivers and varied landscapes made it difficult to define a "we" in that world (Radhakrishnan, 1997, pp. 60-62). The decision to administer India as a single whole, the railway lines of communication and Western ideas, soon assimilated by the enlightened elites, created this common identity.

The way in which India achieved independence defined the role it was to play in the international arena. India had survived the period of colonialism by combining cultural impermeability with an extraordinary ability to handle the occupiers. The greatest example of this was as Mahatma Gandhi. For this reason, India saw its independence not only as the triumph of a nation but as that of universal moral principles. This allowed him to lead the project of the non-aligned countries and, through the Afro-Asian Conference



in Bandung (1955), to lead the nascent Third World with a message of purely Hindu roots: the *Pancha Shila* (Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence) (Mesa, 1993).

But India's role in the post-Cold War world order has been complicated by the support that emerging China gives to Pakistan and Bangladesh, while its shadow lengthens over Sri Lanka. In addition, Beijing is openly using the ports of these three countries to build the nodular part of the "string of pearls", a chain of naval installations that would ensure Chinese control of the sea routes to the Persian Gulf and, in fact, would surround India denying it dominance of the Indian Ocean. So these three sovereign states become India's true borders with China.

Pakistan

The English created India and before leaving, they broke it. The coexistence between "different" people was a daily reality. But Western ideas, and the imperialist state, encouraged these differences to have a political meaning, "communalism", the tool of *divide et impera* with which *Britannia* tried to prolong its domination (Ramírez Ruiz et al., 2017, pp. 106-107). He did not succeed, but he made it impossible for the Muslim-majority provinces to be inserted into the nascent secular Hindu-majority Union of India.

Pakistan is not a country, it is an acronym, say its enemies, because the name of the country was "invented" in 1933 by Choudhry Rahmat Ali, joining the initial of the names of the five regions of northern British India: Punjab, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Sindh and Baluchistan.

These regions are not ethno-linguistically homogeneous, but Pakistan is inhabited by four peoples, principal, different, without positive historical relations behind them. The Punjabis, the majority ethnic group, dominate the army; the Sindhis, around Karachi, business and civil politics; the Balochis, with Iranian roots, feel oppressed in this state; and, on the northeastern borders, the Pashtuns, never well integrated into the state, generate an ungovernable continuum with their ethnic brothers in Afghanistan. On this puzzle were settled the *Mohair*, some eight million Urdu-speaking emigrants from the continent, who in their elite, occupied the leadership positions of the new state (Ahsan, 1996, p. 18).

A state without a nation, created with the beautiful name of "the country of the Pure", but whose only *raison d'être* is to provide Indian Muslims with a state capable of opposing polytheistic India. Only religion and hatred of the Hindu give coherence to the country. This has led to three large-scale conventional wars since independence 1947, 1965, 1971, plus a dangerous incident in 1999, known as the Kargil War. But, above all, it has pushed both to equip themselves with nuclear weapons. In all these incidents, in Pakistan's rearguard, there has always been China, benefiting from Pakistan's recognition of its conquests over India in the Sino-Indian War of 1962 and which is building a naval base in the port of Gwardar that closes India's passage to the Persian Gulf (Kaplan, 2017, pp. 303-310).



Bangladesh

As we have already pointed out, Pakistan was born as an artificial structure that united the provinces of the British Raj with a Muslim majority. This included East Bengal. While West Pakistan lay in western India around the Indus River Valley, in the east, near the mouth of the Ganges, with a thousand kilometers of Union India territory in between, there was East Pakistan, inhabited by Bengalis.

The artificiality of this state structure was hardly maintained until 1970. Bengalis originally accounted for 60% of the total population, but they felt that power was in the hands of the Western Punjabis. Nationalist postulates were gaining affection to the point that in 1970 the *Awami League won the elections*, which triggered Pakistani repression. Indira Gandhi played her cards well. Before intervening, he ensured the neutrality of the Western powers and signed a military cooperation agreement with the USSR. The objective was to neutralize any possibility of Chinese intervention. Once these guarantees were obtained, the Indian army attacked Pakistan, it was the war of 1971, and caused the independence of Bangladesh.

Since then, Bangladesh's relations with India have not been positive. In fact, East Bengal was born in 1905 in the midst of sectarian pogroms (Bianco, 2002, pp. 156-159). China has taken advantage of this to become the main support of this country, turning the port of Chittagong into another of its "pearls" with which to surround India.

Sri Lanka

The *Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka* is a sovereign island country. Its insular character and cultural specificities meant that it was never part of the Raj. Their language is Indo-European like those of northern India, but unlike the subcontinent on the island Buddhism triumphed. This religion was introduced in the third century BC. After the arrival of Arahata Mahinda Thera, son of Emperor Asoka.

The entire island was occupied by the British Empire in 1796 and officially became a colony in 1802, through the Peace of Amiens. Ceylon gained its independence in 1948. In 1972 it changed its name to Sri Lanka and became a republic, severing its last ties with Britain.

Sri Lanka has enjoyed, along with India, the longest period of parliamentary democracy in a non-Western country. But the island has an internal wound that dates back to historical times. In the north of the island, bordering the south of the subcontinent, there is a minority of Tamil language and Hindu religion. The Tamils are the Dravidian inhabitants of southern India, for generations they have settled on the island as tea pickers.

Tensions between the Sinhalese Buddhist majority and the Tamil Hindu minority began in 1983 with a general uprising. Tens of thousands died before a ceasefire was signed in 2001. In 2005, the peace process received a major boost when the Tamil Tigers and the Government signed a cooperation agreement to jointly access and share aid to the tsunami-affected areas. But the government did not comply and in 2008 the ceasefire was broken. Between January and February 2009, a major offensive by the government



army re-established government power over Tamil-controlled areas (Forrester, 2021, pp. 154-158).

Meanwhile, Chinese infiltration of the Sinhalese economy reached the point of investing large amounts in the Magampura Mahinda Rajapaksa Port (also known as Hambantota Port), which since 2010 has become dependent on China for a hundred years lease. This port is another of the "pearls" with which China surrounds India. In 2022, an inflationary crisis, related by the population to Chinese investments, provoked a revolt, with synophobic connotations, that overthrew the government. But the new government quickly had to repair relations with Beijing.

5.5. The borders of China and Japan

The Japanese archipelago has a characteristic that China lacks: adaptability. Japan, a relatively small archipelago, is characterized by ethnic homogeneity and an official ideology that promulgates the divine ancestry of the Japanese people. The enormous awareness of its particularity has provided the country with great flexibility to adjust its policies and structures to the national needs of each moment. This has allowed it to adopt the techniques and institutions of other societies, reinforcing its personality rather than diluting it. This self-confidence led him to refuse to pay tribute to the Emperor of China, thus consciously placing himself on the margins of the Chinese world hierarchical order (Kang, 2010, pp. 77-81).

Its adaptability allowed it to go from being a victim of imperialism to being an aggressive imperialist power in the brief period from 1868 (Meiji Revolution) to 1914 (World War I). Its dominance of the East Asian space was in crescendo: the 1870s, expansion into nearby islands; 1895, Sino-Japanese War and occupation of Korea and annexation of Taiwan; 1905 Russo-Japanese War, annexation of Korea and occupation of Manchuria; 1914, entry into World War I and annexation of German territories in China and the Pacific. After the Great War and until the Second World War, continued aggression against China and defiance of the West. All this ended in 1945. After that, Japan gave another one of its enormous cohesion, becoming in a few decades the second largest economy in the world.

But the wounds that its militarism of those fifty long years of the twentieth century left in its neighbors still remain unhealed. And now, when it is China that seems to be on its way to dominating the future, J. M. Domenach wondered, does China intend to bring Japan to its knees? (Domenach, 2005, p. 167) It is possible, or sometimes it seems so. Japan is aware of this, and is preparing on the other side of the border from China, in this case, after Korea and the island of Taiwan, in the company of the US.

Korea

Korea is the Poland of the Far East, *a small country with a perfectly defined identity surrounded by two large aggressive empires that seek its assimilation and disappearance*. As a result of the influence games of China and Japan and the Cold War between the



USSR and the United States in the space of the Korean Peninsula, there are today two states that defend their legitimacy to rule over the entire nation.

North Korea is officially called the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with its capital in Pyongyang, covers a territory of 120,540 km² and has a population of 26,072,217 inhabitants. South Korea is officially called the Republic of Korea, has its capital in Seoul, an area of 99,260 km² and a population of 51,966,948 inhabitants.

Two Confucian countries that have triumphed. In South Korea it is evident, it has become a new Japan of technological development and high standards of living. But North Korea, with its oppressive, archaic, autarkic regime, has also triumphed. He has achieved the "atomic bomb" despite the great sacrifices imposed on his own people. South Korea is a supervised and apparent democracy. North Korean socialism actually responds to an endogenous version called *Juche*.

The militarized border between the two is a residue of the cold war. But its reality corresponds to the current world order. And this will precisely prevent the Peninsula from being reunified in the near future. They will not be unified because it is not in anyone's interest. No one wants dynamic and modern South Korea with the North's atomic weapons. Everyone fears that this new Korea will fall on the side of the "other" (Nam-lin Hur, 2024, pp. 6-13).

Although Japan backs South Korea against the North, it knows that a unified Korea considers it its first enemy. Although the United States is South Korea's main protector, Japan remains its main ally and does not want an anti-Japanese Korea while being wary of Seoul's strong economic ties with Beijing. China is North Korea's main economic supporter, but its relations with South Korea are better, both politically and economically, and it is wary of a unified Korea that wants to reassert its personality by strengthening ties with the US and Russia. And finally, Russia has a privileged relationship with North Korea and is not willing to jeopardize it.

On the other hand, we must not forget that the two Koreas, like Taiwan, are also the border of China and the West.

Taiwan

Taiwan is actually the Republic of China, founded by Sun Yat sen in 1912, built by Chiang Kai-sek between 1926 and 1937 and moved to the Island of Formosa in 1949. For fifty years it was a Japanese colony (1895-1945). Japan, in its proverbial racism, did not try to Japanize it, although it did create strong economic ties that have survived and that make it one of the main supports of the Taipei regime. As in South Korea, the Japanese play a secondary, but necessary, role in this scenario after the Americans. These, through three joint communiqués (1971, 1979 and 1982) subscribed to the "One China" policy, but in parallel sabotaged the possibility of reunification through the guarantees given to Taipei with the *Law on Relations with Taiwan* (1979) and "the six guarantees" (1982) (Ramírez Ruiz, 2023, pp. 52-55).

China's goodwill towards Taiwan, seen in the application of attraction policies such as the "One Country, Two Systems" model, can do little in the face of the geostrategic pulse that is being played out today on the island. Taiwan has become the Berlin of this incipient



Cold War. Whoever dominates the island will dominate the South China Sea, and whoever controls it will be the power that dominates the future. The United States is increasingly focused on preventing China from winning that game, and Japan is an indispensable soldier in this game.

China's borders with Southeast Asia: the South China Sea

We are not going to refer again to the Chinese worldview: a hierarchical world governed from Beijing by the son of heaven and the scant value given by these parameters to the formal borders of European systems. However, China is now using this historical ambiguity to claim all the waters of what is known as the South China Sea as its own.

The space claimed by China cartographically is recorded on the map of the "Nine Strokes". This "line" refers to the demarcation used, initially by the government of the Republic of China and later also by the People's Republic of China, to delimit its claims to most of the South China Sea.

On July 12, 2016, an arbitral tribunal of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague declared that China has no legal basis to claim "historical rights" within its nine-line line in a case brought by the Philippines. But China, making use of a policy of *real-politik* based on its power, continues to occupy space from its neighbors. These are the open disputes:

With Indonesia, the Natuna Islands; with the Philippines, on the Bank of Scarborough; with Viet Nam, the Paracel Islands and the Spratly Islands (some of these islands are also claimed by Brunei, Malaysia and the Philippines); with Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam in areas of the Gulf of Thailand; and with Singapore and Malaysia various islets and waters along the Strait of Johore and the Strait of Singapore (Sutter, 2010, pp. 17-67).

What is happening is that China does not recognize the sovereign rights, under the parameters of the Westphalian system, of the island or mainland "small states" that surround the South China Sea. China's ambition in this area has a parallel in recent history. Just as the United States had to dominate the Caribbean, expelling all European powers from it to dominate the Panama Canal and become the hegemonic power of its hemisphere. China knows that it must control this sea, which implies subjugating all the riverside countries and recovering Taiwan to become the hegemon of its hemisphere and control the Straits of Malacca.

5.6. The borders of China and Russia: Mongolia.

The Tsarist empire was left out of the Westphalian system. Its characteristics were that of an empire under an absolute monarch, a unified religious orthodoxy and territorial expansion in all directions (Kissinger, 2021, p. 16). Therefore, the borders between the two empires in the enormous North Asian expanses were always blurred.

The Mongolian people are, together with the Tibetan, the rearguard of the *Han*, the only peoples within their cultural area. Both Tibetans and Mongols share Lamaist Buddhism and their ambiguous and symbiotic relationship with the Chinese state provides



arguments for those who defend the independence or integration of Mongols and Tibetans into Beijing's state structures (Kaplan, 2007, pp. 116-130). The Republic of Mongolia as we know it today owes its existence to the status of a buffer state between Russia and China. If in Tibet this same condition did not take hold, it was due to the remoteness of the metropolis and the border stability that the British imposed on the borders of the Himalayas. The Mongols managed to create a state thanks to the fact that between 1911 and 1917 the two empires that competed to dominate their territory collapsed.

Taking advantage of the chaos, the Japanese empire pressured to become the hegemonic empire in the area and an endless number of Russian, Chinese, communist, nationalist and Mongolian warlords plunged the area into the most absolute chaos from which in a somewhat novelistic way, not without epic, the independence of Mongolia will be born. The latter, in an attempt to preserve its identity, will look more to Russia than to China. "Distant" Russia will allow itself to be loved, every time a Russian power has established relations with China it has imposed the recognition of Mongolian sovereignty. Russia's external weakness forced the US to play the same role as guarantor of Mongolia in the first decades of the 21st century. Because the Mongol state lives in a continuous existential threat. Mongolia is a huge steppe country inhabited by only three million inhabitants. China does not have to be aggressive or militarily invade the territory. A mere demographic movement induced or not avoided from Beijing would saturate Mongolia demographically as has already happened with all Chinese autonomous regions, except Tibet.

6. Conclusions

At the beginning of this article we talked about how the borders of Asia were not a mere line on a map. Asia's borders are huge expanses of sovereignty wholly or partially disputed throughout history, even though they may be configured as internationally recognized sovereign states. As we have tried to demonstrate throughout these pages, there are a number of factors that justify this situation.

First, the geographical reality of Asia. Throughout history, the great landmass of Asia has left large areas sparsely populated and with blurred borders, in the Himalayas, the central deserts or the non-navigable seas.

Secondly, the imperfect adaptation of the concept of Western sovereignty, based on the "Westphalian" model that implies the relationship between independent and equal states with the traditional system of relations in Asia that, fundamentally, was governed by a "tributary" and, therefore, hierarchical system. The relationship between Asian states was unequal, but more flexible.

Thirdly, the emergence of the Asian powers which, if on the one hand fiercely defend their sovereignty under the parameters of the Westphalian system, do not hesitate, based on their strength, to claim historical rights from the "tributary" system if it suits them.

Fourthly, the evolution of the globalization process at a general level in the world. The current drift leads us to cultural diversity and "identity" giving legitimacy to any claim,



also in the case of States. This weakens the defenders of the status quo imposed by the West in Asia.

In such a way that, although there is no general questioning of international borders in Asia, we can affirm that the entire border between China and India is in a convulsive uncertainty of legitimacy. That the border between Japan and China is actually the border of the Asian world with the West. And, in relation to this, in the battle for dominance over the South China Sea, from Taiwan to the Straits of Malaysia, the future of Humanity is at stake. History does not repeat itself, it advances in a spiral, conditioned by geography and previous events (history itself), which is why we can say that the most important border in the world is today in the South China Sea, where Taiwan is playing the same role that a few decades ago corresponded to Berlin.

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GEOPOLITICS OF SOUTH ASIA: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS AND CONTEMPORARY DEBATE

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Abstract

South Asian geopolitics has experienced a new development. In light of the 21st century being known as the Asian century, geopolitical dynamics has become a pressing issue. Since the presence of the key global actors in South Asia has been rising, analyzing the new trends in the region's geopolitics is becoming more important. An essential question for the study of South Asian geopolitics is how many dimensions of interactions between China and Pakistan, India and Russia, and the United States and China have an impact on the region's geopolitics. It is crucial to examine from a variety of perspectives how the complex interactions between these super and global powers have complicated South Asian geopolitics. Additionally, it is crucial to investigate the geopolitical trends in South Asia and the problems that have affected them. These difficulties are essentially the core issues of this paper. The theoretical aspects of geopolitics for the study of South Asian geopolitics are assessed in the paper. The development and the pragmatic advancement of its geopolitics have also been extensively examined. To examine the current pragmatic geopolitics of the South Asian region, the paper has also discussed the Indo-Pacific Strategy, the China-Russia Security Dialogue Platform (CRSDP), and the Global Security Initiatives (GSI) of China. This paper has also evaluated the potential effects of the US State Partnership Program (SPP) on Nepal's geopolitics and the geopolitics of the Himalayas in South Asia. It has adapted the qualitative method using descriptive and critical analytical approach. The paper concludes that the South Asian nations should work together to resolve the multilateral regional concerns with external actors without compromising any state's national interests to make geopolitics in the region conducive to peace, harmony, development, cooperation, and prosperity. They have to resolve their difficulties in accordance with their respective diplomatic traditions and foreign policy tenets when it is impossible to reach a consensus. Because each state has distinct political, economic, and social dynamics, any country should avoid interfering with how other nations perceive



South Asian geopolitics because doing so could lead to crisis and additional unrest in the region's geopolitics.

Keywords

Global Security Initiatives, Himalayan Geopolitics, Indo-Pacific Strategy, Pragmatic Geopolitics of South Asia, Theory of Geopolitics.

Resumo

A geopolítica do Sul da Ásia registou um novo desenvolvimento. Tendo em conta que o século XXI é conhecido como o século asiático, a dinâmica geopolítica tornou-se uma questão premente. Uma vez que a presença dos principais atores globais no Sul da Ásia tem vindo a aumentar, a análise das novas tendências na geopolítica da região está a tornar-se mais importante. Uma questão essencial para o estudo da geopolítica do Sul da Ásia é saber quantas dimensões das interações entre a China e o Paquistão, a Índia e a Rússia, e os Estados Unidos e a China têm impacto na geopolítica da região. É fundamental analisar, a partir de uma variedade de perspetivas, a forma como as complexas interações entre estas superpotências e potências globais complicaram a geopolítica do Sul da Ásia. Além disso, é fundamental investigar as tendências geopolíticas no Sul da Ásia e os problemas que as afetaram. Estas dificuldades são essencialmente as questões centrais do presente documento. Os aspetos teóricos da geopolítica para o estudo da geopolítica do Sul da Ásia são avaliados no documento. O desenvolvimento e o avanço pragmático da sua geopolítica também foram amplamente examinados. A fim de examinar a atual geopolítica pragmática da região da Ásia do Sul, o documento discute igualmente a Estratégia do Indo-Pacífico, a Plataforma de Diálogo sobre Segurança China-Rússia (CRSDP) e as Iniciativas de Segurança Global (GSI) da China. Este artigo também avalia os efeitos potenciais do Programa de Parceria Estatal dos EUA (SPP) na geopolítica do Nepal e na geopolítica dos Himalaias no Sul da Ásia. Adotou-se o método qualitativo utilizando uma abordagem analítica descritiva e crítica. O documento conclui que as nações do Sul da Ásia devem trabalhar em conjunto para resolver as preocupações regionais multilaterais com atores externos, sem comprometer os interesses nacionais de qualquer Estado, a fim de tornar a geopolítica da região propícia à paz, à harmonia, ao desenvolvimento, à cooperação e à prosperidade. Quando é impossível chegar a um consenso, os Estados têm de resolver as suas dificuldades de acordo com as respetivas tradições diplomáticas e princípios de política externa. Uma vez que cada Estado tem uma dinâmica política, económica e social distinta, qualquer país deve evitar interferir na forma como as outras nações percecionam a geopolítica do Sul da Ásia, porque isso pode conduzir a uma crise e a mais agitação na geopolítica da região.

Palavras-chave

Iniciativas de segurança global, Geopolítica dos Himalaias, Estratégia do Indo-Pacífico, Geopolítica pragmática do Sul da Ásia, Teoria da Geopolítica.

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GEOPOLITICS OF SOUTH ASIA: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS AND CONTEMPORARY DEBATE

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Introduction

Major geopolitical actors affecting South Asian geopolitics are the USA, China, India, and Russia. The USA is a crucial factor in the changing global geopolitical context. Global and regional politics changes based on the changing interests of political actors involved in a particular geography. External political actors engage in certain geography through their various activities to expand and defend their global interests. When multiple actors with multiple interests focus at a time in the same geography, a political game is introduced that creates confrontation and competition among them. In the meantime, cooperation is the only way for bilateral and multilateral affairs in International Relations to maintain peace and prosperity. This study has mainly focused on assessing South Asian geopolitics and Himalayan geopolitics. In doing so, major political and strategic cooperation and confrontation held in the South Asian region are analyzed from the perspective of geopolitics.

Studying South Asian geopolitics and current Himalayan geopolitics separately, placing Nepal at the core of Himalayan geopolitics is difficult because the geo-strategic importance of Nepal is equally important to South Asian geopolitics for global powers. Because of rising China and emerging India, the Himalayan geopolitics in South Asia is another emerging issue of South Asian peace and stability. As the importance of Himalayan geopolitics is increasing, global powers are concentrating in the region, along with their 21st century global interests. Halford Mackinder termed such a situation as Heartland. The Heartland is the geopolitical theory proposed by Sir Halford Mackinder. Iseri (2009) writes, "I have considered the US grand strategy as a combination of wartime and peacetime strategies and argued that the Caspian region and its hinterland, where I call the Eurasian Heartland, to use the term of Sir Halford Mackinder"(p. 26). Ismailov and Papava define the Heartland as the area where the continental masses of

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Eurasia were concentrated and served as the pivot of all the geopolitical transformations of historical dimensions within the World Island. Europe's development was driven by the need to respond to pressure created by the outside world, especially from Central Asia. A similar situation in South Asian and the Himalayan region, where Nepal is located in the central part, has developed recently. Against this backdrop, this paper mainly focuses on debating South Asian geopolitics, including instability created due to the US involvement in the Himalayan geopolitical region.

Methods and materials

Philosophically, the research focuses on investigating the features of the reality of geopolitics. Recent South Asian geopolitics, Himalayan geopolitics, and the Nepali trilateral geopolitical model are analyzed based on the theoretical reality of geopolitics. Geopolitical and theoretical ontology is dealt with in this research, which is what kind of knowledge exists. The paper adopts the qualitative method using an analytical and critical approach, and this paper focuses on secondary data. Reviewing historical documents is a tool for data collection. This study tries to collect qualitative data as secondary sources. Scholarly Journals, textbooks, policy reports, governmental publications, and some authentic websites are used as sources of qualitative secondary data. Textual analysis is the tool for data analysis to conclude via critical observation and analysis.

Debates, results, and analysis

Geopolitical debates

Tuathail and Agnew define geopolitics as a controversial power exercise by political actors by which intellectuals of the states localize international politics and represent it as a world specialized by unique types of places, people, and dramas (1992, p. 190). They categorize geopolitics into formal geopolitics and practical geopolitics. As per the definition of Tuathail and Agnew, formal and practical geopolitics seems valid as states or political actors represent the formal geopolitics, whereas the localization of international politics by intellectuals is more related to pragmatic or practical geopolitics. Linking with the geopolitical concept of Tuathail and Agnew, they further argue that the confrontation and massive struggle between the powerful and expansionist East against the democratic West is the most dominant geopolitical discourse of this period. This discourse seems influenced by ideological clashes. Expansionist East and powerful West is guided by the Western notion of democracy and their perspective toward the Eastern world. Integrating ideological ground in geopolitics makes it quite controversial in its traditional definition. The traditional definitions of geopolitics are guided by the concept of geographical settings and political processes (Gokmen, 2010, p. 16). The term 'political processes' does not care about ideological political actors but focuses on all kinds of political actors who concentrate on a certain geography to achieve their targeted goals or interests. Therefore, Tuathail and Agnew have defined geopolitics from the Western perspective.



Along with inventing the term 'geopolitics' by Rudolf Kjellen in 1899, it was more popularized in the academic field (Gokmen, 2010, p.13). Academics have also known geopolitics as the analysis between geographic influence and power relationships in world affairs (Chand, 2021, p. 62). The countries with huge geography have a greater influence on domestic political actors in small states. Nepal is an example of such a situation. Nepal's total updated area is 147,516 Sq. Km (The Kathmandu Post, 2020, para. 5). India's total area is 3,287,263 Sq. Km. Similarly, China's total approximate area is 9,600,000 Sq. Km. Thus, Nepal is almost 22.284 times and 65.077 times smaller than India and China, respectively. These two immediate neighbours have greater influence on Nepal and Nepali political parties than other friendly neighbours, except the superpower. Therefore, the definition of geopolitics is valid in the case of Nepal.

Granieri defines geopolitics as an approach to studying recent world affairs in history, culture, tradition, political practices, and geography, or... it is a study of the "realities and mentality of localities (2015, p.492). While studying geopolitics; history, culture, tradition, political practices, geography, etc., are integral to the research for precise results and conclusions on geopolitics. As per Granieri, there are serious reasons behind regional and global conflict or confrontation between and among the nations. For example, there is no single reason behind the competition and confrontation in the recent Russia-Ukraine crisis, the Korean Peninsula issues, the Israel-Palestine conflict, Iran-Saudi Arabia affairs, Turkey-Syria relations, and even the US-China trade war. Reasons from various perspectives are responsible for such kinds of inter-state conflicts. These bilateral and multilateral issues are linked with the concept of realities and mentalities of localities.

Scholars believe that geopolitical research, study, and analysis start with a map of certain geography or states, but it does not end there. The geographical map itself is nothing unless the psychological construct of statesmanship is considered a research unit while researching geopolitics because leaders' actions and reactions guided by their psychological construct play a crucial role in shaping and reshaping geopolitics. For example, there are maps of Nepal and India. But, the state leaders' role is vital for harmonious Nepal-India relations. Their psychology and decision-making capacity lead bilateral relations and its possible consequences. As the map comes first while talking about geopolitics, it has its roots between 1880 and 1910 (Granieri, 2015, p. 492). Though the term 'geopolitics' was coined in 1899, its debate is even old than 1899. Alfred Thayer Mahan wrote a book entitled "The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1783" in 1890, which mainly deals with the supreme importance of sea power in national historical dominance. This notion argues that controlling the seas was a major source of Britain's rise as a world power in the early phase of the modern world (Kennedy, 1983). As geopolitics is significantly controlled by the action of great powers to become a superpower, controlling the seas by Britain is also a way of becoming the superpower in that era. Hence, an informal debate on geopolitics links with this event in Britain.

Mahan's book focuses on the general history of the United States and Europe in a specific context to examine the influence of naval power in the course of that history (Mahan, 1898, p. iii). This book was published in 1890 as the first edition. It has focused on how the great powers try to develop their naval power to control the seas to become a superpower. The book has debated a lot about geopolitics, even though it does not focus



on the term. Later, Rudolf Kjellen invented the term, and it became the formal discourse in world academia. As Mahan geopolitically focuses on the politics of the sea, Mackinder (1943) focuses on the Heartland, whose foundation is the physical basis for strategic thinking (p.598). Strategy in political science deals with power politics, which concentrates on definite geography. The concept of Heartland was developed based on the geographical significance of the pivot position (Chand, 2021, p. 141). As written by Chand, quoted from Mackinder (1943), three key geographical aspects are integrated in the Heartland. First is the lowland plain on the face of the globe, second is some great plain navigable rivers, and the third is the grassland zone of the Heartland. Thus, the Heartland deals with the sea powers to the land powers and geopolitics, in this way, developed in a different form by the 1950s decade.

Klieman writes:

In brief, geopolitics can be defined as what great and superpowers are involved in, what they do exercise in the geography, and what they are best at for establishing themselves as powerful players. The variables that arise in physical geography, including geography, climate, and demography, still translate either into property or liabilities, openness or constraints, as in the age of empires for growing, inhabiting, or declining superpowers. The major point is that geopolitics provides the context—the landscape, the backdrop, the arena—in which great powers concentrate (2015, p.4).

The final discussion of geopolitics can be traced from Klieman's above argument that geopolitics is the process, actions, reactions, strategy, counter-strategy, and balancing of enemies' power by powerful political actors to establish themselves as dominant player in certain geography. In doing so, some existing powers weaken, and some new powers rise. This process is never-ending, either on the seas or on the land. Thus, nineteenth-century geopolitics seems concentrated on the seas' politics, whereas twenty-first-century geopolitics equally imposed on the seas and land politics.

Historical geopolitics of South Asia

As 21st-century geopolitics focuses on both seas and land power play, South Asian geopolitics seems comparatively dominated by land power politics, and thus it represents land geopolitics. This section focuses on South Asian land geopolitics only escaping sea politics like sea politics in the Indian Ocean, which is its limitation. In addition, this paper focuses on Nepal and India, where the other South Asian states' issues come as cross-cutting themes.

South Asian states have undergone significant changes since independence (Shastri, 2001, p. 1). The modern geopolitics of South Asia started from the independent movement in South Asia. The geography and history of the South Asian states are different. Therefore, their potentiality, characteristics, and execution cannot be directly compared. The enormous Indian state was the center of British power in South Asia. Pakistan was formally founded on 14 August 1947, whereas India was on 15 August 1947, just a day ahead of Pakistan. Similarly, Bangladesh came into existence on 26 March 1971, almost two and a half decades later than Pakistan and India. Sri Lanka and



Nepal's status were separate states, where Sri Lanka was controlled as a colony and Nepal had faced the military invasion of the British Empire (Shastri, 2001, p.2). Like Nepal, the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan in South Asia is the least well-known of all the independent countries of Asia (Arts, 1978, p. 1). The Maldives became independent from Britain in 1966. Thus, only two nations (Nepal and Bhutan) in South Asia were never colonized by the British Empire, and the rest of the South Asian countries were directly controlled and colonized.

The modern geopolitics in South Asia traced back to the establishment of the United Nations Organization and the decolonization movement in the world. Therefore, because of different geopolitical characteristics, South Asian countries have their unique geopolitical circumstances and political potentiality, which cope with global geopolitical actors time and again because South Asian geopolitics is important for global actors to increase their influence in the region.

South Asia has a great cultural heritage and is one of the heartlands in the world, with almost one-fourth of the earth's population (Chapman, 2009). South Asia is the center of Hinduism and Buddhism. As per the various scholars, Hinduism evolved around 2300 B.C. and 1500 B.C. in the Indus Valley. It is also known as the Indus Valley civilization, which is one of the key civilizations in the world. The latest Buddhist civilization evolved from Nepal (UNESCO, n.d., para. 1). The Lord Buddha was born in 623 B.C. in the famous place of Lumbini, which became a Buddhist pilgrimage station in the world. The Lord Buddha is the founder of Buddhism who was born and grew up in the current Nepali territory. Similarly, Christianity and Islam are other major religious belief systems in South Asia which were evolved out of the region. There is a competition for religious influence among the major religions in South Asia. Many Churches are increasing day by day, and people have been changing their religious beliefs from other religions to Christian values. Such kinds of religious cultures are also crucial aspects of geopolitics. Based on the authors' observation, the same political actors sometimes become cultural and religious actors, and sometimes they mobilize the cultural and religious actors to achieve the political goal. Hence, the South Asian cultural heritages are important for westerners who are religiously guided by Christianity and politically are founders of neoliberal values.

The political activities of intra-regional and inter-regional actors are another crucial factor in geopolitics. As the largest country in South Asia, first, India's behavior towards other outer geopolitical actors from the region (like the USA, Russia, the EU, China, etc.) and vice versa is a key aspect of the study of South Asian geopolitics. Second, India's behavior towards other South Asian countries and vice versa is also equally important. Mackinder's geopolitical vision and its revival cannot be escaped while analyzing South Asian geopolitics. The geopolitical vision of Mackinder is revived by various authors in different forms (Chapman, 2009, p.285). Cohen is one out of many who revived Mackinder's geopolitical approach. He proposed two concepts in the geopolitical domain. The first is the higher-level concept of the geostrategic region, and the second is the lower-level concept of the geopolitical region (Cohen, 1963). Geo-strategic areas are multi-specific in economic and cultural terms, but trade orientations are single-specific, and there are also various arenas where power can be projected (Chapman, 2009, p.285). Such kind of power is relevant in analyzing India-global power relations and India-other South Asian



Countries relations. The first is related to Cohen's higher-level concept of the geostrategic region, and later seems more linked to his lower-level concept of the geopolitical region. Cohen's two levels are quite relevant to analyze not only South Asian geopolitics but also Nepali geopolitics equally.

From the above description, it seems that South Asian geopolitics is distinctive and unique. Cohen perceives South Asia as an independent geopolitical region. Chapman writes:

Cohen categorizes it as an independent geopolitical region, the only such on earth that does not include any geostrategic regions. It is sufficient to be a subcontinent in its own right; It is protected from Eurasian geopolitical powers by the Great Wall of the Himalayas, the Hindu Kush, and other mountains on the northwestern border from the West Asia, and from the lower, but heavier forests of Myanmar and Indo-China. All the stages, controlled by imperial powers before the British had created land empires, which at one time or another had embraced the entire geopolitical realm, and this was acknowledged by the British when they moved their capital to Delhi in 1911. If the whole South Asian subcontinent was united, the region clearly would have defense lines, and it has options for access to a self-sufficient or trade-dependent maritime world. But if the region is divided, the landscape changes (2009, p.287).

Hence, from Cohen's above analysis, the South Asian region and its geopolitics had not relied on other global geopolitical actors and the geopolitics of other continents. Therefore, as per Cohen's perception, the South Asian geopolitics was independent of pressure or influence of the global actors in that period. But, in the 21st century, the scenarios have massively changed, and we cannot claim that the recent South Asian geopolitics is still independent and out of pressure and influence of other global powers.

Contemporary geopolitics

To investigate the recent pragmatic geopolitics of South Asia, the role and influence of global and regional actors are predominant. There are several regional and global actors; however, to review and analyze the role of all regional and global actors is very difficult in this section. This section is focused on the role of the USA and China in South Asia, especially their relations with India, linking with only some highlighted events or cooperation. There are so many issues and sectors like technology, cyber security, space programming, maritime and naval exercises, counter-terrorism, etc (Khan, 2017) on which the USA and India have been cooperating however, this section is focused only on US-India civil nuclear cooperation-2008, Indo-Pacific Strategy-2017, and newly started Global Security Initiatives (GSI) by China and their implications in South Asian geopolitics.

Since 9/11, US-relations with India has become friendly, cooperative, cordial, and friendly (Khan, 2013, p. 241). Especially due to India's partnership with the former USSR, the relations between them was not harmonious during the Cold War era. Along with



declining and dissolution of the former USSR, half of the bloc of the world ended in the 1990s, and that space was eventually taken over by Western liberal values and capitalist ideology. This situation influenced the Indian government led by P. V. Narasimha Rao in 1991. The finance minister under his government Manamohan Singh, an economist by profession who studied at the University of Cambridge and the University of Oxford, played a crucial role in reforming India's economic policy and adopted a neoliberal economic model². After reforming the economic policy of India after the end of the Cold War, India ideologically became close to the USA and started the harmonious relations between both countries. Then, cooperation between the countries began.

One of the most important agreements between India and the USA is civil nuclear cooperation. The agreement of this cooperation was drafted and agreed upon in July 2007. Jacob writes that after more than two years of dialogue and negotiations, the civilian nuclear agreement between India and the United States is in the stage of full implementation (2007, para. 1). It was signed on 1 October 2008 (Hosur, 2010, p. 435). Turning to a decade-long partnership on civilian nuclear issues, both sides have begun preparations at the site in India for the AP 1000 reactors to be built by Westinghouse. It is assumed to be one of the critical issues for China. Not only the Chinese but also Indian left political parties had perceived it as the US strategic tool to draw "India in as a tool" for achieving its global strategic goal (Jacob, 2007, para. 2). Because of ideological similarity, the Indian left political parties were close to the Chinese perception on this issue. The People's Daily writes, "...The Indo-US nuclear deal has strong symbolic meaning and significance for India to achieve her dream of a powerful nation in the world" (People's Daily, 2007, para. 2). This indicates Chinese suspicion towards India that India may move ahead to becoming nuclear power by producing nuclear weapons based on civil nuclear cooperation with the USA. But in the meantime, China perceives it differently as well. The same newspaper writes that India is in dire need of energy. Lack of electricity has hampered the normal life and sustainable economic development of the people. Civil nuclear energy development will help India reduce energy shortages and guarantee sustainable economic growth (para. 1). Thus, Indo-US relations is under the Chinese observation quite suspiciously, which influences the South Asian geopolitics seriously.

Mohan and Agrawal perceive the civil-nuclear deal between India and the USA as a new dimension of Indian military diplomacy in the 21st century (2019, p. 1). As nuclear issues are increasing in the region and throughout the globe, India also has become one of the key stakeholders of these issues in the world, though India has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Along with the USA, India has agreements on civil nuclear cooperation with 14 countries (Mohan & Agrawal, 2019, p.2) quoted from "Important Agreements", Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India. Such kind of cooperation has established India as one of the key actors in the field of 21st-century global nuclear diplomacy though India had already tested 'Operation Smiling Buddha'- or Pokharan-I as India's first nuclear test³. Many Indian scholars believe that India's growing status in the geopolitical arena has been partly driven by a wider range of its

² <https://www.indiaonline.com/prime-ministers-of-india/manmohan-singh>

³ "India's Nuclear Weapons Program, Smiling Buddha 1974", Nuclear Weapons Archive.



involvement in the nuclear energy sector and facilitated its presence in the global nuclear club. Though it is peaceful civil-nuclear energy cooperation to fulfill the energy crisis in India, other South Asian scholars perceive the cooperation as the entry point of Indo-US strategic nuclear cooperation in the long run. Hussain claims that it was the massive desire of the USA to involve India through various means to contain China's growing influence in the region through meaningful strategic partnerships. The Indo-US civil nuclear deal is the result of such a strategic goal of the USA in South Asia (2017, p. 13).

Russia, China, and Pakistan are the other three key nuclear actors in South Asian geopolitics. China and Russia are suspicious of India due to Indo-US nuclear cooperation. Etzioni writes that The United States of America had long regarded India as the leader of the non-aligned movement but tilted later on toward the Soviet Union and later Russia (2015, para. 2). During the Cold War era, India was close to the former USSR. India imported most of the weapons from the former USSR and later from Russia on the one hand and it reformed her economic policy and adopted a neoliberal economic model on the other hand and tried thus to maintain strategic equidistance between two great actors. Meanwhile, the George W. Bush administration decided to include India in the Western bloc and help keep China in check.

During the 1962 border war with China, the USA did not openly support India but the USA tried to balance between them. The USA did not become ready to bear the cost of its relations with China and Pakistan. These two nations were strategic partners of the USA during the Cold War era because the USA had a grand strategy to split the communist bloc and create confrontation between the former USSR and China which was achieved in the 1970s. To achieve such a strategic goal, the USA tried to maintain balanced relations with India and China during the 1962 Sino-Indian border war. To counterbalance China and the USA, pragmatically, India tilted towards the former USSR during the Cold War period. Its effect was elongated even after the end of the Cold War and still, India has been facing some geopolitical dilemmas to cooperate with prominent national, regional, and global issues with those sorts of global actors. In this way, South Asian geopolitics has become critical.

The next crucial geopolitical trend developed in the second decade of the 21st century is the formation of the Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) which has made the South Asian geopolitics further turmoil. Pompeo writes, "In Vietnam, in November 2017, US President Donald J. Trump framed a vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific in which all countries achieve prosperity side by side as sovereign, and independent states" (2019, p. 4). The goal of the IPS is free, fair, and reciprocal trade, open investment environments, good governance, and freedom of the seas (Pompeo, 2019, p. 4). According to the report published by the Department of Defense of the USA, the IPS is focused to:

Respect for sovereignty and independence of all nations;

Ensure peaceful resolution of disputes;

Maintain free, fair, and reciprocal trade based on open investment, transparent agreements, and connectivity; and

Adhere to international law, including freedom of navigation and overflight. (Department of Defense, 2019, p. 6)



But, Chinese scholars understand that the Indo-Pacific strategy is to connect the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, to prevent the rise of China from a geopolitical point of view, and to protect the leadership and interests of US allied countries in the region (Chen, 2018, para. 2). A researcher from Fudan University Lin Minwang believes that the IPS is still a concept that requires to be constructed and the quadrilateral security dialogue formed of the United States, Japan, India, and Australia – is only the beginning of the construction of the Indo-Pacific security region. Similarly, Chen writes that many Chinese scholars understand that the IPS is an expansion and extension of the Obama administration's 'rebalancing' strategy (2018, para. 4). Wang Xiaowen, a scholar at Beijing Language and Culture University, perceives that the Indo-Pacific strategy is essentially to expand and deepen the "rebalancing" to strategically connect the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Zhao describes, "Obama's rebalancing strategy is the center of US worldwide policy adjustment since Obama came into power in the USA... It has strengthened the US strategic influence and presence in the Asia-Pacific region, which has created some pressure on China's rise (2018, p. 87). Analyzing the strategic goal of IPS and Obama's rebalancing Asia strategy, these two initiatives have the same strategic goal. Hence, it can be said that the US global policy continued differently after Trump's rise in the USA in 2017, which has similar implications in pragmatic geopolitics in South Asia.

The realist approach mainly guides the US global policy (Byers & Schweller, 2024, para. 1). Trump's second comeback to the White House on 20 January 2025 and his new declaration on his foreign policy matters has further proven the US absolute realist approach in its global policy. In addition, US-allied countries have also incorporated themselves into the similar framework. Therefore, the USA cooperates with its allied countries on economic, political, and strategic fronts throughout the globe whereas strategic competition and confrontation are always there among its allied countries as well. Wars conducted during the Cold War era, the Iraq and Afghan wars, intervention in Libya, US involvement in the Syrian civil war, confrontation with Iran, Russia, and North Korea, the trade war with China, the South China Sea disputes, etc. are some examples of US realist approach towards her global affairs with anti-US-states. The same approach the USA has been applying in the Indo-Pacific region through the Indo-Pacific strategy especially targeting China's rise. Denisov, Paramonov, Arapova, and Safranchuk write that the new concept of the "Indo-Pacific Region" (IPR) is generally observed as a response by the USA and allied countries to China's growing influence in important strategic areas of the Pacific and Indian Oceans (2021, p.72). Though the IPS is initiated by the USA including her like-minded friendly countries based on her global strategic goal, other allied countries have their own approaches towards China. India does not want to directly confront China because of her complex interdependence. Bilateral trade is one of the important factors of such interdependence for India which does not encourage to go into direct confrontation or war with China. Moreover, still, India believes in the nonalignment principle at least where her interests do not confront the situation. Japan believes in rules that deny unilateral actions to be taken by any global powers. Australian trade is quite cautious regarding frictions in trade relations with China. Because of such diverse pragmatic approaches of allied countries of IPS, there is a slim chance to comprehensively afford to implement the US realist approach towards the Indo-Pacific region as well as in South Asian geopolitics not only because of allied



countries' diverse practices but also due to China's multilateral relations with them. Despite having different approaches of allied countries of IPS, the USA is trying to pull all members into her same framework of global policy which has further worsened the South Asian geopolitics.

Not only the US realist approach but also China's and Russian approaches towards IPS have made South Asian geopolitics more complex. China has perceived the IPS as a US containment policy toward China. The Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi said, "the IPS is 'bound to fail' as it is promoted by Washington to 'contain' China"(Outlook, 2022, para. 1). The same report says, "IPS is raising more vigilance, concern, and critical issues in the international community in general and in the Asia-Pacific region in particular", the Chinese foreign minister said. Similarly, he said, "the Asia-Pacific geopolitical region better replaced by a plateau of peaceful development. 'Efforts to turn Asia-Pacific into a bloc, NATO or the Cold War will never succeed' (Press Trust of India, 2022, para.7). The same statement was published on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (MoFA of China, 2022). Nepali media has the same opinion. The Annapurna Express quoted the Chinese foreign minister as saying that the United States was redoubling its efforts to peddle the so-called Indo-Pacific strategy aimed at controlling China. The report further states that Wang Yi stressed that the conflicts and confrontations dominated by hegemonic power remain fresh in the memory of the citizens of the Asia-Pacific region, who are now entertaining national stability and happy life. (2022, para. 1&3). From the aforementioned statement of the Chinese Foreign Minister, we can assume that all Chinese people and scholars have a similar opinion toward the IPS because, in China, rare common people do have a different understanding than the government. Such Chinese viewpoints and attempts have triggered South Asian geopolitics to be more dangerous from the perspective of confrontation among big powers in South Asia.

One of the major global actors, Russia, has even critical observation on Indo-Pacific Strategy. Russia sees the Indo-Pacific and Quad initiatives as part of its friction with China and has been widely criticized. According to Sharma, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has repeatedly spoken out against such initiatives. He said in December 2020 that the West was pressuring India to play a bigger role in "anti-China" policies such as the Indo-Pacific and the Quad (Sharma, 2021, para.3). Similarly, according to Ashok Sharma, Lavrov said, "Why is Asia-Pacific called Indo-Pacific? The answer is clear - to boycott China. Glossary should be unified, not divisive" (2020, para. 4). Lavrov's this statement indicates the value of Russian friendship with China. China and Russia are important partners to shape and reshape world geopolitics which impacts South Asian geopolitics too. Since being a crucial strategic partner, Russia wants to include China in a broader framework of the Asia-Pacific concept. On the other side, India is one of the founding members of the QUAD group and hence it wants to make QUAD wider, and broader for its success excluding China. Despite having very good relations between Russia and India, they have a different perspective on Indo-Pacific Strategy. Russia wants equally maintain the relations with India like China since being an old friend. The statement, delivered by the Russian foreign minister, was not expected by India. India wants to be appreciated its security concerns vis-à-vis China. Lavrov soothed Indian concern by stating that Russia did not want any misunderstanding with India and the people of India on this issue (Sharma, 2021, para.3). Such kinds of diverse relations



among regional and global actors have created more challenges in South Asian geopolitics. Pakistani scholars have also a similar understanding of the Indo-Pacific Strategy as the Chinese and Russian have. Akram writes that the United States, reluctant to accept China as an equal partner in the world in the wake of self-inflicted wounds in Iraq and Afghanistan, has promoted the Quad alliance to control and counter rising China (2018, para.3). He further explains that the US presence in the Indo-Pacific is not justified because the US has historically been a Pacific power, but now more than ever to "defend the interests of its allies" against "aggression and expansionism," China (para.4). This statement also indicates that the Indo-Pacific Strategy is centered on American global goals and interests rather than preserving the way of the emerging Asian century. Yamin writes, "it is worth noting that Pakistan is vitally important to US global interests in the Indo-Pacific region because of its all-whether strategic partnership with China, which considers it an "element of strategic competition with the United States and India" (2020, p. 1). With such types of complex but multilateral relations of Pakistan, it has been facing difficulties to deal with all global powers because of their strategic and economic competition. Neither Pakistan can undermine the relations with the USA nor wants to break up with China. In such a situation, South Asian geopolitics has become more problematic due to also having complex geopolitical relations of Pakistan with the global powers.

It is proven that the IPS is focused on containing China and incorporating her allied countries under the framework of her security policy. Western powers perceive China's Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI) as her global strategic project launched to change the current world order led by the USA but China denies that claim. As the USA has been moving aggressively in the strategic front in South Asia through the Indo-Pacific Strategy, China and Russia announced the China-Russia Security Dialogue Platform (CRSDP) on the one hand and China announced Global Security Initiatives (GSI) on the other hand. Many scholars believe that these two new developments have come up as the Chinese policy of counter-containment in the region and the globe.

Krishnan reports, "China and Russia proposed new "regional security dialogue platforms" to address security issues and agendas in the region" (2021, para.1). This proposal was shared just after the meeting of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov in the southern Chinese city of Guilin and the US-China summit in Alaska on March 19 and the Quad summit on March 12, 2021. The Quad group of India, Australia, Japan, and the United States has been closely watched by both Beijing and Moscow. It is analyzed that this new security dialogue platform was proposed by both countries to exclude India since being involved in IPS. China, Russia, and India are together in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Analysts say that China and Russia could strengthen SCO if they want to include India. This platform has rejected the US calls for 'a rule-based order'- a call endorsed by the IPS (Quad) summit- and instead said 'all countries should follow the purpose and principles of the charter of the United Nations' and 'uphold true multilateralism, make international relations more democratic, and accept and promote peaceful coexistence and common development of countries with different social systems and development paths'. Similarly, the Journals of India reports that the summit has decided to reject the US calls for "a rule-based order"-ratified by the Quad summit. The Journals further clarifies that the two countries agreed to appeal to all countries to follow the goals and principles of the Charter of the United



Nations and maintain true multilateralism to make international relations more democratic and focus on peaceful coexistence among all countries (2021, para. 1). From the nature of Indo-Pacific Strategy and China-Russia Security Dialogue platform, it is analyzed that China and Russia have strongly rejected the goal of the Quad and established a separate platform to cooperate to cope up with the threats posed by the Quad group in the region. The new platform is the result of IPS-geopolitics which will also create challenges in South Asian geopolitics. Because the largest South Asian country India has a good strategic partnership with one member of CRSDP and rivalry relations with the next member of the same platform. In addition, Nepal is geographically linked with the largest country in South Asia and one member of the CRSDP. Therefore, such geopolitical relations and geographical proximity will face the critical challenges raised by the IPS and CRSDP, and thus South Asian geopolitics will be further problematic.

Another counter-containment policy of China seems Global Security Initiative (GSI) in the Indo-Pacific region which is targeted at IPS and Quad group activities in this region. Rajagopalan writes that Chinese President Xi Jinping has proposed a new global security proposal, questioning the logic of the Indo-Pacific strategy and the Quad members' argument (2022, para.1). The proposal was put forward on 21 April 2022 during the Boao Forum for Asia's annual conference, China. Rajagopalan further writes that Calling the Cold War mentality, hegemony, and power politics "issues that threaten world peace" and "increasing security challenges in the 21st century," Xi proposed a new "global security initiative" (2022, 1). But Helsinki Times writes that Global Security Initiatives is China's solution to safeguarding global security and peace. The paper writes, "At the opening ceremony of the 2022 annual conference of the Boao Forum for Asia, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a keynote address entitled "Rising to Challenges and Building a Bright Future Through Cooperation". Clear answers to the questions of our time such as what kind of security concept the world needs and how countries can achieve shared security, Xi spoke. GSI is focused on building a community of shared destinations for mankind, which is the vision of Chinese President Xi Jinping. It represents China's wisdom in resolving the problem of peace deficit and China's solution to tackling global challenges related to national and human security issues (Helsinki Times, 2022, para. 4). The concept of GSI believes that while all countries share a common destination and are increasingly interdependent, the security of any country cannot be secured without the security of another country or the rest of the world. GSI believes in working together to maintain a common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security vision and to keep the world safer and secured. But Mehta and Chadha write, "Many reacted to the declaration, calling it an immediate rebuke to the West's coordinated sanctions on Russia for invading Ukraine" (2022, para. 1). It means these authors' belief on GSI is far away than China believes and claims. They further write that Wang Yi, Chinese Foreign Minister, remarked that many security risks and threats have created a peace deficit in the Asia-Pacific region and that China has consistently opposed specific "small factions" such as the AUKUS and Quad that could lead to confrontation and jeopardize China's interests (para.2). Thus, there is the different opinion of Chinese scholars and other scholars from the world about the GSI. But, these authors believe that the BRI of China is China's global economic front and later GSI emerged as her strategic and security front which does not accept the unilateral actions of Quad or any other regional and global big or small security mechanism excluding China in Asia and Indo Pacific region. This is the



core idea of GSI of China and also can be understood as a counter-containment policy of Beijing towards Quad groups in this region which will make South Asian geopolitics quite strategically unsolved. In this way, the South Asian recent pragmatic geopolitics can be assessed and analyzed. Numerous issues, events, and incidents influence South Asian geopolitics pragmatically however, other issues and developments are escaped in this section.

US's State Partnership Program (SPP): Critical Development in Himalayan Geopolitics

Nepal's recent geopolitical situation is one of the most important issues and parts of South Asian geopolitics too. Most dominant actors of South Asian geopolitics are also the actors of Nepali geopolitics and hence they are highly engaged in Nepal. The USA, China, and India are the central geopolitical actors of Nepali geopolitics as the state actors. They are engaged in Nepal through various political, diplomatic, and strategic means, methods, and projects. India's major concern in Nepal is the security issues and hence it has been implementing her Nehruvian doctrine of India's foreign policy. India considers the Himalayan range as its strategic borders and India considers Nepal as one of the states in its sphere of influence. The next topmost way India is involved in Nepal is her micromanagement of politics. Similarly, China is highly engaged in Nepal, especially after the emergence of the Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI) and Nepal's involvement in the US Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). The USA is also massively focused through the MCC project from 2017 to the end of 2024. But, along with the second rise of Trump at the White House, the Trump administration stopped all the aid under USAID and MCC (Giri, 2025, para. 1) in Nepal and the new scenario has become more unpredictable about Nepal and Himalayan geopolitics.

Though there are a number of issues in Nepali geopolitics, this section mainly focused on the US State Partnership Program (SPP) which has massively contributed to making Nepali geopolitics turmoil recently. The SPP is a security cooperation program of the Department of Defense (DoD) of the USA run by the National Guard. It works as a training mechanism as well for National Guard personnel (Kapp & Serafino, 2011, p.1). SPP aims:

- a) Build partnership capacity to deter, prevent, and prepare;
- b) Build partnership capacity to respond and recover;
- c) Support partners' defense reform and professional development;
- d) Enable and facilitate enduring broad-spectrum security relationships.

The SPP evolved in 1992 from an effort launched to establish military relations between the USA and the newly independent nations of the former Soviet Union to help improve and reform the defense establishments of those nations (Kapp & Serafino, 2011, p.1). The US embassy in Kathmandu writes that the SPP has existed for the last twenty-five years. The USA has bilateral relations with more than ninety countries all over the world (2022, para.1). As per the US Embassy's website, the SPP is only an exchange program between an American state's National Guard and a partner foreign country. On the



contrary, The State Partnership Program website makes it clear that the United States National Guard conducts military-to-military engagements in support of defense security goals but it also covers broader inter-agency and allied engagements across broader military, governmental, economic, and social sectors as well (National Guard, n.d., para.4). Therefore, it is clear that State Partnership Program is military cooperation between the USA and her allied country where the American interest and prominence is at the top.

There was a great debate on SPP in Nepal along with publishing its draft of an agreement with Nepal in June 2022 which has massively affected Nepali geopolitics. As per the US Embassy website, Nepal had requested to be involved in the program in 2015 and 2017. The USA accepted the Nepali proposal in 2019 (2022, para. 1). On 14 June 2022, a draft of the US proposal of SPP with Nepal was published in Kantipur National Daily. There are ten articles in the draft. Pandey writes, "Recognizing the fact that the SPP cooperation contributes to the strengthening of the institutional and technical capabilities of the Nepal Army, the proposed MoU stipulates the need to enhance cooperation to contribute to international peace and stability, and to strengthen partnerships on issues such as defense and security" (2022, para.5). But the SPP deal became quite complicated among leaders of the ruling coalition and the opposition who raised questions inside and outside the House. There are some serious and sensitive provisions in the draft. Some of the sensitive points are as below:

Related vehicles or light aircraft operated by or for the United States may be used for training, transfer, assistance, and related activities to refuel vehicles or aircraft and use agreed facilities and areas (Article: 2.1). Nepal cannot provide its sky and land for and to any foreign powers as per the Nepali constitution and principle of foreign policy. Therefore, this article cannot be accepted by the Nepal government.

While providing facilities and areas, the Government of Nepal will pay due attention to the operational and security interests of the United States National Guard (Article: 2.3). The security interest of the US National Guard is linked to US global security goals under the Department of Defense which is not as per the constitution of Nepal. Hence, this article also deserves to be denied by the Nepal government.

To conduct joint military exercises in the highland areas of Nepal (Article: 3.1.1). The serious question raised is why the USA wants to conduct such military exercises in the highland areas rather than lowland and plain terrain. Nepal cannot afford such exercises in the Himalayan areas because of the sensitive security issues of northern neighbour and Nepal's One China policy.

To conduct activities following this Agreement, the Government of Nepal shall make the utmost efforts to provide the necessary assistance to the United States National Guard in Nepal as required and following the written request (Article: 4.1). It means Nepal has to support US National Guard in Nepal in every activity including US's anti-China movement in the Highland areas of Nepal.

The United States will pay a reasonable amount for the requested and received settlement assistance. In this regard, the Government of Nepal will not treat the United States National Guard any less positively than the Nepal Army and will not impose a less positive rate on such assistance than the fee paid by the Nepal Army (Article: 4.2). Any



foreign military personnel cannot be at equal status with the national army. Any government cannot provide the same facilities to foreign military persons while they are working for their country.

For this Agreement, the Government of Nepal will provide tax exemptions on all equipment, materials, transferable structures, and other movable property they import or obtain within Nepal (Article: 5.2). This article seems against Article 4.2. Nepali Army has to pay the tax to the Nepal government for the same purpose but in this provision, the Nepal government cannot receive the tax from US National Guard.

The United States National Guard will be empowered by mutual consent of the parties or their designated bodies to provide security for their movement outside the agreed facility or territory (Article: 6.2). Any sovereign state never can handover the authority, power, and responsibility to any foreign military power to maintain law, order, and security within the state's territory.

Any disputes concerning the interpretation or implementation of this Agreement shall be resolved through consultation between the parties and shall not be communicated and involved to any other nation or international tribunal or a third party (Article:9). While conducting the joint military exercise in highland areas of Nepal (Nepal-China border areas), automatically, China will involve and the third-party involvement will be inevitable.

Its initial period will be five years. Thereafter, the agreement will continue to be implemented unless one of the parties rejects the agreement by giving six months' written notice to the other party through diplomatic channels (Article: 10.1). This article is provisioned to extend the agreement for an infinite period (Pandey, 2022).

The above nine points violate Nepal's national interest, diplomatic practices, foreign policy principles, Nepal's one-China policy, and eventually Nepal's sovereignty and independence. Therefore, the Nepal government finally decided not to be involved in the SPP program (Balachandran, 2022). Many analysts have analyzed that due to Nepal's clear position on SPP not to be its part, the USA under the administration of the 47th President Trump decided to stop the MCC in Nepal for three months. This may be the bargaining approach to create pressure on Nepal to be involved in SPP.

When the draft of the agreement of SPP included such controversial provisions, not only external actors but also domestic political parties began massive debates on this issue. The USA said, "Nepal's application to participate in the SPP has already been approved three years ago" (Shahi, 2022). But the then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal Narayan Khadka opposed the US statement. Kantipur writes, "In a meeting of the House of Representatives, Minister Khadka called on U.S. Army Pacific Chief of Staff Charles A. Flynn who was in Nepal-visit during that time and Minister Khadka claimed that the signing of the SPP by Nepal government is just a rumor (2022, para. 2). Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" blamed the immediate past Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli in that time for the initiation to involve in SPP. Nepalpress published news and wrote that Prachanda accused the KP Oli government of implementing the SPP in 2019 (2022, para.4). But Oli challenged them to show his involvement in the US-SPP (Khabarhub, 2022, para. 1). Former Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali also strongly denied the involvement of Oli government to put forward the SPP agreement in Nepal



(Gyawali, 2022, Conference Speech). He further claimed that the agreement initiated by former governments in 2015 and 2017 led by Shushil Koirala and Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda", was stopped by the Oli government. As per Gyawali, Oli formed a Study Task Force in 2019, and based on its report, the SPP was stopped, he said during the conference organized by the Madan Bhandari Foundation. A leader of CPN (Maoist Center) Barshaman Pun has also a similar expression. He also claimed that the SPP process was unknown to then Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli and his government. Both the then Ministers of the Oli government Gyawali and Pun claimed that the SPP proposal was sent by the Nepali Army directly to the Embassy of the United States of America and the then government was unaware of it (Gyawali & Pun, 2022, Conference Speech). But, the authenticity of the SPP document is still under suspicion. The US embassy claims that they have not shared any draft with the Nepal government. Nepal Army and the Ministry of Defense (MoD) have also a similar opinion. Giri writes, "...however, the Ministry of Defense and the Nepal Army have stated that they are not aware of the proposal" (2022, para.8).

Some controversial opinions of the Nepal Army have been published in Nepali newspapers in June 2022. Regarding the same issue, the US Embassy in Kathmandu said, "At the request of Nepal, membership of the SPP was granted in 2019 and as this process has been completed, no further agreement should be reached (Pandey, 2022, para.1). Nepali Army countered this claim and said that no agreement has been reached regarding SPP, no such process and no future military partnership with anyone will be materialized (Pandey, 2022, para.2). Despite this counter-argument, it seems that Nepal Army had begun the correspondence on SPP with the US Embassy in 2015. Nepal Army spokesperson Narayan Silwal said the Nepal Army had written a letter to the US not to enter into a military partnership but to cooperate in disaster management after the 2015 earthquake (Setopati, 2022, para. 2). Setopati further writes indicating Narayan Silwal that:

This letter was written in the context of 2015. At that time, the massive earthquake had caused great loss of lives and property in Nepal. Public life was chaotic. Nepal had called on international organizations and agencies for rescue, 'he told Setopati.' Dozens of allies had come to the rescue. Troops from China, India, Pakistan, the USA, and the UK also came. All coordination is done by the Nepal Army (Setopati, 2022, para.3).

Thus the controversial opinion of the Nepal Army on the same issue was published which proves that the SPP has made the geopolitics of the Himalayan Kingdom more complicated and risky for Nepal and the Himalayan range of South Asia and hence Nepal government has decided not to involve in US State Partnership Program to maintain its neutrality and non-aligned foreign policy for the sake of making the Himalayan geopolitics much secured and safer for South Asian countries. China also welcomed Nepal's decision not to be part of SPP. Speaking at a regular press briefing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin praised the decision of the Nepal government, as a friendly and close neighbour for its decision not to move forward with the SPP. He further said that China always stands ready to work with Nepal to jointly safeguard regional security, stability, and shared prosperity (The Kathmandu Post, 2022, para. 2&12). This statement



further proves how the SPP is threatening the Himalayan geopolitics in South Asia and China.

Discussions

The fundamental cause of South Asia's complicated geopolitics, according to the discussion and analysis in this paper, is the conflict and confrontation between the superpower's global interests and the Great Power's counter-strategy. The United States appears to be pursuing a strategy to undermine the changing Asian region as much as possible as the center of global politics and the economy. The study concludes that the United States is expanding its Indo-Pacific strategy as an Asian NATO, incorporating Asian nations that are outside of NATO because the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) finds it difficult to operate in Asia. In this instance, it appears that the Indo-Pacific strategy only advances while the national interests of the IPS nations align with those of the US. The global objectives of the United States and the national interests of the countries participating in the Indo-Pacific Strategy may conflict in the future, creating a unique situation. The IPS's security cooperation appears to be waning right now. Asian nations may eventually opt for the GSI over the IPS as China's Global Security Initiatives (GSI) become more comprehensive, broader, and stronger, but China must stop any unilateral initiatives and include all major powers—including Japan, India, and other South/Asia countries—as her partners from the very beginning of her regional and global initiatives. It will significantly support the geopolitics of South Asia which is peaceful, secure, tolerant, and integrative.

The nations of South Asia should work together to resolve the multilateral regional concerns with external actors without compromising any state's national interests to make geopolitics in the region conducive to peace, development, and prosperity. South Asian nations have to resolve their difficulties following their respective diplomatic traditions and foreign policy tenets when it is impossible to reach a consensus. Any nation should refrain from influencing how other nations view South Asian geopolitics in this process. Because every country has its own political, economic, and social dynamics, if those dynamics change, countries will experience a crisis. Due to US interests in global security, Nepal, the oldest and most strategically significant country in South Asia, has recently emerged as the region's geopolitical center. Nepal should continue to develop positive relations with China, India, and other Asian nations. But in the interim, Nepal should protect its interests while improving relations with regional and international powers.

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THE GEO-POLITICAL SCENARIOS OF INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE SOUTH ASIAN ISLAND COUNTRIES AND THE US, CHINA AND INDIA. CURRENT TRENDS AND FUTURE TRAJECTORIES

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Abstract

This desk study is intended to explore the current trends in the relationships between Sri Lanka and Maldives with the USA, China, and India to illuminate regional geopolitical calculus. Besides, the study also attempts to project the future scenarios of interactions among these nations based on the dynamics and policies of their contemporary relations. Sri Lanka and Maldives, two island nations in South Asia, hold a significant strategic position along the maritime sea lanes of the Indian Ocean. However, China's significant economic engagement with these two island countries, primarily through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and their deepening relations with China in recent years have brought them under intense scrutiny from regional power India and extra-regional player USA. India and the US's shared perception of the alleged 'China threat' to their respective dominance prompts them, to some extent, to unite to 'counter China' in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Conversely, China emphasizes economic partnerships over military alliances or political meddling, unlike India and the US. The counter-measures adopted by the US and India against Beijing's growing inroads in smaller nations like Sri Lanka and the Maldives have imposed fresh constraints and complexities on the foreign policy manoeuvres of these smaller states. The study finds that the evolving geopolitical factors increasingly impact domestic politics and international alignment orientations in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The future interactions and foreign policy choices of Colombo and Malé towards Washington, Beijing, and Delhi will be shaped by the complex interplay of three factors: political leanings of the ruling party, pressing economic needs, and the competition intensity between China and India, and the US and China over the IOR.

Keywords

Major Powers, Maritime Competition, Island Countries, Sri Lanka and Maldives, Future Projection.



Resumo

Este estudo documental pretende explorar as tendências atuais das relações entre o Sri Lanka e as Maldivas com os EUA, a China e a Índia para iluminar o cálculo geopolítico regional. O estudo também tenta projetar os cenários futuros das interações entre estas nações com base na dinâmica e nas políticas das suas relações contemporâneas. O Sri Lanka e as Maldivas, duas nações insulares do Sul da Ásia, ocupam uma posição estratégica significativa ao longo das rotas marítimas do Oceano Índico. No entanto, o significativo envolvimento económico da China com estes dois países insulares, principalmente através da Iniciativa "Uma Faixa, Uma Rota" (BRI), e o aprofundamento das suas relações com a China nos últimos anos colocaram-nos sob intenso escrutínio da potência regional Índia e do ator extra-regional EUA. A perceção partilhada pela Índia e pelos EUA da alegada "ameaça chinesa" ao seu domínio respetivo levou-os, em certa medida, a unirem-se para "contrariar a China" na região do Oceano Índico (IOR). Por outro lado, a China privilegia as parcerias económicas em detrimento das alianças militares ou da ingerência política, ao contrário da Índia e dos EUA. As contra-medidas adoptadas pelos EUA e pela Índia contra as crescentes incursões de Pequim em nações mais pequenas, como o Sri Lanka e as Maldivas, impuseram novos constrangimentos e complexidades às manobras de política externa destes Estados mais pequenos. O estudo conclui que a evolução dos factores geopolíticos tem um impacto crescente na política interna e nas orientações de alinhamento internacional do Sri Lanka e das Maldivas. As futuras interações e escolhas de política externa de Colombo e Malé em relação a Washington, Pequim e Deli serão moldadas pela complexa interação de três factores: as inclinações políticas do partido no poder, as necessidades económicas prementes e a intensidade da concorrência entre a China e a Índia, e entre os EUA e a China, no que diz respeito à IOR.

Palavras-chave

Grandes Potências, Concorrência Marítima, Países Insulares, Sri Lanka e Maldivas, Projeção Futura.

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THE GEO-POLITICAL SCENARIOS OF INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE SOUTH ASIAN ISLAND COUNTRIES AND THE US, CHINA, AND INDIA. CURRENT TRENDS AND FUTURE TRAJECTORIES

MOHAMMAD SHAKIL BHUIYAN

WANG YI

1. Background

Early international studies focused disproportionately on major powers, neglecting small-state agencies in global politics. However, after the Cold War and the Soviet Union's collapse, coupled with China's rise and the perceived decline of the United States, smaller states have assumed a more substantial role in global affairs than ever before (Wang and Tan, 2021). There is growing academic interest in how smaller states manage relations within major-power competition and preserve autonomy.

Likewise, two smaller South Asian Island nations in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka and Maldives have recently gained scholarly attention due to rising geopolitical competition in their vicinity. The strategic positions of these two island countries hold substantial importance in global maritime trade. Sri Lanka's strategic place in the Indian Ocean makes it crucial for oil-import-dependent countries, especially East Asian countries. It is a vital transit point for crude oil transportation from the Arab world to various nations. Therefore, countries like the US, China, Japan, India, Russia, and France invested in the island state (Awad and Todkar, 2021, p. 4091).

On the other hand, the Maldives, a small, 99% sea-covered island, is a vital link in the maritime lanes connecting East Asia to the Middle East. Its strategic significance lies in its role as "a chain of unsinkable aircraft carriers" strategically sited across the crucial sea lanes in the northern Indian Ocean. It plays a significant role in facilitating a substantial volume of shipping traffic crossing the Indian Ocean (Brewster, 2018, p. 15). Today, the Maldives, much like Sri Lanka, has a robust economic partnership with China and India. Although the US investment volume in the Maldives is lower than China and India's, it remains one of the country's leading sources of aid and foreign assistance.

However, both island nations' strategic significance in sea routes positions them at the forefront of competition from regional and extra-regional powers. They have become crucial actors in the prevailing geostrategic power dynamics within the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). For example, Sri Lanka is key to India's security due to its proximity. On the other hand, Sri Lanka is vital for China's energy import security under the much-



discussed 'Malacca Dilemma'. But amid the US forging strategic coalitions with India, the UK, Japan, and Australia to counter China's expanding influence, Sri Lanka finds itself entangled in this evolving geopolitical competition landscape (Wijekoon, 2022). The US and India actively participate in a competitive dynamic with the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) within the Indian Ocean coastal regions through their Indo-Pacific strategy. Examples include US funding and Adani Group's involvement in the Sri Lankan port projects (Abeyagoonasekera, 2024).

The geopolitical competition among the US, India and China in the IOR challenges smaller South Asian states like Sri Lanka and the Maldives in balancing their relations with these powers. Each major power strategises its actions and role in the region based on its geostrategic concerns. China endorses its idea of a shared future and mutual growth through economic collaboration via the region's BRI and highlights the importance of regional linkage. It has expanded its presence in the IOR through financial investments, maritime infrastructure projects, and naval engagements. Beijing's focus on the IOR stems from its economic needs, energy security considerations, and the strategic importance of safeguarding maritime routes (Khan, Ahmad and Ullah, 2023, p. 141).

China underlines that its involvement revolves around peaceful development. But its competitors perceive these enterprises as superfluous, unwarranted, and objectionable (Iyer, Mukhopadhyay and Iyer, 2021) and as military-strategic policies focused on achieving supremacy in the Indian Ocean (Odhiambo, 2020). This perspective has driven the US to pursue its Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) under the 'Asia-Pacific Rebalance' policy. Conversely, India asserts itself as the "net security provider" in the region. It is pursuing the strategy of "security and growth for all" (Shahid, 2021: 40) out of apprehensions that Chinese BRI in South Asia could encircle it geographically. At the alliance level, Japan, Australia, India, and the US have formed the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) to counterbalance China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region.

Arguably, in the present circumstances, the US, India, and China are the three most influential powers in the IOR, while other powers align to varying degrees with these three (Lou, 2012, pp. 624-25). The competition among the US, China, and India over their visions and interests in maritime space and security in the region has led to diverse geopolitical power struggles. According to Len (2022), the strategic atmosphere of the area as a whole can be characterized by three distinct phases: strategic- (competition, alliances and dilemmas). The first phase involves major powers vying for influence; the second compels smaller states to choose sides among dominant actors, while the third highlights their alignment dilemma (Habib, Iqbal and Fatima, 2022, p. 2484). In such a geopolitical landscape, as Mitchell & Scheunemann (2014) explained, small states encounter several challenges, including whether to balance or bandwagon with powerful nations. Amid the geo-economic strategies powerful nations employ to pursue their interests, small states struggle to find a middle ground (Premaratna and Thrishali, 2020, p. 20).

States today employ three core foreign policy strategies: balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging. The balancing strategy includes enhancing internal military capabilities or establishing external alliances (Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro, 2009) to guarantee independence and protection against the threatening state. Bandwagoning is a tactic usually adopted by weaker states that opt to align themselves with a stronger nation to



avoid threats or reap advantages (Walt, 1987) instead of resisting them (balancing). Bandwagoning, such as economic bandwagoning, extends beyond mere submission to power; it can be a strategic manoeuvre to seize opportunities for gain (Schweller, 1994; Kirshner, 1995). On the contrary, hedging is an insurance-seeking strategy utilized in high-uncertainty scenarios where actors strive for autonomy by abstaining from aligning with any specific side (Kuik, 2021). It mixtures tactics like bandwagoning, limited confrontation, and engagement. Hedging a middle ground combining balancing and bandwagoning (Vinodan and Kurian, 2024). Chan (2010), Kang (2003), and Koga (2018) studies indicate that many countries in the Asian region practice hedging strategy. Rather than solely pursuing a pure form of balancing or bandwagoning, these countries navigate geopolitical competition by accommodating dominant and rising powers.

The Maldives and Sri Lanka's interactions with major powers show how small states utilize balancing, bandwagoning, and hedging in contested regions like the IOR. However, inconsistencies in strategic policies highlight the dilemmas small states face when navigating geopolitical competition dynamics. Divisions in domestic political circles regarding foreign policy strategies and practices are evident from regime preferences for engagement. This review study seeks to scrutinize the evolving interactions among the US, China, India, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives and anticipate these relationships' future developments.

2. Methodological Position

This study employs qualitative descriptive techniques to explore the relationship dynamics and strategic interactions among Sri Lanka, the Maldives, the US, China, and India within the present geopolitical landscape of the IOR through a comprehensive review of existing literature. It also outlines relationship trajectories based on data derived from relationship dynamics. The study relies on secondary data from various materials, including books, journals, reports from public and private institutions, newspaper articles, scholarly commentaries, online resources, and other written sources pertinent to the research issues. The article is structured in the following manner: it begins with a brief background study of how the relationships among the USA, China, India, the Maldives, and Bhutan are evolving and how they are strategizing their interactions. Lastly, concludes by presenting potential future relations dynamics and their implications.

3. Smaller/littoral States of the IOR/South Asia, Major Power Competitions and Strategies: Insights from Existing Literatures

Great-power-centric IR scholars persistently treat small states as passive objects rather than actors in the international system because of their perceived structural constraints to influence. This perspective emphasizes smaller states' need to align with major powers to safeguard their national interests. However, Lindell and Persson (1986), Hey (2003), Neumann and Gstöhl (2012), Chong (2010), Long (2017), Tang (2018), Bueger and Wivel (2018), Efremova (2019) studies suggest that small states also can influence major powers and sustain themselves in power struggles by utilizing specific capabilities, geographic positioning, institutional frameworks, international system dynamics &



norms, global tension, and political strategies. Similarly, the works of Robert D. Kaplan, Bertil Lintner, and Rory Medcalf shed light on the critical role that the geographic locations of small island states play in their significance within the geopolitics and power dynamics of the 21st century (Kaplan, 2010; Medcalf, 2020; Lintner, 2019). For example, Djibouti, with an area of only 23,200 square kilometres, drew major powers' attention, drew major powers' attention due to its location on the Bab al-Mandeb Strait. This strait is an entry point to the Suez Canal and a crucial pathway for ships travelling between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean via the Suez Canal, Red Sea, and Gulf of Aden (Aliyev and Çalışkan, 2023, p. 194). Today, this small island hosts eight military bases, featuring the US, China, India, France, Russia, Germany, and Japan.

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR), significant for world trade and home to strategic straits, is again a theatre for great-power competition after Cold War dormancy (Azmie, 2017; Karim, Kayani and Bukhari, 2022; Anwar, Yousaf and Hussain, 2024). Nevertheless, out of all the other factors at play, two factors have substantially elevated the significance of IOR, especially the island nations, for major powers' competitive engagements. First is the transition of the world's political and economic center from the Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific region; 2nd is China's rise as a major power and its extensive engagements in the IOR (Attanayake and Ranjan, 2022). It is contended that China's rise has reconfigured the global power balance in a manner analogous to the emergence of a formidable Germany and the United States at the start of the 20th century (Baig, 2022, p. 518).

The existing global and regional powers perceive rising China and its growing global footprint as challenging their status quo. For instance, the United States regards China's economic expansion, military advancements, and international engagement as a threat to its hegemonic position, particularly in Asia (Zarkachi, 2023). Today, competition is the dominant context in US-China relations and influences key aspects of global politics (Boon and Teo, 2022). The Maritime Silk Road (MSR), integral to the BRI, has catalyzed responses like the US's 'Indo-Pacific strategy' (Baqai, 2021) to counter China's rise in the region. Washington's 'Pivot to Asia' was another strategic move explicitly designed to break Beijing's rising clout across Asia. This tactic involved reducing military commitments in other regions to increase investments and engagements in the Asia-Pacific, reflecting a renewed focus on China akin to pre-9/11 strategies (Tehseen, 2017). Under 'pivot to Asia', the US shifted 60% of its navy to the region (Roper, 2024). Washington faces allegations of actively undermining China-align regimes worldwide as part of its containment strategy. In countries like Myanmar and Sri Lanka, Washington, supported by New Delhi, has ousted China-friendly governments in favor of pro-US leaders (Zaidi and Saud, 2020).

From the US perspective, China's growing footprint in South Asia creates three key challenges: weakening economic leverage, heightening new security vulnerabilities, and accelerating strategic competition. Thus, the US is muscling against China in South Asia through a three-pronged strategy: strengthening diplomatic ties through high-level engagements and cultural exchanges, providing economic alternatives via trade and investment initiatives, and enhancing security cooperation with regional partners through joint military exercises and defense assistance (Hassan et al., 2024). The United States aims to exploit the region's immediacy to China for strategic surveillance. Thus, South Asia, historically pivotal in US containment strategies, will play a significant role in the future (Rashid, 2022).



Like other subregions in the broader IOR, South Asia's geopolitical dynamics have significantly evolved since the introduction of the BRI (Pattanaik, 2019). China has effectively expanded its economic and trade influence across South Asia, drawing all regional nations—except India and Bhutan—into its BRI framework. China is financing and constructing ports/infrastructure in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and the Maldives. Beijing's growing influence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean has intensified India's security worries.

India regards the Indian Ocean as an "Indian lake" (Khan, 2022) and sees Chinese maritime initiatives in the IOR through the MSR as threatening its naval goals. Tagging MSR projects' string of pearls', India has launched a counterstrategy termed the 'necklace of diamonds' (Mengal and Mirza, 2022) to build ports and stations in the IOR. India, the region's dominant power, considers the region its 'backyard' (Singh and Singh, 2023), interpreting the increasing Chinese influence in its traditional bastion as a challenge to its authority. India introduced the 'Neighbourhood-First Policy' to counter Chinese influence, ramping up assistance, trade, investment, economic involvement, and cultural connections in its immediate neighbour states (Bharti, 2024). While China strives to enhance its position in IOR, India is focused on preserving its current advantageous and prominent role in the region (Kılıç and Kaya, 2017).

According to Tan and Soong (2023), Vinodan and Kurian (2024) and Khan (2023), India is employing strategic hedging towards China, the US and Indo-Pacific amidst the China-US rivalry. This strategy incorporates both soft-balancing alliances and restricted hard-balancing policies such as engagement in QUAD, BRICS, SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) and G20, a nuanced stance on the Russian-Ukrainian war, intense criticism of BRI, a cautious line on joining vigorous armed groupings and engaging with neighbours by own designed programs. India is likely to stick to this strategy instead of bandwagoning with or balancing against China unless a direct US-China military war occurs, the US decreases its Indo-Pacific regional security commitment, or direct attacks on India's security interests by China.

The US and India are cautious about the BRI partnership, particularly the port infrastructures, fearing they could enhance Beijing's influence and naval capabilities. Therefore, the 'common enemy' idea aligns India and the US for collaboration to limit China's sway in maritime domains (Khan, 2022). China's growing economic and military strength drives India and the US toward a 'strategic convergence' in the Indo-Pacific (Sisodia, 2024; Abraham, 2020). America's Indo-Pacific strategy currently banks on backing rising India to counterbalance rising China (Scott, 2018). However, despite India and the US's red flag to the BRI, China has successfully strengthened its economic and trade ties in South Asia. Factors like the aspiration for infrastructure development, less stern conditionality, and trade opportunities have prompted small South Asian states to embrace Chinese finance and the BRI. Smaller countries want to leverage their engagement with China to counterbalance Indian dominance (Anwar, 2020).

China prioritizes human and economic development, which is evident in heavy investments in BRI projects. The BRI will grant China strategic access to the Middle East, bypassing the 'Straits of Malacca' and opening up Central Asian and European markets (Zaidi and Saud, 2020). China's objectives focus solely on protecting its economic interests and business ventures. It has refrained from overt military involvement with



nations engaged in the BRI. Ahmed (2020) finds China's IOR growth is primarily economic, with BRI military elements reflecting defensive postures amidst its SLOC vulnerabilities. Islam (2023) pointed out that Chinese economic involvement and strategic partnerships with coastal nations like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are soft-balancing tactics against the US and India. This approach aims to mitigate challenges from the US and India regarding Chinese maritime security and economic interests. Therefore, Li (2017) argues that the Chinese IOR fleet via the MSR is a 'legitimate right'.

BRI is proving beneficial for the South Asia region, especially in infrastructure and education, which are essential for development. China is leveraging soft power tools like cultural engagement, citizen-to-citizen exchanges, economic collaboration, and infrastructural developmental aid to strengthen its ties with South Asia (Islam, 2017).

However, the US-India countermeasure, shaped by perceived 'threat perception', has escalated geopolitical tensions, creating ripple effects across smaller regional states. Deb and Jiayue (2024) argue that growing China-India tensions will likely drive India toward more substantial alignment with the US. But Lou (2012) believes the motivation to 'counter China' might not be compelling enough to solidify a robust US-India relationship in a future trilateral setting because of the deep-seated 'strategic contradictions' between the two nations regarding their visions for the Indian Ocean. While the US aims for absolute maritime supremacy in the IOR, India claims its 'natural right' to dominate the IOR to address security concerns.

The complex dynamic of relations between India and China, marked by 3C's conflict, competition, and cooperation, carries imperative implications for small South Asian countries. The growing China-India competition is increasing the geopolitical vulnerabilities of small states in the region, posing a challenge for these nations in crafting their foreign policies for sustainability (Pulami, 2021). In the age of globalization, where economic motives influence countries' strategies, allowing smaller nations to capitalize on competition for financial assistance and investments (Mohammed, 2023). Small states currently benefit from limited China-India competition in a globalized economy. The scales of Indian and Chinese investments in Maldives and Sri Lanka reflect this phenomenon. In such a situation, smaller countries can operate independently without positioning themselves with any specific side. However, if the competition escalates, small states may be compelled to align with one power, which certainly affects their bargaining power (Paul, 2019).

Small states often choose between bandwagoning, balancing, and hedging when engaging with major powers to safeguard their interests. Sri Lanka and the Maldives' recent policies exemplify this pattern. Babar (2024) frames Sri Lanka's foreign policy as a 'balancing act,' monetizing its geographic value for Chinese capital while preemptively addressing India's security sensitivities. Silva (2023) identifies domestic interest groups' pivotal influence in shaping Sri Lanka's foreign policy. His analysis contends that Gotabaya Rajapaksa's 'tightrope balancing', particularly in port infrastructure cooperation with India and China, partially succeeded but weakened Sri Lanka's ties with Japan. But Attanayake (2021) and Ranjan & Senevirathna (2022) characterize Sri Lanka's foreign policy toward India and China as 'strategic hedging,' aiming to secure developmental assistance while avoiding geopolitical entanglements. However, Samaranayake's (2023) study finds Sri Lanka's policy constituted neither balancing against India, bandwagoning



with China, nor hedging. Its policy choices were driven by 'domestic level interests and preferences', with bandwagoning treated only as a contingency measure, not simply between balancing, bandwagoning and hedging.

The Maldives' internal political dimension since 2008 unswervingly correlates with its divided foreign engagements between China and India. The polarized politics reflect its ambivalent strategic posture toward both regional powers (Hazarika and Mishra, 2016; Rahman, Disha and Rahman, 2024). Government policy choices reveal these divergent patterns: Nasheed (2008-2012) and Solih (2018-2023) favoured India, while Waheed (2012-2013) and Yameen (2013-2018) leaned toward China (Nahushal, 2024). Maldives' foreign policy alignment oscillates between pro-China and pro-India positions depending on the government in power is a 'flip-flop' strategy. This leadership-dependent alignment defies binary categorization, operating as a transactional hybrid of bandwagoning and hedging to optimize short-term political/diplomatic returns (Aryal and Droop, 2024).

4. Trends in Sri Lanka's Relations with China, India, and the US

Sri Lanka lies at the center of the global commerce and shipping chain. Sri Lankan ports are vital for vessels transiting between the East and West. Its strategic significance stems from its location between the Suez Canal and the Strait of Malacca and its position along the pathway from the Strait of Hormuz (Arachchige et al., 2021, p. 31). This strategically located island is increasingly becoming a vital port partner for competing Asian powers (Attanayake, 2023).

Post-independence, Sri Lanka adopted a British-aligned bandwagoning approach to counter perceived Indian expansionist threats. It transitioned to a balancing strategy by embracing a non-alignment posture in the Cold War era (Gunasekara, 2015). Since its independence, Sri Lanka has forged strong economic connections with major global powers. However, Sri Lanka's economy is tightly intertwined with India, China, the US, the UK, and the UAE. The island nation is actively pursuing its national objectives by fostering strong economic interactions with these countries. The financial data below highlights the significance of China, the United States, and India for the Sri Lankan economy:

**Table 01.** Sri Lanka's Top 3 Import Sources and Export Destinations

Year	Import Sources	Value (In US\$ Million)	Export Destinations	Value (In US\$ Million)
2018	1. India	4,231	1. United States	3,085
	2. China	4,116	2. UK	980
	3. UAE	1,835	3. India	777
2019	1. China	4,034	1. United States	3,141
	2. India	3,899	2. UK	998
	3. UAE	1,669	3. India	768
2020	1. China	3,579	1. United States	2,500
	2. India	3,079	2. UK	908
	3. UAE	1,035	3. India	606
2021	1. China	4,756	1. United States	3,108
	2. India	4,625	2. UK	938
	3. UAE	1,413	3. India	829

Source: Central Bank of Sri Lanka (2022).

Table 02. FDI Inflows to Sri Lanka (2012 -2017) and Stock Position (2018-2020) in US\$ Million

Country	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
China	185	240	403	322	802	1,630	2,128	2,173	2,188
Hong Kong	252	140	175	174	108	1,344	951	1,031	1,067
India	26	33	35	44	44	1,077	1,563	1,688	1,803
Malaysia	49	180	42	77	152	980	967	1,083	1,044
UK	62	67	383	33	254	905	662	686	746
Netherlands	62	103	73	69	92	808	1,774	1,593	1,497
Singapore	56	92	68	71	62	885	1,030	1,145	1,406
UAE	185	102	42	41	51	550	368	397	418
USA	168	163	380	348	391	369	287	258	274

Source: Pradeep (2022); Central Bank of Sri Lanka (2022).

India-Sri Lanka relations, dating back over 2,500 years, are founded on extensive cultural exchanges and deep people-to-people interactions (Aliff, 2015, p. 321). The geographical proximity has been a key factor in influencing the relationship between the two nations. Their intertwined history is marked by significant cases of migration, especially from India to Sri Lanka (Moorthy, 2010, p. 4). But India's dual-track approach to Sri Lanka's civil war (1983-2009) - simultaneously supporting Tamil political rights while opposing separatism - created recurring significant distrust in bilateral relations (Thalpathwila, 2014; Imtiyaz, 2008; Shahid and Sakib, 2023).

Again, New Delhi's endorsement of the UNHRC resolution (2012, 2013) on Sri Lanka for balancing pressures from Tamil Nadu politics and strategic concerns regarding Sri Lanka left Colombo disillusioned during the sensitive post-war reconciliation period. Despite these political incongruities, economic relations between Sri Lanka and India continue to advance at their rhythm. The India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement (ISFTA) was signed in 1998 and came into effect in March 2000. In 2010, India granted US\$ 27.5 million for reconstruction projects in Sri Lanka's Northern Province and extended US\$ 416.4 million in lines of credit for constructing the Northern railway line.



The post-2009 India-Sri Lanka relationship has evolved through five key drivers: security considerations, economic engagement, development assistance, post-conflict reconciliation, and managing great-power competition in the region (Mallampati, 2022). Beijing's growing presence in Sri Lanka, particularly through strategic infrastructure development, has emerged as a critical variable shaping New Delhi's engagement with Colombo. New Delhi fears Beijing may use these assets to undermine Indian interests (Manoharan and Chakravarty, 2016).

India's 'hands off' policy toward Sri Lankan civil war during the 1990s allowed China to step in. China filled the vacuum created by India's disengagement by bolstering its strategic ties through timely aid and assistance (Farooq, 2023). This ushered in a new era of relations between China and Sri Lanka, with China eventually becoming the island nation's major economic partner. Relations between China and Sri Lanka gained momentum under President Mahinda Rajapaksa from 2005 to 2015 (Samaranayake, 2019:5). China emerged as Sri Lanka's largest investor, lender and trading partner in less than a decade. It provided a US\$7.2 billion loan between 1971 and 2020. Notably, \$6.91 billion was given during 2005-2020, showcasing the level of economic ties during the period (Predeep, 2022).

Under its Maritime Silk Road dream, China invested heavily in infrastructure, including port and road construction. China is building long-term goodwill in Sri Lanka by developing China-friendly stakeholders across multiple sectors (Sri Lanka-China Friendship Association, Youth Friendship Association, Sri Lanka-China Journalists' Forum). Beijing actively strengthens cultural ties with Sri Lanka via platforms like the Sri Lanka-China Buddhist Friendship Association. China's patient investment in these people-centred ties suggests a long-term vision for the relationship beyond immediate geopolitical considerations.

Sri Lanka's proximity to China can be attributed to several factors. First, China's adherence to non-intervention principles contradicts India's hegemonic or "big brother" approach to regional engagement strategies. Second, India has been incapable of meeting the development financing needs of its smaller neighboring countries. Third, India's unilateral heavy engagement with the West has generated a sense of alienation among its neighboring nations. Fourth, India is reluctant to address several crucial bilateral issues with its neighboring states. Finally, India's domestic complexities have kept it from adopting a proactive policy towards its neighbors (Kumar, 2017, pp. 1120-1123).

The United States, on the other hand, has had longstanding diplomatic ties with Colombo since its independence. In recent years, it has become one of the consistent top destinations for Sri Lankan exports (refer to Table 01). Both countries actively participate in international institutions and are involved in the multilateral structure. However, the politico-economic affairs between Sri Lanka and the US have been diverse. Sri Lanka's US ties hinge on its ruling party: United National Party (UNP) governments favor Western alignment, while Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) administrations pivot Eastward (Kapur and Attanayake, 2021, pp. 1, 9). During the civil war's final stages, Colombo-US relations fractured over rights abuse claims versus interference in domestic matters. The Rajapaksa era (2005-2015) saw US-Sri Lanka tense relations over democratic backsliding



concerns and Chinese influence. Rajapaksa's China embrace turned Sri Lanka into a US/QUAD priority for monitoring Chinese Indo-Pacific influence.

Recent US moves in Sri Lanka - \$553M Adani port funding + nuclear pact - demonstrate integrated Indo-Pacific containment: partnering with India to offset Chinese BRI gains. However, India walks a tightrope in Sri Lanka—quietly welcoming US counterweight to China while publicly opposing external powers' military presence in its traditional sphere of influence (Abeyagoonasekera, 2023). The post-default geopolitical competition in Sri Lanka has seen Washington and New Delhi collaboratively promote the 'debt-trap' narrative, positioning Hambantota's lease as symptomatic of BRI's strategic predation through unsustainable infrastructure financing. They warned that Chinese loans and BRI will cause the same complications for other BRI-affiliated states. But Hammer and Rod's (2022) empirical research reveals that debt trap diplomacy is merely a political discourse and myth, Chinese loans are not solely responsible for Sri Lanka's debt default, and the Hambantota Sea Port 99-year lease is not a case of "debt-to-equity transfer.

The US and India are reinforcing their Sri Lanka engagement through financial initiatives. India's \$1 billion credit line, joint debt relief efforts with Japan and France, and IMF bailout support aim to regain strategic leverage. Unverified claims of Chinese military use of Hambantota Port and potential radar installations have intensified geopolitical tensions in Sri Lanka. Colombo has consistently denied these allegations, with President Wickremesinghe clarifying: 'No Chinese naval bases exist here - Hambantota remains purely a commercial venture with China Merchants Group' (Carrai, 2018). China's growing economic presence in Sri Lanka does not substantiate claims that Hambantota could become a Chinese military base. China's historical interactions with Sri Lanka reveal no evidence of colonization attempts despite the island's geostrategic value as a naval hub and resource-rich territory ideal for permanent basing (Kohona, 2024).

Perceptions of a 'China threat' shape US and India's Sri Lanka policies. Since the 2022 economic crisis, the interplay of IMF conditionalities, Chinese BRI leverage, and Indo-Pacific security concerns has compelled Sri Lanka to adopt a soft hedging strategy: allowing Chinese research ships (2022) to sidestep alienating Beijing while implementing Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to address Indian security concerns (e.g., denying later vessel visits). However, the Chinese research ship ban (2024) demonstrates how Indian strategic pressures limit Sri Lanka's non-aligned flexibility.

Sri Lanka's domestic politics are deeply intertwined with its engagements with China, India, and the US. While India has traditionally held sway over its neighbors, China's growing regional role since the 2000s—alongside anti-India sentiment—fueled pro-China shifts in Sri Lankan politics. The Rajapaksa administrations (2005–2015, 2019–2022) prioritized Chinese investments, departing from Colombo's historically pro-India stance. However, Gotabaya Rajapaksa's 2019 decisions—advancing the India-backed East Container Terminal, making New Delhi his first official visit, and accepting a \$480 million US MCC grant—suggested a more balanced approach driven by post-war economic pragmatism rather than an outright pro-China alignment.

Beijing's consistent engagement across successive Sri Lankan governments—including the Rajapaksas' strategic alignment and Sirisena's balancing approach—reflects its long-term commitment to being a 'friend of Sri Lanka' beyond the regime. While Sirisena initially criticized BRI, he endorsed it to boost ties, showcasing Beijing's diplomatic



persistence. A recent survey by SAFN (South Asia Foresight Network), including respondents from journalists, scholars, university students, and government executives in Sri Lanka, showed that foreign intervention significantly influences domestic politics. The survey revealed that the US had the highest perceived intervention, while China scored the lowest. This survey result emphasizes China's effective strategic communication, which has bolstered its positive influence in Sri Lanka (Abeyagoonasekera, 2023).

Sri Lanka's current NPP-led government (headed by the JVP) is adopting a pragmatic foreign policy, balancing relations with India and China despite its leftist roots and historical opposition to the Indo-Lanka Accord. While President Dissanayake assured New Delhi that Sri Lankan territory would not threaten Indian security during his inaugural visit, he simultaneously pledged to 'open a new chapter' with Beijing, highlighting Colombo's delicate tightrope act. The administration prioritizes diversified partnerships and multilateral engagement to avoid overreliance on any single power, focusing on economic recovery. Concurrent China (\$3.7B oil) and India (defense/energy) deals exemplify Sri Lanka's pursuit of a balancing act.

5. Maldives's Contemporary Interactions with USA, China and India

The Maldives, an archipelago state in the West Indian Ocean, comprises around 1,300 coral islands and sandbanks. With a land area of only 180 square miles and a population of approximately 0.50 million, its strategic location along the Seven Degree Channel makes it geopolitically significant. Situated southwest of Sri Lanka and southern India, the Maldives intersects major east-west maritime trade routes, attracting attention and interest despite its small size. The economy of Maldives, like other smaller South Asian countries, today is closely connected by its economic interactions with China and India. Maldives' tourist sources (economic lifeline) and trading partner data validate the statement.

Strong traditional socio-ethnic contacts trademark the relationship between India and the Maldives. India was one of the first countries to recognize the status of the sovereign Maldives. Since the foundation of ambassadorial associations, Indian heads of the government have frequently visited the Maldives, and the island nation has consistently prioritized its relationship with India through its "India First" policy. However, during the premiership of Waheed and Yameen, India's relationship with the Maldives experienced a significant downturn due to its closeness to China (Aktar and Pailan, 2022, pp. a497-a498). In 2012, the government led by President Waheed secured a loan of \$500 million from China, which further solidified the growing relationship between the two countries. The 2015 China-Maldives Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and military assistance agreements form the core of bilateral ties (Shabbir, 2021).

**Tabel 03.** Top 3 Tourist Source Countries

Year	Country		
2014	China (363,626)	Germany (98,328)	UK (88,704)
2015	China (359,514)	Germany (105,132)	UK (101,843)
2016	China (324,326)	Germany (106,381)	UK (92,775)
2017	China (306,530)	Germany (112,109)	UK (103,977)
2018	China (283,116)	Germany (117,532)	UK (114,602)
2019	China (284,029)	India (166,030)	Germany (131,561)

Source: Maldives Monetary Authority, Annual Report 2019 & 2020

Table 04. Maldives Top 3 Import and Export Partners

Year	Import Sources	Value (CIF, Millions)	MVR	Export Destinations	Value (FOB, Millions)	MVR
2018	1. UAE	7,655.59	7,172.14	1. Thailand	1,014.23	
	2. China	5,142.24		2. Germany	355.43	
	3. Singapore			3. Great Britain	258.46	
2019	1. UAE	7,668.26		1. Thailand	885.77	
	2. China	6,969.60		2. Germany	286.72	
	3. Singapore	4,945.92		3. France	230.92	
2020	1. China	3,911.31		1. Thailand	1,089.55	242.38
	2. India	3,299.11		2. Germany	200.77	
	3. UAE	3,151.73		3. France		
2021	1. China	4,672.73		1. Thailand	1,086.35	
	2. India	4,370.09		2. Germany	265.82	
	3. UAE	4,248.75		3. Great Britain	157.89	

Source: Maldives Customs Service, Annual Statistical Review 2021

China's Maldives policy is a component of its integrated strategy in the Indian Ocean for safeguarding its maritime trade routes and energy supply chains (Bhatt, 2016). India and China maintain strong diplomatic ties with the Maldives. However, China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean islands is perceived as a significant strategic threat to India. While China strives to strengthen its economic maritime stakes in the region, India prioritizes security (Kumar, 2016, p. 24). China's Maritime Silk Route (MSR) drive plays a vital role in its significant presence in the Maldives. The bilateral relationship between China and the Maldives experienced dramatic growth after President Yameen took office in 2013. Maldives joined BRI under his presidency and received substantial infrastructure, health, accommodation, and tourism aid and loans. Since becoming a part of China's BRI in 2014, the Maldives has secured \$1.4 billion in Chinese funding for important projects, such as the \$200 million China-Maldives Friendship Bridge.

India enjoyed unparalleled influence in Maldives for 34 consecutive years (1978-2012). But the political shift 2013 under President Yameen marked a dramatic deterioration in India-Maldives relations, as Malé sidelined Indian companies in favor of Chinese investments while accusing New Delhi of political interference (Kumar, 2017). India's 2018 \$1.4B package for the Maldives, featuring multi-sectoral aid, was a strategic pushback against growing Chinese influence in the archipelago. The year 2021 saw India-



Maldives trade cross the \$300 million threshold for the first time (Bora, 2024). Despite initial tensions in 2024, India has injected \$220 million into the development of Addu City. This investment encompasses an \$80 million coastal protection initiative and \$70 million allocated for road and drainage enhancements.

Although the new president, Mr Muizzu, spoke positively about Chinese infrastructure projects in the Maldives, he has refuted any claims of being pro-China. Mr. Muizzu affirmed his commitment to the Maldives, stating that his priority lies with his country and its independence. He clarified that he does not favor or oppose any particular nation. Mr Muizzu emphasized that the Maldives should avoid involvement in global power struggles as a small nation. In October 2024, India inked a \$400 million and a 30-billion-rupee currency swap pact with the Maldives and committed to exploring a free trade agreement (FTA) centred on goods and services. India's concerns about the China-Maldives FTA and Modi's promotion of Lakshadweep tourism during Muizzu's trip to China hint at continued geopolitical complexities ahead. These events suggest India is uneasy about its neighboring country's legitimate engagement with China.

On the other hand, America continues to engage actively with the Maldives, having urged democratic reforms during the previous administrations. Washington emphasized the importance of free elections and judicial fairness, signalling its ongoing commitment to stability in the Indian Ocean region. The US first pursued a defense agreement with the Maldives in 2013, but the proposal stalled amid objections from Sri Lanka and India, with critics viewing it as an effort to establish a military presence between China and India. However, Washington eventually secured a similar pact in 2020, demonstrating its enduring strategic focus in the region. Notably, India—which had opposed the earlier deal—accepted the revised agreement, signalling shifting geopolitical dynamics (Ranjan, 2020). The US investments in the Maldives have mainly concentrated on tourism, notably in hotel chains and aviation. In 2023, the United States opened its embassy in the Maldives, demonstrating its strategic intent to deepen involvement in the Indo-Pacific region to counter China's growing impact.

Indian and Chinese initiatives in the Maldives span multiple sectors, including infrastructure, economic development, and intergovernmental security cooperation (Ahmad and Wagay, 2025). Maldives' foreign policy tilts sharply between India and China with changing leadership. From Abdulla Yameen's presidency to today, Maldives' foreign policy has oscillated between Indian and Chinese influence. Under President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, ties with India strengthened, reversing Yameen's China-leaning stance, though Beijing retained economic importance. As Sultana (2024) notes, China-Maldives ties have strengthened through shared strategic goals, yielding mutual benefits, while India retains natural advantages through proximity and cultural ties.

6. Concluding Remarks

The strategic value of Indian Ocean littoral states lies in their position over crucial trade routes and maritime chokepoints. China's BRI and other forms of economic engagement have provided opportunities to bridge the infrastructure gaps necessary for holistic development in smaller states like Maldives and Sri Lanka. But China's sweeping BRI investments in these countries draw them into the geopolitical competition between



Beijing, Delhi, and Washington (Ali, 2020), despite Beijing's insistence on the peaceful nature of its activities aimed at protecting its Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) and securing trade, commerce, and energy interests. China's growing strengths in the Indian Ocean region has created uneasiness and anxiety amongst Indian policymakers and concerns among the Americans (Sidhu and Rogers, 2015). This geopolitical dynamic has profound implications for small Asian countries navigating the complexities of the contention. Successfully navigating these conflicts and fostering collaboration will be pivotal in determining the Indian Ocean's geopolitical trajectory in the coming years (Yadav and Yadav, 2024).

International relations emphasize the study of conditional future trajectories rather than definitive predictions. It is the methodological distinction that underpins its analytical rigor. However, policymakers' need for early warnings has spurred greater academic engagement with forecasting in IR (Schneider, Gleditsch and Carey, 2011). In support of the current interactions involving the United States, China, India, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, and considering the present global and regional geopolitical contexts, this analysis highlights the below likely direction of their relationships:

I. In both the Maldives and Sri Lanka, foreign policy trajectories remain intrinsically linked to domestic political dynamics, particularly the ideologies of incumbent parties. However, given the substantial economic influence wielded by India and China, these states will likely adopt economic bandwagoning—prioritizing development partnerships—while cautiously hedging through limited balancing tactics, including strategic engagement with the US. Only war-like situations may force to choose bandwagoning or balancing.

II. China's proactive and defensive strategy, combined with its economic and investment concentration in South Asia utilizing soft power, is expected to persist. However, the ongoing dissemination of anti-China narratives by the US and India and their policies aimed at countering China could challenge the existing strong relations between China and South Asian nations. The debt issue might also cast a shadow on the development of their growing partnerships.

III. India's policy towards Sri Lanka and the Maldives may operate under three strategic pillars: 1) providing alternative investments, either independently or in collaboration with partners like Japan, to counterbalance China's influence; 2) leveraging cultural and historical ties to strengthen political partnerships, and 3) employing restrained-balancing tools for managing competition and cooperation with both China and the US. The emphasis will be placed on exploiting China-US competition to advance its regional interests and influence.

IV. The United States is discreetly establishing a strategic network across the Indian Ocean to counter its global competitor, China. This strategy involves creating subtle security alliances through small yet effective trilateral agreements (US-India-Maldives/Sri Lanka) focusing on maritime security cooperation. These initiatives aim to complicate China's activities without inciting a crisis. Washington will empower New Delhi to lead while offering discreet support from behind.

V. Sri Lanka/Maldives may face mounting US-India pressure vs. Chinese economic sway, straining independent policymaking. If interference grows, domestic instability may spread regionally. Outcomes hinge on whether elites can balance external pressures



without triggering internal upheaval—a test of small-state agency in an era of competitive multipolarity.

VI. In the years ahead, Beijing's economic-focused engagement in South Asia will face unprecedented pressure. The growing strategic alignment between India and the US, which views China as a shared threat, will put Beijing's core foreign policy principles, i.e., non-interference and peaceful rise, to the test.

VII. China's disposition to guard the Maldives and Sri Lanka against US-Indian pressure will signal its reliability to other South Asian states. If Beijing delivers sustained support, alignment may grow; if it wavers, smaller nations could hedge. Intensifying Western-Indian coercion might paradoxically push some closer to China—but only if Beijing proves it can counterbalance pressure effectively.

VIII. US-India coordination to counter China may backfire if Washington's growing role in Sri Lanka/Maldives displaces New Delhi's regional leadership. Over time, sustained U.S. engagement could marginalize India's traditional leadership role, reducing New Delhi to a junior partner in its neighborhood. Smaller states, seeking maximal leverage, might bypass India entirely to negotiate directly with Washington.

IX. Economic interdependence, power asymmetry, and small-state hedging will make direct China-India-US massive confrontation unlikely. Instead, expect prolonged competition via proxies, trade wars, and naval posturing in the Indian Ocean.

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NAVIGATING CHINA'S GLOBAL FOREIGN SECURITY STRATEGY: ASSESSING THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES OF THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE AFTER A DECADE OF IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) serves as a central component of China's foreign security strategy under Xi Jinping, aimed at achieving the "two centenary goals" and realizing the "Chinese Dream". This study utilizes a document analysis approach to assess the objectives, positive outcomes, and challenges that the BRI has encountered in the strategic repositioning of China's foreign security after a decade of global implementation (2013-2023). The research focuses on three main aspects: (i) Analyzing China's foreign security strategic objectives through the BRI, including positioning China as a friendly major power, promoting economic development, safeguarding strategic maritime routes, and shaping a geopolitical landscape favorable to China's interests; (ii) Evaluating the positive outcomes achieved, such as enhancing influence through "policy connectivity", expanding soft power, establishing financial institutions, boosting overseas infrastructure investments, and fostering economic and financial linkages; and (iii) Identifying the major challenges BRI faces, including strategic competition from other major powers, concerns from participating countries about "debt-trap diplomacy", risks to Chinese enterprises investing abroad, and potential failure due to external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Based on this analysis, the study concludes that overcoming these challenges will be crucial for China to achieve its strategic objectives in foreign security through the BRI.

Keywords

BRI, China's foreign security strategy, maritime security, geopolitical influence, infrastructure investment.



Resumo

A Iniciativa Uma Faixa, Uma Rota (Belt and Road Initiative, BRI) serve como componente central da estratégia de segurança externa da China sob Xi Jinping, visando alcançar as "duas metas centenárias" e realizar o "Sonho Chinês". Este estudo utiliza uma abordagem de análise documental para avaliar os objetivos, resultados positivos e desafios que a BRI encontrou no reposicionamento estratégico da segurança externa da China após uma década de implementação global (2013-2023). A pesquisa concentra-se em três aspectos principais: (i) Análise dos objetivos estratégicos de segurança externa da China através da BRI, incluindo o posicionamento da China como uma grande potência amigável, promoção do desenvolvimento econômico, salvaguarda de rotas marítimas estratégicas e formação de uma paisagem geopolítica favorável aos interesses chineses; (ii) Avaliação dos resultados positivos alcançados, como o aumento da influência através da "conectividade política", expansão do poder brando, estabelecimento de instituições financeiras, impulso aos investimentos em infraestrutura no exterior e fomento de vínculos econômicos e financeiros; e (iii) Identificação dos principais desafios que a BRI enfrenta, incluindo a competição estratégica de outras grandes potências, preocupações dos países participantes sobre a "diplomacia da armadilha da dívida", riscos para empresas chinesas que investem no exterior e potencial fracasso devido a choques externos como a pandemia de COVID-19 e o conflito Rússia-Ucrânia. Com base nesta análise, o estudo conclui que superar estes desafios será crucial para a China alcançar seus objetivos estratégicos de segurança externa através da BRI.

Palavras-chave

BRI, estratégia de segurança externa da China, segurança marítima, influência geopolítica, investimento em infraestrutura.

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NAVIGATING CHINA'S GLOBAL FOREIGN SECURITY STRATEGY: ASSESSING THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES OF THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE AFTER A DECADE OF IMPLEMENTATION

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Introduction

China's economic reform and international integration process, initiated in 1978 under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping—referred to as the “architect of reform and opening-up policy” — has fundamentally transformed the country's geopolitical position in the contemporary international system. With a GDP reaching \$14.72 trillion by 2024 (Global PEO Services, 2024), China has established itself as the world's second-largest economy amid a chaotic world order facing numerous complex geopolitical dynamics: (i) The Russia-Ukraine War in Eastern Europe; (ii) The Israel-Palestine War; and (iii) The potential reconfiguration of US foreign policy toward an “anti-China” orientation under the “America First” doctrine with Donald Trump's potential second-term election in 2025 - 2029. Through examining its historical development trajectory, China's rise exhibits the characteristics of an emerging power within the process of restructuring regional and global power balances. In this progression, the role of Xi Jinping—the fifth-generation leader—is considered pivotal in shaping China's foundation and status as a superpower both currently and in the future (Yang, 2017).

Foreign security strategy comprises a set of policies and actions designed to ensure a nation's security through managing relationships with other countries and maintaining stability in the international environment (Michaels & Sus, 2025). For China, foreign security strategy constitutes one of the two main pillars of its national security strategy, aiming to protect China's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national interests, while simultaneously creating favorable conditions for China's economic development and global influence (Cabestan, 2021). China's foreign security strategy has undergone a strategic transformation from the “keeping a low profile” principle—proposed by Deng Xiaoping after the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident amid tense relations with the West—to an “active participation” strategy under Xi Jinping since 2013 (Yan, 2014). While the previous strategy emphasized “*cautious accumulation of internal strength and*



development of national potential" (Yan, 2014) the current period witnesses a China *"actively shaping a new international order through global geopolitical and economic initiatives"* (Yan, 2014). This is demonstrated through Beijing's proactive proposal of Chinese-led regional security mechanisms, while simultaneously asserting firm positions on core sovereignty issues such as Taiwan and territorial disputes in the East Sea (Cabestan, 2021). In the context of signs of declining US global influence, particularly during Donald Trump's first term which demonstrated inadequate responsibility and global leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, China is actively positioning itself as a responsible power in addressing global challenges and restructuring the world order (Thompson, 2020).

In the context of the restructuring of the contemporary world order, major powers are repositioning their national security strategies, not only to protect core interests but also to establish influential positions within the international system (Ahrari, 2011). Under Xi Jinping's leadership since the 18th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, Beijing has demonstrated a transformation in its foreign security strategy from a passive stance to "wolf warrior diplomacy"—a more assertive diplomatic approach in protecting and promoting national interests (Sullivan & Wang, 2023). This shift in China's foreign security strategy reflects not only the internal dynamics of the Chinese Communist Party but also creates widespread ripple effects, reshaping the geopolitical structure and foreign policy environment in strategic subregions of Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and South Asia. To realize the "two centenary goals" and the "Chinese Dream", Beijing has implemented a system of global strategic initiatives, including: (i) the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI); (ii) the Global Security Initiative (GSI); (iii) the Maritime Power Strategy; and (iv) the Global Data Security Initiative (GDSI).

Xiao (2016) characterizes China's foreign security strategy as a comprehensive mechanism that not only addresses "existing" and "potential" challenges but also creates a foundation for Beijing's rise as a global power capable of balancing with Washington. The central axis of this strategy is the BRI, announced by Xi Jinping in 2013 in Indonesia and Kazakhstan as a strategic framework aimed at expanding China's geopolitical influence at regional and global levels (Beeson & Crawford, 2023). During its decade of implementation, the Chinese Communist Party has flexibly adjusted the BRI to adapt to the intensely fluctuating international dynamics. Although this initiative has achieved significant accomplishments in expanding China's global influence, the developmental trajectory of the BRI faces increasingly complex geostrategic challenges. This is clearly demonstrated through the formation of counterbalancing mechanisms such as the QUAD led by the US and India, along with strategic adjustments by Western powers and allies aimed at counterbalancing China's growing influence in the region and globally (Yang, 2017). These developments reflect the multidimensional interaction between three factors: (i) Global power competition; (ii) Regional geopolitical dynamics; and (iii) China's comprehensive development strategy in its journey to affirm its status as a global power.

This research aims to analyze and evaluate the achievements and challenges in the implementation of China's foreign security strategy through the BRI during the period 2013-2023. The urgency of this research is demonstrated through the key role of the BRI in China's great power diplomacy strategy in the context of a world order being restructured by multiple impacts from the chaotic state of world politics. Through



analyzing the BRI—an important component in China's foreign security strategic framework—this research contributes to the academic understanding of key issues in contemporary international relations, including global governance, regional security dynamics, and strategic competition between major powers in the 21st century. To achieve the research objectives, this paper focuses on addressing three core research questions:

- (i) What are China's foreign security strategic objectives within the BRI framework?
- (ii) What achievements has China's foreign security strategy through the BRI accomplished during the period 2013-2023?
- (iii) What challenges has China's foreign security strategy through the BRI encountered during the period 2013-2023?

Methodology

This study employs a rigorous document analysis method to examine China's foreign security strategy through the BRI during the period 2013-2023. Document analysis is selected as the primary research methodology due to its effectiveness in systematically evaluating and interpreting documentary evidence to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge about complex geopolitical phenomena. The research adopts a qualitative analytical approach centered on document analysis to investigate the strategic objectives, achievements, and challenges of China's foreign security strategy through the BRI. This method is particularly appropriate given the complexity of the subject matter, which encompasses multifaceted geopolitical dynamics across diverse regions and involves numerous stakeholders with varying interests and perspectives.

The documentary evidence was collected through a comprehensive search of multiple sources to ensure triangulation and validity of findings:

- (i) Official Chinese policy documents: including white papers, policy pronouncements, and official statements from the Chinese Communist Party and government ministries related to the BRI and foreign security strategy (2013-2023).
- (ii) International organizational reports: documents from multilateral institutions such as the World Bank (WB), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and relevant regional organizations that provide assessments of BRI projects and their impacts.
- (iii) Academic research: scholarly articles, books, and research papers from reputable academic journals focusing on China's foreign policy, international relations theory, geopolitics, and infrastructure development.
- (iv) Think tank publications: reports and analyses from leading international and regional think tanks specializing in Asian security affairs, economic development, and great power competition.
- (v) Media reports: selective integration of credible news sources providing factual reporting on BRI developments, project implementations, and international responses.



The collected documents were analyzed using a systematic approach, following a three-phase analytical framework:

Phase 1: Identification and Classification of Content

The initial documents were meticulously screened, selected from reputable sources, and classified based on their relevance to the three research questions outlined in the introduction:

- (i) Documents related to China's foreign security strategy objectives within the BRI framework.
- (ii) Documents concerning the achievements of China's foreign security strategy through the BRI (2013-2023).
- (iii) Documents addressing the challenges faced by China's foreign security strategy through the BRI (2013-2023).

Phase 2: Thematic Analysis

Within each category, the documents were analyzed thematically through an iterative coding process. This process included:

- (i) Open coding: identifying initial concepts and themes emerging from the documents.
- (ii) Axial coding: establishing relationships between the identified themes.
- (iii) Selective coding: integrating and refining the themes into coherent analytical frameworks.

This thematic analysis aimed to identify recurring patterns, strategic narratives, key policy initiatives, project implementations, and international responses, providing insights into China's foreign security objectives, achievements, and challenges through the BRI.

Phase 3: Interpretive Analysis

The final phase of analysis involved interpretive examination of the identified themes to develop a comprehensive understanding of:

- (i) The strategic logic underlying China's foreign security objectives in the new era under Xi Jinping, through the BRI.
- (ii) The achievements of China's foreign security strategy through the BRI, realized over a decade of global implementation.
- (iii) The multidimensional challenges faced by the BRI as a tool for global geopolitical and geoeconomic expansion.

In general, this study primarily adopts a traditional qualitative document analysis method, allowing for this interpretive process to be structured within a multifaceted system, encompassing various fields such as economics, politics, culture, society, and



environment. This approach is intended to reassess the achievements and challenges of China's decade-long shift in foreign security strategy from "keeping a low profile" to "actively participating" under Xi Jinping through the BRI. In our view, evaluating an international project of unprecedented scale in global trade history, such as the BRI, requires a comprehensive perspective integrating multiple angles and fields to fully grasp its magnitude, success, and limitations. Consequently, this study will contribute findings on the achievements and challenges of China's foreign security strategy through the BRI during a decade of implementation to broader academic debates on the adjustment of foreign security strategies by rising powers in the 21st century, and the transformation of the new international order influenced by strategic competition among major powers, especially the US-China rivalry.

1. What is the BRI?

"Around 140 BCE during China's Han Dynasty, Zhang Qian, a royal envoy, undertook a journey westward from Chang'an (now Xi'an in Shaanxi Province), establishing a land route connecting East and West. Many centuries later, during the Tang, Song, and Yuan dynasties, the Silk Road routes flourished both on land and sea, facilitating trade between East and West. In the early 15th century, Zheng He, the famous navigator of China's Ming Dynasty, made seven voyages to the Western Seas, promoting trade along the maritime silk routes... These roads facilitated exchange and mutual learning between Eastern and Western civilizations, promoted regional development and prosperity, and shaped the Silk Road spirit characterized by peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit" (China's State Council Information Office, 2023).

Beijing has skillfully utilized this historical heritage, constructing a cultural inheritance argument to justify contemporary geopolitical strategy. By connecting the "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) Initiative with the ancient Silk Road, the Chinese state has created a coherent narrative of historical continuity, in which the BRI is described as a natural revival of traditional trade networks associated with the "greatness" of Chinese civilization. This approach not only aims to consolidate the initiative's legitimacy within China but also seeks to build a positive interpretive framework internationally, mitigating concerns about Beijing's hegemonic ambitions. OBOR initially proposed by Xi Jinping in 2013 during visits to Nazarbayev University (Kazakhstan) and spoke to the Indonesian National Assembly after successfully consolidating power and assuming Chinese leadership in 2012 (Ginsburg, 2021). During these diplomatic engagements, Xi Jinping clearly articulated China's new foreign security strategic vision through a modern OBOR, marking the beginning of a transformation from the "keeping a low profile" strategy to an "active participation" strategy, while also initiating what would later develop into the BRI (Jingping, 2019: 702). Initially, the initiative only included the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (MSR) and the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB), and subsequently the BRI expanded its scope with the inclusion of the Digital Silk Road (DSR) in 2015. The MSR outlines an economic route from China's eastern coastal ports, across the East Sea to the



Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean, ultimately converging with the SREB in Venice, Italy. Additionally, the SREB delineates three strategic economic corridors: (i) A corridor connecting China with the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean through Central Asia and West Asia; (ii) A corridor connecting China with the Indian Ocean through Southeast Asia and South Asia; and (iii) A corridor connecting China with the Baltic region in Europe through Central Asia, Russia, and West Asia (Wang et al., 2024). Simultaneously, the DSR plays a role in establishing a digital corridor facilitated by underwater fiber optic cables, enhancing internet connectivity between Asia, Europe, and Africa, as Zhao (2021) described "This digital infrastructure not only promotes technological advancement but also lays the foundation for modern information technology systems, including broadband networks, e-commerce centers, and smart cities, in countries participating in the BRI".

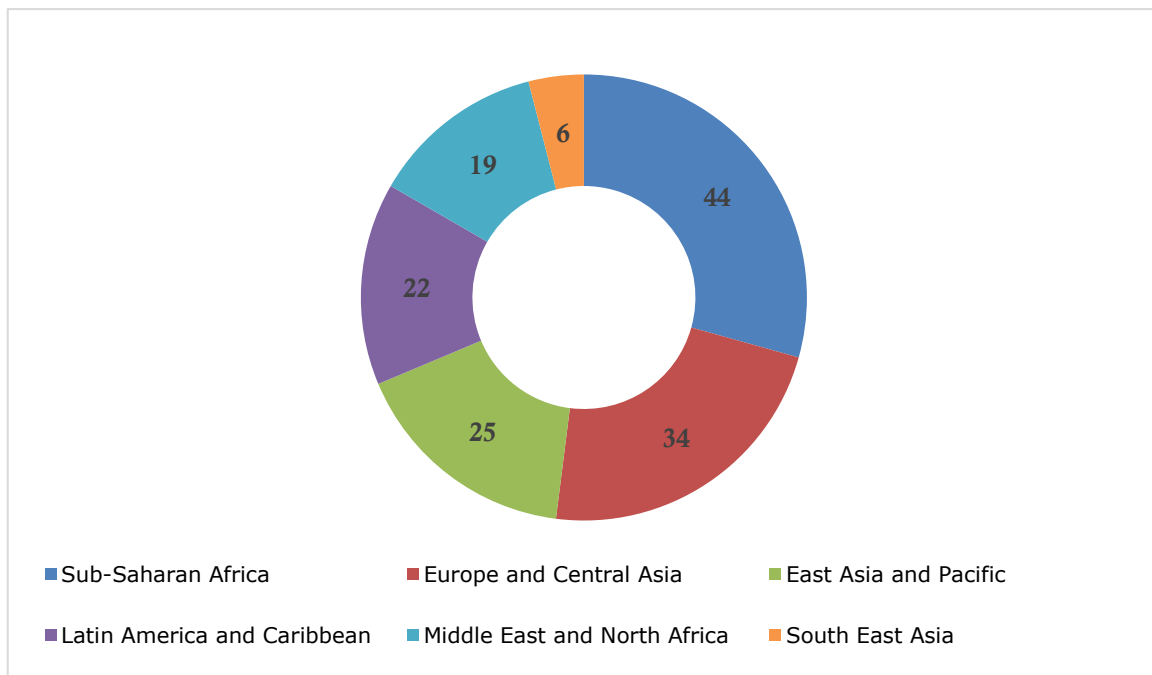
Conceptually, the BRI resembles two expanding arcs encompassing the continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa, leveraging established trade routes and coastal port cities as focal points (Schulhof et al., 2022). This framework forms the basis for six major economic corridors, including routes through Russia, Mongolia, West Asia, the East China Sea and East Sea, the Indochina Peninsula, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, and Myanmar. These corridors serve as regional connectivity channels, facilitated by a network of critical infrastructure projects, thereby promoting interdependence and cooperation among participating countries (Li et al., 2022). In 2014, China outlined a comprehensive three-step roadmap for developing the BRI. This roadmap extends from the initiative's inception in 2013 until 2049, divided into strategic phases: (i) Momentum-building phase (2013-2016); (ii) Planning phase (2016-2021); and (iii) Implementation phase (2021-2049). Through this strategic framework, China aims to expand its geopolitical and geostrategic influence in the region, enabling the country to rise to the status of a global power comparable both economically and politically with the US. The significance of the BRI is emphasized by its powerful economic impacts on the global economy, creating an initiative of immense scale and funding with participation from numerous countries worldwide. Countries directly or indirectly participating in the BRI collectively contribute approximately 55% of global GDP, encompassing about 70% of the world's population and 75% of global resources. Within this scope, the BRI's direct cooperation includes 64 countries with a total population of 4.4 billion people, representing 63% of the global population and an estimated economic output of approximately \$21 trillion, accounting for 29% of global GDP (Chinese Communist Party, 2018: 102). As of 2023, a total of 150 countries (including China) have signed documents to participate in China's BRI (see Figure 1).

The institutionalization of the BRI within the CCP framework reflects the strategic importance of this initiative in China's national policy agenda under Xi Jinping. Initially absent from official CCP documents, the BRI was formally recognized and confirmed in the Report of the 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2017 (Chinese Communist Party, 2018: 117). This institutionalization emphasizes the key role of the BRI in China's vision for the new era, as well as affirming Beijing's "active participation" strategy in the global economy to directly counter containment measures by the US and Western allies, as Xi Jinping clearly stated, who emphasized the global importance of this initiative by declaring: "*The BRI originates from China but benefits the entire world*" (Li et al., 2022). Commenting on the role of the BRI for China, Simonov (2025) described "This initiative enhances China's global influence, prompting other



major actors to take countermeasures. One such response is the policy of the US and the Group of Seven (G7) countries that seeks to reorient China's partners".

Figure 1. Number of countries that have joined China's BRI as of December 2023



Sources: Statista (2023).

Bharti (2023) emphasizes the role of the BRI in promoting cooperation across five key areas: (i) Policy; (ii) Infrastructure; (iii) Trade relations; (iv) Finance; and (v) People-to-people connectivity. Originating from the principle of "a community of shared destiny" and guided by the spirit of "three togethers", including (i) Joint discussion; (ii) Joint development; and (iii) Joint benefits. The BRI represents one of the most ambitious efforts in the annals of global trade history, and the country driving this project is China—an emerging global power challenging a world order under American "hegemony", as Chaziza (2023) has recognized:

"The paramount importance of the BRI will shape success or failure for China's future, illuminating Xi Jinping's unwavering commitment to implementing this strategy. This belief highlights the strategic imperative placed on the BRI within China's comprehensive national strategy under Xi Jinping's leadership to counter the injustices that the Chinese believe the US is attempting to lead Western allies in containing their rise".

In general, the BRI is a strategy of unprecedented scale in global trade history, spanning numerous countries and sectors, with the consolidation of China's diplomatic strategy emerging as a central objective to counter and challenge American "hegemony". With its



significance, the BRI holds the role of a foundational strategy in realizing the “two centenary goals” and the “Chinese Dream”. Throughout its implementation, China has transformed the BRI into vast spider-like networks connecting continents, from Asia to Europe, from Asia to Africa, and from Asia to Oceania and the Americas. These networks envision one endpoint as Europe’s highly developed economic region and the other endpoint as the dynamic East Asian economic region. Within this framework, countries situated between these endpoints are positioned to potentially develop into significant economies in the near future.

2. China’s Foreign Security Strategic Objectives Through the BRI

In the context of an increasingly complex and challenging global security environment, coupled with the process of repositioning its role and stature during its rise, China has undertaken adjustments to its foreign security strategy aimed at adaptation and position consolidation. Within this framework, the BRI emerges as a central element, playing a key role in realizing China’s strategic objectives on the international stage. Through the BRI, China’s foreign security strategy aims to achieve the following objectives:

First, the BRI is used by China as a strategic tool to build and strengthen its image as a peaceful, friendly, and responsible power in the perception of the international community (Li et al., 2022). China clearly recognizes that to be acknowledged as a true global power, the country needs to be viewed by other nations as an entity rising peacefully, committed to promoting values oriented toward the common prosperity of humanity (Schulhof et al., 2022). Accordingly, through the BRI, China actively promotes the concept of a “Community of Shared Destiny”, emphasizing harmony between national interests and the principle of mutually beneficial cooperation. This is considered the ideological foundation for creating a multipolar, peaceful world order where countries share benefits and bear risks (Chaziza, 2023). China positions the BRI as an initiative based on common interests, where the level of contribution exceeds the benefits received, with the primary goal of promoting development and prosperity for participating countries, especially those in the Global South. Moreover, the BRI is also an important means to realize China’s long-term objectives, including the “two centenaries” and the “Chinese Dream” of national rejuvenation. These ambitions are linked to efforts to overcome historical challenges, including more than a century of population control policies, leading to a continuous decline in birth rates for 7 years from 2016 to 2023 (Moritsugu, 2024). Additionally, to strengthen the image of a friendly power, China continuously promotes public welfare projects within the BRI framework and implements a multi-channel communication strategy. The benefits of this initiative are widely promoted through mass media, conferences, seminars, and high-level diplomatic events globally. Notably, at the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (2022), China affirmed the pursuit of a proactive and expansive strategy, including:

“Establishing a comprehensive global network of high-quality free trade zones, accelerating the development of pilot free trade zones, such as the Hainan Free Trade Port, and jointly promoting the BRI initiative, which has received significant recognition as a valuable international cooperation effort”.



Therefore, the BRI is not merely an infrastructure or economic project but also a strategic platform for China to assert its position as a friendly and responsible global power. Through combining economic cooperation, public diplomacy, and ideological orientation, China leverages the BRI to shape a positive national image while consolidating its influence in the international system.

Second, the BRI is a strategic tool for China to consolidate its power and economic networks that are increasingly under pressure from the US and Western allies, especially since Donald Trump's first term (2017-2021) when the trade war with China erupted. From a security perspective, the BRI allows China to expand its sphere of influence and promote comprehensive economic development with diverse supply networks worldwide, avoiding excessive dependence on US and Western allied markets (Carmody & Wainwright, 2022). With its extensive geographical scope, encompassing both land and maritime routes, the BRI targets two main areas: (i) Infrastructure; and (ii) Energy. Regarding infrastructure, the BRI addresses two challenges that China currently faces: (i) Excess production capacity; and (ii) Large foreign exchange reserves. By creating connectivity, the BRI provides China with a pathway to invest capital, technology, and infrastructure, opening "new doors" for Chinese companies to access and penetrate foreign markets, especially developing countries in the "Southern Hemisphere" to reduce pressure on domestic production and business operations (Zhao, 2021). By establishing infrastructure connections spanning across regions and continents, the BRI is poised to unlock powerful opportunities for "Made in China" branded goods to saturate the entire global market. This will be facilitated through the seamless integration of transportation networks and economic connectivity, promoting enhanced trade and economic cooperation on a global scale. Furthermore, with the 21st century celebrated as the "century of seas and oceans", the MSR aspect of the BRI emerges as a key instrument for China to realize its maritime ambitions. Currently, the String of Pearls Strategy is viewed as China's major success in expanding its influence in the Indo-Pacific region through investment in seaports from BRI funding, as assessed by Sparling (2020) described:

"The ports along China's 'string of pearls' in the Indian Ocean are designed to be commercial trading posts to bolster China's role in international trade. However, they have increasingly come to play a potentially more menacing role as dual-use ports that can give the strengthened Chinese navy a global reach it lacked entirely just a few years ago".

Therefore, the BRI serves as a platform for China to extend its influence, exploit maritime resources, and engage in strategic commitments, particularly in the context of regional security dynamics and competition with the US and Western allies.

Energy security is another crucial objective underpinning China's BRI. As a power with a population of 1.4 billion and on a trajectory of strong economic development, China has enormous energy consumption needs to operate its national economy. "Oil, gas and coal imports to China account for around 85 percent, 40 percent and 7 percent of the country's domestic consumption, respectively; and about 18 percent, 16 percent and 18 percent of the global trade of these commodities" (Nakhle, 2023). To address this dependency,



China has announced plans to enhance domestic energy production by 2030 with a vision extending to 2035. This strategy includes prioritizing the expansion of domestic oil and gas reserves, increasing production, and actively exploiting both onshore and offshore resources.

Therefore, strengthening energy security is one of the primary objectives of the BRI. Through this initiative, China aims to diversify its energy supply sources, thereby reinforcing energy security in the context of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, which has disrupted global energy supply chains. Simultaneously, the BRI creates pathways for cooperation, particularly in the energy sector, attracting energy-exporting countries to collaborate with China. By establishing pipeline connections with Central Asian countries, Russia, and others, China seeks to reduce energy import costs and strengthen national energy security. Consequently, since the Russia-Ukraine conflict erupted in 2022, China's energy sector supply has improved significantly, with Moscow enhancing comprehensive cooperation with Beijing to redirect the European energy market toward China. This has helped both powers address core needs in their national security strategies, as Down et al. (2023) have demonstrated:

"In 2021-2023, Russia's crude oil exports to China increased by one-third, while coal and LNG exports nearly doubled. In 2023, Russia was China's largest crude oil supplier, second-largest coal supplier, and third-largest LNG supplier. Russia is also an increasingly important pipeline gas exporter to China. It has increased gas deliveries via the Power of Siberia 1 (PS-1) pipeline from 10.4 bcm in 2021 to 22.7 bcm in 2023, accounting for 34 percent of China's pipeline gas imports. Russia expects PS-1 to reach its maximum capacity of 38 bcm/year by 2025. Additionally, China and Russia signed an agreement in early February 2022 for another pipeline, the Far Eastern Route, to supply 10 bcm/year by 2027".

Third, the BRI serves as a means for China to protect its maritime security and advance its sea power strategy. A core principle in China's approach to foreign security, as demonstrated through the BRI, is protecting its maritime interests and strengthening security measures in the disputed "claimed" waters in the East Sea with Southeast Asian nations such as Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, and Indonesia (Hung et al., 2025). As coastal nations aim to develop maritime infrastructure and expand their reach into the sea, China's MSR initiative provides a convenient channel for financial and security activities.

China has significantly increased investments with a primary focus on accessing and controlling strategically important seaports for both military and semi-military purposes, specifically efforts to invest in military bases and ports through the String of Pearls strategy extending from Eastern China to Africa, including Cambodia's Ream Naval Base, Myanmar's Coco Island and Kyaukpyu Port, Bangladesh's Chittagong Port, Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port, the Maldives's Male Port, Pakistan's Gwadar Port, Khartoum Port and Port Sudan in Sudan, as well as Bagamoyo Port in Tanzania (Huang, 2018). This effort allows China to effectively address what they consider maritime security challenges, particularly the "Malacca dilemma" – a term denoting China's strategic vulnerability



related to its dependence on these maritime chokepoints (Paszak, 2021). To achieve this objective, China uses financial instruments such as the AIIB and other channels to transfer money and influence other countries regionally and globally to garner support for its "claims" and militarization activities in the East Sea (Carmody & Wainwright, 2022). According to the assessment of the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (2023) has described it specifically as follows:

"China has substantially expanded its ability to monitor and project power throughout the East Sea via the construction of dual civilian-military bases at its outposts in the disputed Spratly and Paracel Islands. These include new radar and communications arrays, airstrips and hangars to accommodate combat aircraft, and deployments of mobile surface-to-air and anti-ship cruise missile systems... Combat radii for fighter aircraft are shown based on China's J-11 fighters while bomber ranges are based on China's H-6 bombers, both of which have been deployed to Woody Island. SAM and cruise missile ranges are based on the HQ-9, YJ-62, and YJ-12B systems that have been deployed across Woody Island, Fiery Cross Reef, Mischief Reef, and Subi Reef. Fighter and bomber ranges at Fiery Cross, Mischief, and Subi Reefs represent expected future deployments based on the hangars built to accommodate those assets".

The above assessment shows that China is increasingly militarizing islands that are under Vietnam's sovereignty but claimed by China to coercively monopolize the East Sea. Furthermore, through politically calculated BRI investments in Southeast Asian countries, Beijing has actively lobbied ASEAN nations to prevent a unified position on the East Sea issue, thereby weakening the bloc's ability to collectively counter China's violations. Cambodia (where China has access to the Ream naval base to enhance its influence in the Gulf of Thailand and the East Sea) is a country *"ready to block ASEAN policy-making targeting China"* (Epstein, 2024). WB (2023) conducted a study focusing on analyzing Cambodia's current economic situation, showing that Cambodia's GDP growth now depends primarily on the garment export industry; however, over 90% of the production facilities are directly operated by Chinese owners. Additionally, China continues to be Cambodia's largest investor, having invested more than \$3 billion USD in 2023, indicating that the BRI plays a crucial role in implementing China's ambitious maritime strategies in the East Sea. Controlling critical port infrastructure will allow China to enhance power projection capabilities and sustain naval operations offshore. Thus, the MSR strengthens China's ability to counter and control the region with the US, providing crucial strategic depth for its naval forces. By shaping the security framework and strategic landscape along critical maritime shipping routes, the MSR emerges as a key instrument for China in pursuing its goal of achieving maritime supremacy. Ultimately, this initiative aims to position China as a formidable maritime power capable of eclipsing the US to become the dominant force in the Indo-Pacific region (Carmody & Wainwright, 2022).

Fourth, the BRI serves as a strategic tool for China to build a geopolitical landscape favorable to its interests in the 21st century. Although China has repeatedly asserted that *"the BRI is not a geopolitical tool. It is a product of cooperation, aimed at economic connectivity, promoting collaboration between countries and regions, not only in*



economic fields but also in cultural and social aspects, benefiting all. The goal of the BRI is to build partnerships, not alliances” (China’s State Council Information Office, 2023)). However, the role of the BRI in expanding China’s influence has been affirmed by many international scholars, despite China’s efforts to deny its geopolitical nature. According to several current case studies on the BRI by global scholars, the BRI plays an important role in shaping a geopolitical environment conducive to China’s interests through the following mechanisms:

- (i) Establishing infrastructure systems to enhance control over strategic transportation routes: BRI road, rail, and port development projects allow China to control critical trade routes and resource transportation channels. This increases China’s geopolitical access and influence in strategic regions such as Central Asia, the Persian Gulf, and Africa (Schulhof et al. 2022).
- (ii) Creating economic leverage through trade and investment: Economic and financial linkages formed through the BRI enable China to develop trade and investment partnerships with countries along the routes. This allows China to strengthen its economic influence and create geopolitical leverage over these nations (Yu, 2024).
- (iii) Developing multilateral mechanisms to shape regional order: Multilateral financial and trade initiatives under the BRI such as the AIIB and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) aim to establish a new economic-trade structure, creating a foundation for China to shape a regional order aligned with its interests (Oakes, 2021).
- (iv) Penetrating soft power domains to increase sociocultural influence: Cultural exchanges, student exchanges, and the establishment of Chinese cultural centers abroad under the BRI aim to promote Chinese values and lifestyle and increase China’s attractiveness, thereby consolidating long-term geopolitical influence (Kiet et al., 2024).

Through these mechanisms, the BRI serves as an important tool helping China gradually transform its geopolitical sphere of influence into a multilateral regional order aligned with the country’s strategic objectives and interests in the 21st century (Beeson & Crawford, 2023). In a decade of implementation, the BRI has helped China enhance its geopolitical influence, a development that has raised significant concerns among Western powers, especially the US. Beyond economic benefits, the BRI is an essential tool for China to employ in the geopolitical competition of the 21st century, particularly against the US and Western allies. This initiative allows China to demonstrate its power and influence across numerous countries, regions, and continents. Consequently, the resulting regional connectivity is expected to shift the geopolitical balance toward Asia, with China as the focal point. Beside, the successful deployment of the MSR will help China leverage economic influence, drawing regional countries closer into its sphere of influence. Furthermore, the MSR functions as a strategic counterbalance to US rebalancing efforts and economic agreements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), designed to attract allies and partners. Through the BRI, Chinese leaders aspire to gradually gain greater control, counter, and shape ongoing geopolitical developments in the neighboring region (Zhao, 2021).



In general, China's foreign security strategy through the BRI under Xi Jinping has undergone significant adjustments to adapt to an increasingly complex and dangerous external security environment, as well as China's self-awareness and "repositioning" on the international stage, marking qualitative changes. However, this period is still defined as a "strategic opportunity" requiring the Chinese nation to seize opportunities and break through barriers. The overarching goal of China's national security strategy, including its foreign security strategy, *"is to realize the rejuvenation dream of the Chinese nation, restore its former glory and emerge as a strong, prosperous, and respected global power, transcending its current status as a rising regional force"* (Morky, 2023).

3. BRI: Assessing a decade of achievements under Xi Jinping

Since Xi Jinping assumed leadership of China in 2012, with the goal of transforming China into a global power and revitalizing the inherent greatness of the ancient Chinese civilization, China has intensified its implementation of a "proactive engagement" foreign security strategy through the BRI, achieving notable results after a decade of deployment.

First, at the forefront of China's strategy is the active promotion of the BRI through what is termed "policy connectivity". Through various platforms including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Boao Forum for Asia (BFA), Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD), as well as events such as the Hangzhou Summit and the Belt and Road Forum, China has diligently disseminated the BRI agenda. This effort over the past decade has facilitated the establishment of trust and attracted participation from numerous countries across the world. In particular, the BRI Forums serve as significant occasions to advocate for the initiative and cultivate cooperation with BRI target countries:

(i) The First Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF I) was held in May 2017 in Beijing with the theme "Belt and Road: Cooperation for Common Prosperity", attended by 28 national leaders and international organizations (Institute for Strategy and Policy Research in Industry and Trade, 2023).

(ii) The Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF II) with the theme "Shaping a Brighter Shared Future" was convened in Beijing in April 2019, with the participation of 5,000 delegates from 150 countries and 90 international organizations (Institute for Strategy and Policy Research in Industry and Trade, 2023). Just two years after the official renaming to BRI at the 19th Chinese Communist Party Congress, this event was celebrated as evidence of the initiative's success despite US opposition due to concerns that Beijing's BRI provides China with greater geopolitical influence at Washington's expense" and warnings that participating countries risked falling into a "debt trap" according to US policymakers (Garcia & Guerreiro, 2024).

(iii) The Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF III) with the theme "High-quality Belt and Road Cooperation: Together for Common Development and Prosperity" was successfully held in October 2023 with the participation of over 4,000 delegates from 140 countries and 30 international organizations (Institute for Strategy and Policy Research in Industry and Trade, 2023). Although throughout the 2019-2023



period, China's image regarding BRI was significantly diminished due to the impact of several failed BRI projects (the Khorgos dry port near the Kazakhstan border (Central Asia), Sri Lanka's Hambantota port, and Malaysia's incomplete East Coast Railway), the achievements made throughout this process were numerous. The extensive participation of 140 countries worldwide at the BRF III demonstrated the tangible benefits not only for China but also for participating countries, further reinforcing the momentum of the BRI.

In a decade of implementation, the BRI has delivered remarkable results, bringing clear advantages not only to China but also to countries actively participating in this initiative. At the BRF III event, Xi Jinping declared:

"As of 2023, China has signed more than 200 cooperation documents within the BRI framework with 150 countries and over 30 international organizations, while launching more than 20 multilateral dialogue and cooperation platforms in fields including railways, ports, finance, taxation, energy, green development, green investment, disaster risk reduction, anti-corruption, research groups, media, cultural exchanges,... generating nearly 1 trillion US dollars in investment" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs the People's Republic China, 2023).

The deep and global-scale participation of many countries around the world demonstrates the success of the BRI throughout a decade of implementation. Particularly noteworthy was Italy's historic decision on March 23, 2019, to become the first G7 member to align with the BRI—a significant achievement emphasizing China's adeptness in attracting international support and enhancing its global standing (Al Jazeera, 2019). Through continuous advocacy via policy channels and influence on developments surrounding the BRI, China seeks to consolidate the initiative's credibility as a multilateral platform dedicated to promoting global common interests. Simultaneously, the BRI also serves as an effective geopolitical tool helping China expand its influence and shape the international economic order in alignment with Beijing's vision of global governance in the 21st century.

Second, China has deployed a strategy to expand cultural influence through "people-to-people connectivity" mechanisms. The policy document "Vision and Actions on Jointly Building the SREB and 21st-Century MSR", published in March 2015, identifies that *"people-to-people connectivity is the social foundation of the BRI"* (Zhao, 2021). To actualize this strategy, China has committed to enhancing academic exchanges, promoting educational cooperation, and providing 10,000 scholarships for countries along the BRI corridor (Woo, 2023). Although the BRI originated as a transcontinental infrastructure development project, by 2016, the initiative had been expanded by China to integrate education as a strategic component aimed at reinforcing and disseminating Chinese cultural values globally, with higher education identified as a priority area (Woo, 2023).

The favorable results demonstrating the effectiveness of the educational strategy within the BRI framework include a significant increase in international students in China. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of international students had reached 492,185 in 2018 (Woo, 2023), with the highest growth rates from Africa and Central Asia. China



is now the world's largest provider of higher education scholarships for African students, with 12,000 scholarships awarded in 2020 (Woo, 2023). Through this strategy, China aims to restructure the global higher education ecosystem that has been dominated by Western models, while simultaneously elevating the status of leading educational institutions such as Tsinghua University and Peking University as ideal academic destinations for international students.

Additionally, China has developed a roadmap to enhance multidisciplinary cooperation through the BRI, encompassing film, television, cultural heritage preservation, high-quality human resource development, tourism, sports, healthcare, science and technology, youth development, inter-party and inter-governmental dialogue, non-governmental exchanges, and cultural-media cooperation. Notably, to mitigate public debt risks and fiscal pressure on recipient countries of BRI project", China has committed to implementing social welfare projects and initiatives with direct impact on local communities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs the People's Republic China, 2023). This strategy has attracted the participation of many countries previously hesitant about potential negative economic impacts from the BRI.

In the complex geopolitical context created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and strategic competition between major powers, the "people-to-people connectivity" model has become a key pillar in the BRI architecture. Recognizing this importance, the Chinese administration and BRI partner countries have proactively promoted cultural exchanges and social linkages. As of 2023, China has signed cultural and tourism cooperation documents with 144 BRI partner countries (China's State Council Information Office, 2023). China has created cooperation platforms with participating countries, including the Silk Road International Theatre Federation, the Silk Road International Museum Alliance, the Silk Road Arts Festival Network, the Silk Road International Library Alliance, and the Silk Road International Museum and Art Gallery Alliance. These platforms have a total of 562 members, including 326 cultural institutions from 72 partner countries (China's State Council Information Office, 2023). Specific initiatives include the establishment of 16 cultural centers in member countries, organizing more than 1,600 cultural events since 2014, and signing film production cooperation agreements with 21 countries and territories participating in the initiative (Vietnam Institute of Finance, 2023). Expanding this strategy, China has added 37 cultural centers and organized over 2,000 additional cultural events in BRI partner countries (Vietnam Institute of Finance, 2023). By prioritizing people-to-people interactions, China not only strengthens its national image but also creates attractive momentum for countries still cautious about participating in the BRI. Specific initiatives include the establishment of 16 cultural centers in member countries, organizing more than 1,600 cultural events since 2014, and signing film production cooperation agreements with 21 countries and territories participating in the initiative (Vietnam Institute of Finance, 2023). Expanding this strategy, China has added 37 cultural centers and organized over 2,000 additional cultural events in BRI partner countries (Vietnam Institute of Finance, 2023). By prioritizing people-to-people interactions, China not only strengthens its national image but also creates attractive momentum for countries still cautious about participating in the BRI.



Third, China has implemented a strategy to strengthen its competitive position and economic influence through multilateral financial mechanisms. Access to investment capital is a key factor for countries participating in the BRI. To meet this need, China has established a dedicated financial ecosystem within the BRI framework, including the Silk Road Fund (SRF) with a registered capital of \$40 billion USD, the AIIB with resources of \$100 billion USD, and the New Development Bank (NDB) with an initial capital of \$100 billion USD. These institutions are structured as strategic financial pillars of the initiative (Institute for Strategy and Policy Research in Industry and Trade, 2023). As of now, the AIIB (2023) has 110 member countries, including 96 full members and 14 prospective members, representing 65% of the global population and 81% of global GDP. Through the AIIB (2023) platform, China has mobilized financial resources amounting to \$59.17 billion for 306 projects across 37 countries, with the objective of developing strategic infrastructure and enhancing competitive capacity in international markets. In 2022, the AIIB established a Special Fund Window mechanism, designed to improve the repayment capability of AIIB loans by less developed members through an interest subsidy mechanism. This initiative has contributed to improving the credibility and transparency of BRI projects, which have faced allegations that behind BRI investments lies China's "debt trap" diplomacy strategy, intended to place recipient countries in Beijing's orbit of influence and control. Overall, China's decision to use foreign exchange reserves to invest in infrastructure to support developing economies and promote international trade is viewed as a form of providing global public goods. In the AIIB structure, China holds the largest share at 26.75% and possesses preferential voting rights, thereby enhancing its influence and shaping a China-led financial mechanism (Kim, 2020). This move elevates China's competitive position with traditional Western-dominated international financial institutions such as the WB and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), while promoting the internationalization of the Chinese Yuan (CNY).

Fourth, the BRI has played a crucial catalytic role in expanding cross-border infrastructure investment by Chinese corporations. Connectivity through multimodal transportation infrastructure (both land and sea routes) has been identified as a strategic priority of the BRI, creating a foundation for China to deploy resources to international markets. According to quantitative analyses, the total investment capital necessary to realize the BRI is estimated at approximately \$1.4 trillion, more than 12 times the scale of the Marshall Plan implemented by the US after World War II (Hiep & Kiet, 2024). Infrastructure investment accounts for the dominant proportion in the BRI capital structure. Countries participating in the BRI have attracted FDI from China with a total value of \$80 billion (Vietnam Institute of Finance, 2023). Furthermore, China has developed more than 50 economic and trade cooperation zones in approximately 20 BRI participating countries, contributing \$1.1 billion in tax revenue and creating 180,000 new job opportunities (Vietnam Institute of Finance, 2023). Several BRI projects have achieved significant progress, such as the China-Thailand railway project and the oil pipeline project with the Russian Federation. The strategic investment markets of the BRI are primarily concentrated in the regions of Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and West Asia, with special attention to the Middle East and Africa.

In investment activities on both land and sea routes, China is simultaneously implementing multiple large-scale infrastructure projects. In the railway sector, plans are being promoted to develop a high-speed rail network spanning 81,000 kilometers



connecting BRI participating countries—exceeding the current total length of the entire global high-speed rail system. In parallel, China has announced plans to allocate 35 trillion Yuan (equivalent to \$503 billion USD) to strengthen and expand its domestic railway network to more than 30,000 kilometers (Zhao, 2021). This expansion process aims to establish connections between 80% of major cities within Chinese territory (Zhao, 2021). Regarding port infrastructure, China is focusing on building a network of connection points with geostrategic value. As of 2023, China's global presence in port ownership and operation has expanded to nearly 100 ports in more than 50 countries (Sly & Ledur, 2023). Notable strategic port projects include Djibouti, Piraeus, and Gwadar. According to analysis by Nedopil (2023), the total value of construction contracts related to the BRI has reached \$573 billion since 2013. When including non-financial investments, this total value approaches \$1 trillion USD. Additionally, BRI projects with significant valuations are being implemented on a global scale. Over the past decade, this initiative has established partnerships with 32 international organizations and attracted the participation of more than 150 countries and territories across continents—Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa—with over 3,000 cooperation projects and a total investment capital of approximately \$1 trillion USD (China's State Council Information Office, 2023).

Fifth, China strategically positioned the BRI as an instrument to promote cross-national trade and financial investment, thereby enhancing its comprehensive national power and strategic competitive capacity with the US. Within the current global power structure, China is identified as a competitor with the potential to surpass the US to become the world's leading economic power. Through the BRI mechanism, China has skillfully applied "trade and financial leverage" in conjunction with the internationalization strategy of the CNY, aiming to consolidate the foundation of national power sufficient to engage in strategic competition with the US (Cabestan, 2021).

Regarding the trade aspect, leveraging its position as the "global manufacturing workshop" and diverse network of trading partners, China has proactively led the process of establishing regional and global trade mechanisms. When the BRI infrastructure system becomes operational, China will enhance its ability to access and penetrate markets along economic corridors. This initiative also creates opportunities for China to shape, cooperate, and establish highly integrated bilateral, multilateral, and regional economic agreements. In a decade of implementation, the BRI has played a dominant role in mobilizing approximately \$1 trillion USD in investment capital. Through the deployment of more than 3,000 cooperation projects, China has facilitated the creation of 420,000 job opportunities and made significant contributions to the process of lifting nearly 40 million people out of poverty (Nedopil, 2023). The total trade volume between China and countries along the BRI corridors in the five-year period from 2013 to 2018 exceeded \$6 trillion. In 2017 alone, this index recorded a record growth of 14.2%, as China imported goods valued at over \$666 billion from these countries, accounting for 25% of the country's total import value (Schulhof et al., 2022).

Beyond assuming a leadership role in the RCEP and supporting the process of joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), China actively promotes and utilizes multilateral mechanisms to diversify trade development. This strategy includes promoting bilateral trade agreements and supporting the process



of participating in Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). By fostering trade relations between China and BRI countries, China not only contributes significantly to global economic expansion but also creates momentum for domestic economic growth. This process promotes mutually beneficial cooperative relationships and enhances the credibility of the BRI, thereby attracting greater participation from more countries. In the financial domain, a core component among the five pillars of the BRI, China has actively participated in numerous multilateral financial cooperation initiatives with countries along the BRI corridors. These efforts aim to integrate financial activities into the economic structures of partner countries, creating political influence and establishing a foundation for implementing BRI financial connectivity programs. Simultaneously, this approach serves as the main channel promoting the internationalization of the CNY, aligning with the increasingly evident trend of “de-dollarization” and China’s economic rise.

Overall, the BRI is positioned as a strategic tool helping Chinese corporations expand their business operations and international influence, contributing to the realization of China’s foreign security strategy. Through the BRI implementation process to date, China has achieved concrete results in its foreign security strategy, creating a foundation to respond to the significant challenges the country faces in the global geopolitical context.

4. BRI: Challenges on the Development Path under Xi Jinping

Despite achieving certain accomplishments in realizing foreign security objectives through the BRI over the past decade, China still faces diverse geo-strategic risks and challenges, particularly from geopolitical pressure exerted by the US and Western allies in response to China’s rise. In the context of a transforming global security architecture, the BRI faces the risk of stagnation, especially as some BRI projects become financially unfeasible and numerous participating countries encounter public debt liquidity crises. In response, China has implemented strategic adjustments aimed at maintaining momentum for this initiative. Nevertheless, the BRI continues to confront several major challenges:

First, the BRI is facing increasingly intense geo-strategic competition from major powers, particularly the US and its Western bloc allies. Over the past decade, major powers have actively positioned themselves to capture new development trends, establish prerequisites, and endeavor to construct a global order aligned with their strategic interests. The US, European Union, Russian Federation, India, Japan, and other nations all aim to shape a world architecture favorable to their positions, and they perceive the BRI as a strategic instrument for China to establish leadership and shape global security structures (Thuan, 2021: 166). Consequently, powers with conflicting national interests with China have undertaken strategic adjustments in their foreign security policies to contain China’s rise. In this context, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) comprising the US, India, Japan, and Australia is identified as a multilateral mechanism aimed at containing the expansion of China’s geopolitical influence and power in the Indo-Pacific region (Hung et al., 2025). Accordingly, powers that counterbalance China continuously pursue their own programs to establish suitable regional and global security structures while asserting their roles in a transforming world order.



The Trump administration in its first term (2017-2021) introduced the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” (FOIP) strategy; strengthened multilateral cooperation within the QUAD framework and initiated a trade war with China in 2018, as a strategic measure to contain China’s rise in the region and establish a direct counterbalance to the BRI (Long & Yen, 2020). Although the US currently maintains advantages in economic and military potential compared to China, this position is being strongly challenged due to China’s superior economic development capacity, rapidly modernizing military capabilities influenced by economic potential, and the development of domestic technical experts. Accordingly, China is actively positioning itself to establish a strategic counterbalance relationship with the US and aims to surpass the US in the future. The US-led QUAD has established the “QUAD Infrastructure Partnership”, evaluated as a “strategic initiative” aimed at counterbalancing China’s BRI through promoting infrastructure investment according to Western international standards (Kiet et al., 2024).

India maintains a consistent position of non-participation in the BRI, clearly demonstrated through its official stance at the SCO conference in July 2023. India’s cautious stance stems from security concerns related to one of the largest and most notable BRI projects, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), launched in 2015. CPEC is a trade corridor connecting Pakistan’s Gwadar port on the Arabian Sea with Kashgar, a city in China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, notably passing through the disputed Kashmir territory between India and Pakistan. The project involves the construction of airports, railways, highways, pipelines, along with other types of commercial and energy infrastructure. China’s total investment in the project has reached \$60 billion USD (Gill, 2019), as a Bharti (2023) analyzes that *“India’s position of not supporting the BRI reflects this nation’s distinct strategic vision regarding regional infrastructure development projects”*.

China has also anticipated India’s non-supportive attitude in the context of serious border conflicts between these two Asian powers in the Himalayan region (Atkins et al., 2023). Notably, the increasing presence and influence of the BRI in South Asia has exacerbated the strategic interest conflict between India and China, while India’s Indo-Pacific strategy and Act East policy are being vigorously implemented, focusing on Southeast Asia – which currently receives the largest total investment capital from the BRI at 44% (Hiep & Kiet, 2024). Currently, the prevailing view among Indian academic and policy-making circles is that the BRI not only focuses on economic development but also aims at geopolitical and strategic objectives, wherein the String of Pearls strategy is seen as a strategic mechanism to encircle and limit India’s geopolitical space within its own territory, while diminishing New Delhi’s strategic influence in the Indian Ocean region (Bharti, 2023).

Second, in the current international context, countries participating in the BRI are exhibiting increasingly cautious and vigilant attitudes toward potential risks associated with this initiative. The primary concern centers on the possibility of falling into so-called “debt-trap diplomacy” through loans from Chinese-led financial institutions such as AIIB, NDB, and SRF. Although the initial preferential terms offered to less developed countries appear attractive, the operational mechanisms of these financial institutions have raised serious concerns about transparency and governance, potentially pushing low and middle-income countries into insolvency, which could pose risks to the national security of developing countries participating in the BRI (Xiaojun, 2023). In global media, the



case of Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port is frequently cited as a typical example of a "debt trap" (Moramudali & Panduwawala, 2024; Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2022). However, recent analyses have indicated that the reality is much more complex and does not necessarily reflect a deliberate Chinese strategy (Himmer & Rod, 2022). Many contemporary studies show no systematic pattern of China intentionally lending beyond countries' repayment capacity to gain control of strategic assets (Peng & Cheng, 2024). On the contrary, China has repeatedly restructured debts and, in some cases, even implemented debt forgiveness for countries in difficulty, which is inconsistent with the hypothesis of a deliberate "debt trap" strategy. Many researchers argue that the concept of a "debt trap" is largely an interpretation from Western geopolitical perspectives, particularly the US, stemming from concerns about China's expanding global influence (Jones & Hameri, 2022). To enhance the transparency of BRI projects, in 2022, China implemented significant adjustments in debt management policies within the BRI framework, a phenomenon referred to by Chinese researchers and internal businesses as "BRI 2.0". Accordingly, Chinese policy-making bodies have committed to evaluating new projects (from 2023) with more stringent standards and allowing debt renegotiations—a significant change from the previous rigid stance, when debt repayment was considered a non-negotiable "red line" for BRI-participating countries (Stanhope, 2023).

Within the BRI framework, China and Chinese state-owned enterprises directly invest in and construct numerous large-scale infrastructure projects in strategically positioned countries, including the CPEC (more than \$60 billion USD), Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM) (\$22 billion USD), Nepal-China Trans-Himalayan Railway Project (\$2,75 billion USD) in South Asia, and multiple projects in Africa such as the Kenya Railway Project (\$5 billion USD), Djibouti Port (\$590 million USD), Africa's longest suspension bridge (\$786 million USD), and mineral exploitation projects in Botswana (\$1.9 billion USD). These projects are primarily financed through loans from Chinese-backed financial institutions. Through the BRI, China has established a mechanism that makes many developing countries increasingly dependent on Chinese capital, enabling Beijing to leverage this dependency relationship to expand its geopolitical influence. According to research by Himmer and Rod (2022), the BRI risks creating unsustainable debt burdens for countries with vulnerable economies in Africa and Asia. Specifically, Djibouti has debts to China amounting to \$1.4 billion (equivalent to approximately 45% of the country's GDP), Kenya (\$8 billion), Pakistan (\$68.91 billion), Laos (approximately \$6 billion), Maldives (\$1.37 billion, accounting for about 40% of public debt), and Sri Lanka (\$8.8 billion). Countries located along the BRI corridors face significant challenges in managing these debts, especially in the context of the US and Western allies continuously warning about China's "debt trap strategy" and recommending that BRI-participating countries carefully consider potential consequences. Notably, credit risk is significantly increasing, with debt to China exceeding 15% of GDP in many low and middle-income countries globally (Horn et al., 2021).

Currently, according to the latest research data, 23 countries are in a state of "dangerous debt" due to participation in infrastructure development projects under the BRI (Liu, 2023). Many infrastructure projects implemented by China in these countries have revealed serious limitations, particularly a lack of transparency in financial management



and a tendency to use suboptimal technology. Consequently, recipient countries not only bear the debt burden to China but also face the risk of partial infringement on national sovereignty. A prominent characteristic of China's lending policy is the absence of strict conditions imposed on recipient countries; in many cases, even disregarding environmental and social impact assessments or economic efficiency evaluations of funded projects. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) (2023) has issued warnings about significant ecological impacts, indicating that development corridors planned under the BRI will overlap with the habitats of 265 endangered species, including the saiga antelope, tigers, and giant pandas. WWF (2023) research has also identified that these routes encroach upon 1,739 protected important bird areas or key biodiversity areas, along with 46 global biodiversity hotspots. Despite the potential negative impacts on the ecosystems of BRI-participating countries, China's policies primarily focus on securing favorable financial terms, including: commercial interest rate commitments, debt repayment mechanisms using natural resources, requirements for controlling equity stakes in local enterprises, or guaranteed preferential access to recipient countries' domestic markets for Chinese exports (Liu, 2023).

According to Brobbey's analysis (2018), there are four main structural causes leading to the increasing debt situation of BRI-participating countries:

- (i) Lack of comprehensive assessment of debt repayment capacity: Many BRI projects are implemented without thorough evaluations of the financial capacity and long-term debt servicing ability of recipient countries. This issue is particularly serious for developing economies with weak financial foundations, often leading to unsustainable debt-to-GDP ratios.
- (ii) Lack of transparency and competition in the bidding process: Many BRI contracts are signed without following open, transparent, and competitive bidding processes between contractors, facilitating cost inflation and increasing the risk of budget losses.
- (iii) Project costs often far exceed initial estimates: Due to lack of experience in managing and implementing large-scale infrastructure projects, actual costs are often significantly higher than initial budgets, forcing countries to borrow more to complete projects.
- (iv) Many BRI projects face significant environmental and social risks, causing opposition from local communities due to negative impacts on living environments and issues related to resettlement, resulting in implementation delays and increasing total project costs.

To illustrate specifically, the Kaliwa Dam Project in the Philippines with a total investment of \$211 million USD has encountered strong opposition from many stakeholders. This project plans to construct a 60-meter high concrete dam and a 25-kilometer water tunnel in the border area between Rizal and Quezon provinces, causing serious environmental and social risks. The dam construction not only threatens the natural ecosystem and biodiversity in the area but also puts the Dumagats and Remontados ethnic communities at risk of losing ancestral lands (Chavez, 2024). Notably, the Philippine administration under President Duterte was accused of using fraudulent and coercive measures to force indigenous communities to sign "Free, Prior, and Informed Consent" (FPIC) agreements. The most serious case was recorded in May 2016, when village chief Alan Buenodicio died after allegedly being forced by military personnel to drink alcohol every morning for



refusing to surrender community land rights. Additionally, other projects such as the Chico River Pump Irrigation project (\$88 million USD) and the Sangley Point International Airport project (\$10.2 billion USD) in the Philippines also faced strong opposition from local communities and government members (Bharti & Kumari, 2024).

Similarly, the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project in Malaysia has faced serious criticism regarding environmental and social risks. This project was suspended after the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) discovered abnormally inflated contract values and approximately \$700 million had been diverted to pay debts related to the 1MDB national development fund. Prime Minister Mahathir decided to cancel the project, partly due to the unstable financial condition of Malaysia's economy and unfavorable terms in the BRI contract. Additionally, the project posed potential negative environmental impacts due to the large land area required for the railway. As a result, this project had to be renegotiated, reducing the total cost from \$19.9 billion to \$10.7 billion in April 2019 (Bharti & Kumari, 2024).

In general, structural weaknesses in project governance, incomplete risk assessments, and lack of transparency in BRI projects have led to increasingly heavy debt burdens for many participating countries, posing serious challenges to long-term financial sustainability.

Third, Chinese enterprises participating in the BRI face significant risks in cross-border investment activities. Although the BRI is a large-scale international cooperation initiative, its development and governance mechanisms are primarily unilaterally designed and operated by China. The BRI currently faces stringent scrutiny from Western economies, particularly the US and the European Union, entities that view the BRI as an instrument for expanding China's geopolitical influence. Consequently, Chinese enterprises operating in BRI-participating countries often face unpredictable challenges, while errors and risks in project implementation are closely monitored by international oversight bodies and Western media and publicized globally. Factors such as cultural disparities, differences in legal frameworks, political volatility, and ecological-environmental conditions can create significant barriers to the economic interests of Chinese enterprises (Weng et al., 2021). Additionally, non-traditional security threats, especially terrorist activities in African and Central Asian regions, further exacerbate these challenges. The consequences of these risks are evidenced by the suspension or cancellation of numerous Chinese investment projects across various countries. Specifically, Malaysia canceled projects worth \$11.58 billion USD between 2013-2021, while similar concerns led to the cancellation of projects valued at over \$1 billion USD in Bolivia and nearly \$1.5 billion USD in Kazakhstan (Bharti & Kumari, 2024). The \$2.7 billion USD Coca Codo Sinclair hydroelectric project in Ecuador, with serious structural quality issues, exemplifies the investment security challenges that Chinese enterprises face (Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, 2023).

Empirical studies, such as the report by AidData (2021), have published alarming figures: 35% of BRI projects face allegations of corruption, labor rights violations, negative environmental impacts, and opposition from local communities. *"BRI projects are predicted to increase global warming by 3 degrees Celsius which could force over 100 million people in Asia into extreme poverty"* (Felsen, 2024). Besides, many BRI-participating countries are facing financial risks due to investments from China, with 42



low and middle-income countries currently having debt to China exceeding 10% of annual GDP (Aidata, 2021). Notably, researchers have identified \$385 billion in loans from China not recorded in official statistics (Aidata, 2021). This figure equals nearly 50% of the total value of loans that China provides for transnational infrastructure projects being concealed (Aidata, 2021). Uzbekistan continues to increase its debt to Beijing, while Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are among countries with particularly high hidden debts, creating financial pressure on Chinese enterprises (Aidata, 2021). Therefore, the BRI, under the strategic direction of President Xi Jinping, is implemented by Chinese enterprises according to state policy orientation. However, in the context of volatile global market conditions, influenced by both partner countries and China's domestic policies, these enterprises increasingly encounter obstacles in implementing international projects within the BRI framework, risking insolvency and bankruptcy.

Fourth, a significant structural challenge facing the BRI is the risk of systemic financial instability. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019 created a serious multidimensional shock to the BRI's integration within the global economic architecture, particularly affecting low and middle-income developing countries (Demiryol, 2022). These countries faced project implementation stagnation and severe deterioration in the financial viability of flagship projects, while still having to maintain debt payment obligations to China. Furthermore, the Russia-Ukraine conflict disrupted strategic supply chains, leading to food security instability and volatility in food and energy prices, with Africa being the most affected region due to serious dependence on food supplies from Russia and Ukraine (Hassen & Bilali, 2024). This adds to the financial burden on BRI participating countries in regions already repaying BRI loans to China.

Simultaneously, cases of systemic corruption and bribery during negotiations of bilateral loan agreements with China have undermined the political-social stability of many recipient countries, as evidenced through the multi-layered crisis in Sri Lanka (Attanayake, 2023). Additionally, many BRI-funded infrastructures have begun revealing technical deficiencies and serious premature deterioration, with the \$2.7 billion USD Coca Codo Sinclair hydroelectric project in Ecuador being a prime example (Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, 2023). Thousands of structural cracks have appeared in the plant built by Chinese companies. Considering this project's strategic importance to Ecuador's national energy security, investing in remedying these technical deficiencies risks pushing this South American nation into an even more serious public debt crisis. These factors continuously challenge the sustainability and strategic resilience of the BRI.

Increasing questions about the BRI's geo-strategic effectiveness continue to exist, exemplified by Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's official announcement of withdrawal from the BRI initiative on December 9, 2023, before the official cooperation agreement expired in March 2024. Despite numerous hypotheses suggesting the US implemented diplomatic measures to influence Rome's decision, Italy's withdrawal—as the only G7 member participating in the BRI—has created a significant negative impact on the BRI's international image and legitimacy. Moreover, BRI projects have been criticized for being prone to corruption while severely lacking economic sustainability, regulatory transparency, and good governance. This has led to competing initiatives, such as the EU's Global Gateway and the US' Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative, aimed at providing alternatives to the BRI. Additionally, direct geo-strategic competition models



between the BRI and counterbalancing initiatives such as the FOIP and the QUAD have posed multidimensional challenges to the BRI's development trajectory, as counterbalancing powers increase strategic and economic pressure on BRI participating countries, forcing them to reconsider or withdraw from strategic projects within the BRI framework.

In general, the BRI's \$1 trillion USD cross-national infrastructure investment program faces an alarming increase in non-recoverable debts: *"As of 2023, just within the past three years, \$78 billion USD of the total value of loans under this initiative has become non-performing or required restructuring through debt relief mechanisms"* (Vietnam Institute of International Finance 2023). This figure is four times higher than the total value of debts China was forced to negotiate restructuring or cancellation during the 2017-2019 period (\$17 billion USD) (Vietnam Institute of International Finance 2023). According to analysis by economists Sebastian Horn, Carmen Reinhart, and Christoph Trebesch cited by the Wall Street Journal, BRI participating countries experiencing financial instability currently hold nearly 60% of the total value of China's foreign loans, a significant increase compared to just 5% in 2010—the pre-BRI period (Whitehouse, 2022). Consequently, the escalation of non-repayable debts has made China the largest bilateral creditor globally, creating a financial-budgetary burden not only for China but also for emerging financial institutions within the BRI framework such as the SRF, NDB, and AIIB—multilateral financial mechanisms led by China or with significant Chinese investment.

Conclusion

A comprehensive analysis reveals that the BRI plays a vital role in China's foreign security strategic architecture over the past decade. Through the BRI, China has implemented core strategic objectives such as: creating the image of a responsible and peace-oriented power, promoting multilateral economic integration, ensuring maritime security along strategic sea routes, and shaping the geo-strategic context in accordance with China's national interests. After a decade of implementation, the BRI has achieved many noteworthy accomplishments. Beijing has focused on expanding its geopolitical sphere of influence and enhancing propaganda surrounding the BRI through a multi-layered "policy connectivity" strategy, strengthening cultural and people-to-people exchanges, establishing competitive alternative financial mechanisms, accelerating cross-border infrastructure investment, and promoting trade-financial cooperation with participating countries. These strategic achievements have contributed significantly to elevating China's position and international influence within the global governance system.

However, the BRI also faces substantial structural challenges. Increasingly intense geo-strategic competition from major powers, particularly the US and its allies; growing concerns from partner countries about the risks of "debt traps" and strategic dependency; difficulties in the operations of Chinese economic entities in cross-national investment environments; and the potential for the BRI to lose momentum due to geopolitical shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict—all are creating significant pressure on this strategic initiative. Overcoming these structural challenges will be the determining factor for China to successfully realize its foreign



security strategic objectives through the BRI and consolidate its position as a power with global influence.

In the context of increasingly complex and multidimensional geopolitical competition among major powers, the BRI plays a pivotal role in China's strategy to expand its regional and global spheres of influence. However, the strategic effectiveness of the BRI will depend on China's capacity to provide comprehensive and sustainable solutions to the challenges mentioned, while maintaining strategic credibility and support from participating countries. If successful, the BRI will not only help China realize its foreign security strategic objectives but also has the potential to become one of the important strategic foundations for China to establish its position as a global superpower in the 21st century, challenging the Western-led international order and creating a multipolar world order with China's central role.

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A SEMIOTIC DECODING OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE BETWEEN CHINA AND PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

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Abstract

This paper is the first in a series that examines how China engages in high-level political discourse (HLPD) via political speeches, bilateral and multilateral agreements, official documents, and media reports, with Portuguese-speaking countries (PSCs). Political discourse serves as a tool through which states convey policies, diplomacy, ideologies, and national image. For China, under the leadership of President Xi Jinping, there has been an explicit focus on building a robust discourse system to enhance its international communications and project itself as a peaceful, positive global power. In recent years, China has steadily increased its high-level exchange activities with PSCs, prompting this series of studies. The current paper focuses specifically on Portugal. Using official government sources, including websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this study collected 32 textual samples of HLPD from high-level political communication events (HLPCEs) that took place between March 2013 and October 2022, during President Xi's first two terms in office. These events involved Xi Jinping, former Head of Government Li Keqiang, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi. The innovative aspect of this study lies in its use of semiotic analysis to decode the HLPD samples. This analysis concludes that China places significant emphasis on sustainable cooperation, particularly in trade and technology, while fostering people-to-people exchanges and human bonds.

Keywords

Portugal, China, Portuguese-speaking Countries, Political Narrative, Semiotics, Belt and Road Initiative (B&RI), International Relations.

Resumo

Este artigo é o primeiro de uma série que examina a forma como a China se envolve em discursos políticos de alto nível (DPN) através de discursos políticos, acordos bilaterais e multilaterais, documentos oficiais e relatórios dos media, com os países de língua portuguesa (PLP). O discurso político é um instrumento através do qual os Estados transmitem políticas, diplomacia, ideologias e imagem nacional. No caso da China, sob a liderança do Presidente Xi Jinping, tem havido um enfoque explícito na construção de um sistema de discurso robusto para melhorar as suas comunicações internacionais e projetar-se como uma potência global pacífica e positiva. Nos últimos anos, a China tem aumentado de forma constante as suas actividades de intercâmbio de alto nível com os CPS, o que motivou esta série de estudos. O presente documento centra-se especificamente em Portugal. Utilizando fontes oficiais do governo, incluindo sites do Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, este estudo recolheu 32 amostras textuais de HLPD de eventos de comunicação política de alto nível (HLPCEs) que



ocorreram entre março de 2013 e outubro de 2022, durante os dois primeiros mandatos do Presidente Xi. Estes eventos envolveram Xi Jinping, o antigo Chefe de Governo Li Keqiang e o Ministro dos Negócios Estrangeiros Wang Yi. O aspeto inovador deste estudo reside na utilização da análise semiótica para descodificar as amostras do HLPD. Esta análise conclui que a China coloca uma ênfase significativa na cooperação sustentável, particularmente no comércio e na tecnologia, ao mesmo tempo que promove os intercâmbios interpessoais e os laços humanos.

Palavras-chave

Portugal, China, Países de Língua Portuguesa, Narrativa Política, Semiótica, Iniciativa Faixa e Rota (B&RI), Relações Internacionais.

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A SEMIOTIC DECODING OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE BETWEEN CHINA AND PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES¹

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CÁTIA MIRIAM COSTA

1. Introduction

The People's Republic of China and the Portuguese Republic (hereafter China and Portugal, respectively) have had more than 45 years of bilateral relations particularly over areas of trade and investment. In fact, their relations were first conducted via the Portugal-China Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In the last 25 years, there have been three main reasons to support close(r) ties between the two nations: first, it was the milestone retrocession of Macau to the Chinese sovereignty in 1999; second, China's reform and opening-up policy set a good tone for friendly cooperations. "Bringing in" foreign investment and Chinese enterprises "going out" form the rationale for this bilateral relationship. President Xi has continually emphasized this open approach to the Belt and Road Initiative (hereafter B&RI)—and Portugal signed a B&RI Memorandum (MoU) in 2018; third, against the backdrop of globalization, Portugal has been afforded prominence in China's geo-economic strategy towards the European Union (EU), as Portugal provides fast-track access to important EU market space (Fernandes et al., 2022, p. 68).

At the same time, Portugal is a participant of the B&RI, through which it seeks more cooperation opportunities. In November 2017, Portugal became the first EU country to establish a blue partnership with China. The two countries have jointly planned concrete cooperation and set up working groups, such as operating marine academic exchanges and establishing cooperative laboratories and shared centers for marine science. Likewise, China participates in constructing the Atlantic Joint Research Centre. These activities are making "China-Portugal Blue Partnership" a sort of branding to promote their relationship as a reference to all PSCs².

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² Portuguese-Speaking Countries



An examination of the discourse between China and Portugal will unveil insights into how the two interact politically. China has evolved into an important economic partner of Portugal (Xinhuanet, 2018). Consequently, on both sides, discussions mainly concern trade, investment, culture and economic cooperation, and that is reflected in China's high-level political discourse (hereafter HLPD). Given Portugal's relatively small market and desire for foreign investment, it is expected to continue to place a high political emphasis on strengthening economic ties with China. Simultaneously, bilateral political discussions may encompass matters such as EU-China relations, and these discussions may in turn lead to exploration of topics related to trade agreements such as the B&RI, intellectual property rights, and environmental sustainability.

After a brief introduction of Sino-Portuguese relationship, the authors put forward a foundation review of existing theories, which serves as a roadmap for developing methodological design. After this theoretical framework, we present a methodology for interpreting HLPD, including semiotics of textual analysis, followed by explaining what the Chinese HLPD³ is building, with the consideration of two-state interaction. Finally, we conclude, drawing on China and Portugal's narrative cooperative preferences, the future development tendency.

2. Literature Review

The conceptual core of this research is to understand how the Chinese string together various discourses to build political narratives. The particular discourses we select to examine in this study are high-level political speeches.

Discourse transcends conversations: a discourse is a sequence of statements and other instruments that forge what is known as a "discourse world" or "discourse ontology". Discourers meticulously use words and language to build a narrative space, where ideas, information and other intended meanings are arranged to craft a specific version of reality, to be decoded by the audience (i.e., the receiver) (Chilton, 2004). Political discourses, in particular, hold great potential to influence if they are able to structure, even manipulate information, events and actions to craft stories—i.e., about who did what, to whom, when, where, and for what purpose; the characters and elements in the stories are the discourse referents, each playing a specific role based on its interrelations with others. Political discourses form the basis for these stories—narratives—to project a version of reality that suits a particular political agenda. In other words, using different discourses to form a storyline can become a platform for envisioning and launching political narratives (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). This very fact that discourse can be a formidable rhetorical tool to mold, steer and even ferment public beliefs and perceptions on society as well as the world is what political discourses take advantage of to turn intangible notions into reasoning and justifications for political actions (Chilton, 2004; Tannen et al., 2015). Such discourses can significantly influence public behaviors and

³ High-Level Political Discourse



decision-making regarding such matter as societal structures, national identity, security, and governance.

Figure 1. The Formation of Political Narratives

Types of Political Discourses ▶	Political Narrative ▶		Audiences ▶ Perceptions	
Congratulatory messages Political speeches Meetings Editorials (newspapers and magazines) Interviews (...)	Storyline Discourse referents "Good stories" Ideologies Power structures	Intended to foster positive public perspectives	Simplicity Appealing Positive Seeking retribution, Adherence and support	General Public Decision-makers Media Outlets
Source: Authors				

Narratives on the other hand are assemblages of discourses that are cherry-picked and sequenced into stories that appear coherent, logical and even convincing (Livholts and Tamboukou, 2015). As such, language and rhetoric are part and parcel of narratives, facilitating narratives' weaving together of events, characters, and settings to offer glimpses into both the personal and collective human layers beyond mere facts. Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) and Riessman (2008) underline the formidable capacity of narratives as their "ability to select, organize, and emphasize various discourse elements, thereby influencing the audience's interpretation".

Political narratives are logical sequences of political discourses within a certain political context, and typically have a well-defined structure (e.g., a chronology). Such narratives, motivated by political intentions, utilize contexts, characters, and plots to induce immediate, simple individual perceptions and stances. Political narratives that are particularly appealing and persuasive have a logical facade and the ability to transform political matters into comprehensible and emotionally compelling tales. Figure 2 illustrates how discourses and narratives intertwine in a political framework.

To understand the *narrative ability* (what politicians intend to communicate), *political reality* (the actual events), and their complex interplay that pertain to a political narrative requires narrative analysis (Shenhav, 2006, p. 247). For example, using B&RI-related narratives as a basis, Costa (2020, p. 27) suggests that narrative analysis is "critical because every political or social fact needs a story. A good story captures the reader or listener and maintains his or her curiosity to know more or even to participate. Consequently, a narrative is essential to have a process of communication and to induce reactions towards the narrated fact or story."

While narrative analysis focuses on storytelling, discourse analysis examines the use of language. Moreover, discourse analysis can be conducted through a semiotic lens to also study the signs and symbols embedded in the text to unveil their intricate meanings. Combining discourse analysis with semiotics can be particularly powerful for dissecting

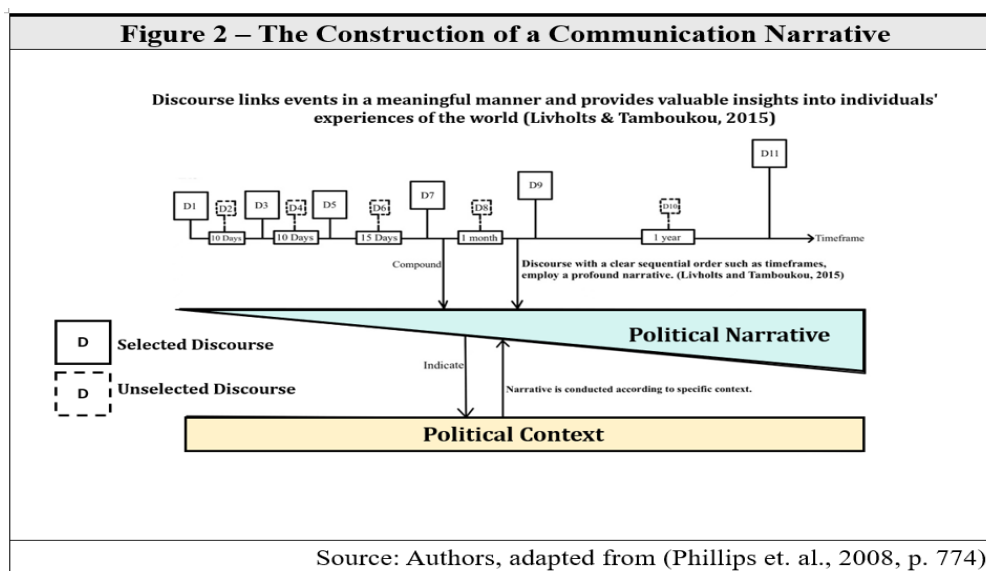


political narratives, as it examines the strategic use of symbols in crafting messages. These messages offer a deeper understanding on how narratives are constructed, conveyed, and are meant to be interpreted. In other words, they offer insights into the nature of the political communication, illuminating how it aims to influence public opinion and the political landscape.

For instance, Sengul's (2019) study on Australian right-wing populism showcases how linguistic choices and symbolic imagery are strategically woven to construct compelling narratives around themes like "national identity", "otherness", and "crisis". These narratives significantly impact public sentiment by framing national identity against perceived threats, thereby mobilizing support and directing political discourse. Similarly, using semiotics, El-Nawawy and Elmasry analyze the "strongman" archetype in leadership (2016) to expose the complex relationship between visual and textual symbols. In China's high-level political communications, we notice the repeated use of symbolic words such as "prosperity", "harmony", "common destiny", "(consultative) democracy" to bring a Confucian and patriarchal aspect into the political discourse. These symbolic words tap into social norms and values to elevate the emitters' appeal and reinforce their political legitimacy. By adopting a semiotic perspective, we can unveil the layered meanings within the political communications, uncovering the ideologies, power structures, and cultural schemas that drive the political narratives into actions.

In essence, semiotic discourse analysis allows for a nuanced examination of how political entities leverage language and symbols to construct meaning and narratives, establish authority, and influence societies. Through such scholarly inquiry, the multifaceted nature of political rhetoric and its impact on shaping political landscapes and public consciousness is more thoroughly understood. As asserted by Costa (2020, pp. 27–28):

Through the merge of spaces, time and channels, political discourses became a product to be received by peers and by the public sphere in general. Media and political communication share attention and develop different channels of communication, which are mingled. The globalization of the communicational flows made of international communication a much attractive way to design international relations. Discourse became a crucial factor for the international narrative of the countries.





Semiotic discourse analysis has previously been used to study the rhetoric of such political figures as former U.S. President Reagan (Lewis 1987), former Israeli Prime Minister Sharon (Shenhav 2005), Russian President Putin (Bacon 2012), and Indonesian President Widodo (Surdiasis & Eriyanto 2018). However, despite extensive research at the global level, political discourses and narratives in China remain understudied. It is therefore the intention of this paper to fill this gap and shed light on Chinese political communications. This research employs a qualitative analysis of Chinese political discourse vis-a-vis the Portuguese Republic. Specifically, we select samples of *political speeches*—which are public statements of political intentions toward a target audience, and are a type of political discourse that can become integral to the formation of political narratives—from specific events and arranged them chronologically. This sequence of speech samples illustrates a comprehensive narrative within the consideration of a broader political context.

2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach that examines how language reflects, reinforces, or challenges power dynamics and social inequalities. Emerging in the late 1980s, CDA was spearheaded by scholars such as Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, and Teun van Dijk (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). This approach combines linguistic theory with social theory to analyze discourse as a form of social practice (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). CDA focuses on how discourse shapes and is shaped by social structures, power relations, and ideologies (Fairclough, 1995). It aims to uncover hidden meanings and power asymmetries in texts and conversations, revealing how language use can perpetuate or resist social hierarchies (Van Dijk, 1993). For instance, CDA has been used to analyze media reports, political speeches, and educational materials to identify instances of manipulation, discrimination, and exploitation (Wodak, 1997).

One of the key principles of CDA is that discourse is both socially constitutive and socially conditioned (Fairclough, 1992). This means that while discourse shapes social realities, it is also influenced by existing social structures and power relations. CDA researchers often employ a variety of methods, including textual analysis, ethnography, and critical linguistics, to examine how discourse operates in different contexts (Van Leeuwen, 2008). CDA is particularly concerned with making power relations visible and challenging dominant ideologies (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). By analyzing how language functions in various domains, such as politics, media, and education, CDA provides insights into how discourse can be used to maintain or challenge social inequalities and political hierarchy (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000).

When addressing the relationship between two states, CDA can be helpful by showing us if one of the parties was more active in setting the agenda process or if one of the states takes advantage of the weaknesses of the negotiation partner. Simultaneously, we can verify if the two parties' messages were clear and understood the same way.



3. Methodology

The study is divided into three parts: (1) first, data collection (sampling) within a timeframe, and transformation of raw materials into line codes (encoding); (2) second, HLPD analysis—using comparison to identify commanding themes under the ground theory methodological guidance; (3) third, the reason for unveiling the rationale of the high-level political narrative (HLPN), assembling all the HLPD codes (Table 1). In addition, this methodology allows for a comprehensive analysis of the bilateral communication events. By semiotically decoding the HLPD, the study highlights stories and identifies cooperative prospects between China and Portugal, contributing to decoding China and Portugal's cooperation objectives and their future development perspectives.

Step 1 Collecting and organizing sources of HLPN relating to High-Level Political Communicative Events (HLPCEs)

In this section, we explain the model that we use to analyze China's political narratives towards Portugal (Table 1).

Step 1A: We define the period of research as from March 2013 to October 2022, which aligns with the Chinese HoS's⁴ three terms in office (see Figure 3). This timeframe is selected for two reasons: first, during this period, China and Portugal established a blue partnership (2017) and strengthened their 2005 comprehensive partnership; second, during this period under the leadership of President Xi, China became a global power, and it would be interesting to understand how China has been regarded by the PSCs.

Figure 3. The Chinese HoS's Terms in Office		
First term	Second term	Third term
From March 2013 to March 2018	From April 2018 to October 2022	From November 2022 to November 2026
Source: Authors		

Step 1B: We sampled only HLPCEs that involved three key Chinese figures — the HoS, President Xi Jinping; the Head of Government, former Prime Minister Li Keqiang; and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi — as they epitomize the apex of Chinese governance. In addition, we used political relevance as a criterion for selecting the discourse samples. The resulting dataset comprises samples from 32 HLPCEs which included, for example, talks held between Xi and President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa (Portugal) in April 2019, a congratulatory message that Li sent to Portuguese Prime Minister António Costa on his re-election in March 2022, and discussions held between Wang and Portuguese Minister

⁴ Head of State.



of Foreign Affairs João Gomes Cravinho in September 2022, showing a diverse array of high-level diplomatic interactions.

Step 1C: To gather records of bilateral engagements, we examined official Chinese websites in detail, focusing on the English version of their content. These websites include those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Xinhuanet. We classified the HLPCEs into three distinct types: (1) speeches and messages; (2) meetings; and (3) newspaper articles (NA). The use of different official documents offers us a tool to analyze and interpret the information retrieved from official channels, ensuring a comprehensive and structured investigation into the dynamics of bilateral engagements.

Step 2 HLPD analysis of each HLPCE5 — Employing NVivo 14 for textual analysis, and transforming content of HLPCEs into HLPD textual codes (Table 1)

Step 2A: The coding process is facilitated by NVivo 14 (qualitative textual analysis software). With features including coding, thematic analysis, and visualization tools, NVivo 14 allows users to import large volumes of text data (e.g., documents, interviews, surveys, etc.) to be analyzed in depth.

Upon importing the text samples into NVivo 14, we created nodes to organize the data. In NVivo, nodes are containers that hold references to specific themes or categories identified during the research, while codes refer to the process of labeling parts of the text with these themes or categories. In this way, coding is the act of tagging or marking the data, whereas nodes serve as the organizational structure that stores all the coded references related to a particular theme. To organize the data according to the study periods, nodes were created for each period (e.g., Period 1: March 2013 –March 2018” and “Period 2: April 2018 – October 2022.”). These nodes helped to structure the data temporally, allowing us to analyze changes in political discourse over time. Within these broader period nodes, sub-nodes (or child themes) were created based on specific themes that emerged from the data. For example, a parent node labeled “Development” might have child nodes like “Sustainable Development” or “Practical Development” to capture more specific aspects of the theme. After coding the text samples, we queried the coded text to identify the most frequently appearing words and patterns, which helped reveal the underlying main themes. This parent-and-child node hierarchy lends more granularity and depth to the analysis, ensuring that the results are nuanced and provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate themes embedded within the political narratives under examination.

Step 2B: Sentiments, which are the attitude or tone that coats each reference, are a pivotal component of the NVivo 14 analytical framework. This sentiment analysis involves categorizing the nature of the references related to each theme as either positive, negative, or neutral. Attributing such sentiment labels to the references also adds nuance to understanding the main and child themes, thereby enhancing the overall depth and richness of our interpretation of the political discourse.

Step 2C: The data gathered from steps 2A and 2B forms the basis for matrix coding

⁵ High-Level Political Communication Events.



queries, leading to the creation of charts specific to Period 1 (Table 2) and Period 2 (Table 3) for the discussion section. A comprehensive overview of the entire period is presented in the Conclusion (Table 4), which contains a classification by sentiment of the various themes. The outcome of this analysis informs the subsequent discussion, where the distinctive characteristics characterizing each of the two periods of HLPD are thoroughly examined and expounded upon. This methodological approach enhances the granularity of the study, allowing for a nuanced exploration of the evolving sentiment dynamics within the political discourse.

Step 3 Decoding of HLPN via Semiotics

Step 3A: This is where we combine discourse analysis with semiotics to examine the HLPD samples. Semiotic analysis is applied both to individual texts and to the broader political narratives they form. While semiotic discourse analysis uncovers meanings, symbols, and communicative elements in specific speeches or documents, semiotic narrative analysis reveals how these pieces connect to construct a cohesive political narrative. Using this approach, we can interpret both detailed discourse elements and the overarching high-level political narrative (HLPN) between China and Portugal.

Step 3B: It draws the conclusion by assessing China and Portugal's cooperation, development trends, and challenges. This step also outlines future directions for their relationship, emphasizing how political narrative can shape continued collaboration and growth.

Table 1 – Research Methodological Design (China → PSC: The Case of the Portuguese Republic)				
Text Analysis Themes, patterns, meanings and language structures	→ ↘	High Level Political Discourse Analysis (HLPD) The social and political decoding and relationships of the language: Audiences, keywords, figures of style, adaptation and impact (negative, positive or neutral). "(...) discourse as a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 1).	→ ↗	High Level Political Narrative (HLPN) Identification The assembly the analysis of several discourses and unveil the story they tell all together. Narratives (stories) (...) are discourses with a clear sequential order that connect events in a meaningful way for a definite audience and thus offer insights about the world and/or people's experiences of it. (Hinchman & Hinchman, in Elliott, 2005, p. 5)
Step 1 – Preparation: Data Selection, Collection, Organization and Sources		Step 2 – HLPD Analysis of Each HLPCE		Step 3 – Semiotic Decoding - The HLPN
1A: Setting the study timeline.		2A: Identify the keywords frequency in each HLPCE, to establish the theme correlation with the dominant message of the discourse.	Nvivo 14 Data Analysis Software	3A: (ALL CE TOGETHER) ↓ Apply the semiotic decoding of CE, to unveil the HLPN, as the result of the constructed sense of whole HLPD.
1B: Select all relevant High-Level Political Communication Events (HLPCE) originated in China and politically addressed to the Portuguese Republic: (1) Speeches and Messages (SM); (2) Meeting Transcripts (MT); (3) Newspaper Articles (NA).		2B: Decoding keywords adapted or not and its perceived impact in (1) Positive; (2) Neutral; (3) Negative.		
1C: Identify the HLPCE official sources in English.		2C: Evaluate keywords in the political context.		3B: Identify the China's cooperative preference, future development tendency and challenges may meet during engagement with Portugal.
Source: Authors – version 24.				



4. Discussion and Findings

This section decodes themes from the HLPDs between China and Portugal during the first two terms of Chinese President Xi's tenure (March 2013 to March 2018, and April 2018 to October 2022). Significant shifts in crucial themes relating to the three perspectives applied above can be observed (Tables 2 and 3).

(1) Between March 2013 and March 2018

In this period, the HLPDs between China and Portugal concentrated on five central themes (see Table 2): **cooperation**, **relations**, **development**, **exchanges**, and **market** (these were the five most frequently appearing codes), each offering a distinct perspective on the evolving dynamics between the two nations.

Cooperation emerges as a thematic linchpin that not only lends an organizing principle to the collaborative efforts between China and Portugal, but also accentuates the intrinsically multifaceted nature of their bilateral ties. There is a particularly noteworthy emphasis on *practical cooperation*, which comprises a diverse array of initiatives to foster economic and strategic collaborations. However, while references to the main theme of cooperation and its child themes have predominantly positive sentiments which highlight the constructive nature that is part and parcel of collaborations, most of these references also carry a discernible neutrality stemming from cautiousness and pragmatism. (There is one negative reference, which underscores the complexity inherent in navigating cooperative endeavors.)

The frequent mention of "practical cooperation" not only spotlights the diversity in initiatives but also reflects the pragmatism in their approach toward economic and strategic collaboration. One source, for example, notes Chinese President Xi as saying:

[I h]ope that both sides take this as an opportunity to deepen practical cooperation in such areas as economy and trade, technology, investment, agriculture and animal husbandry, tourism and maritime affairs and to promote the [sic] China-Portugal relations to a new level (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2014).

Under the theme of *relations*, China-Portugal ties engenders more pronounced positivity in sentiments. This positivity does not stem from recognizing the inherently constructive nature of cooperation, but rather results from diplomatic achievements and optimism in the trajectory of the two countries' relationship. Moreover, there is a notable absence of negative references associated with relations, which reinforces the generally optimistic tone. However, there is also a substantial number of neutral references to suggest a certain cautiousness in optimism toward the peace and wellness of the ever-evolving political environment between the two nations. For instance, in 2016, as then Chinese Head of Government Li said, China and Portugal's bilateral relations would always maintain stability and health, and place emphasis on positive diplomatic achievements (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2016c).



On the other hand, the theme of *development* emerges as a nexus of common development and sustainable progress. References to *development* are predominantly—but not overtly—positive (there are no negative references) and underscore a shared commitment to economic, social, and political progress. A case in point is the recurrent child theme, *common development*. It is under this theme that Forum Macao has, since being established in 2013, played an irreplaceable role in boosting economic and trade cooperation, facilitating cultural exchanges, as well as promoting development in both China (including the Macao SAR) and the PSCs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2016a).

Narratives in the realm of *exchanges* unravel a multifaceted interaction spanning the cultural, political, and personnel dimensions. Here, exchanges between China and Portugal have induced some positive sentiments to underline the richness and depth of these interactions, but a considerably larger number of neutral references (though no negative references) can be construed as only a generally optimistic tone, highlighting a nuanced assessment of the opportunities and challenges embedded in such exchanges. For instance, an emphasis on cultural exchanges signals a positive tone, as China intensifies cultural exchanges with Portugal from high-level to personal (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2016b).

Market is a main theme that relates exclusively to economics, and highlights potential areas of collaboration and market openness between China and Portugal. The positive sentiments here may signify a presence or even abundance of economic opportunities, but the apparent neutral and negative references here also shows cautiousness in both approach and outlook pertaining to economic collaborations, marking a departure from the predominantly positive tone in *cooperation* and *exchanges*. This cautiousness may be attributed to the complexities associated with market-related endeavors. For example, there is a focus on *third-party market cooperation*—e.g., in 2016, then Chinese Head of Government Li called on both China and Portugal to “develop third-party markets and promote cooperation in technology jointly” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2016a)—which underscores a circumspect optimism toward economic collaborations.

Overall, unveiled in Table 2 is a dynamic tapestry of China-Portugal relations characterized by cooperation, diplomatic relations, developmental aspirations, multifaceted exchanges, and economic considerations. While general positivity threads through *cooperation*, *relations*, and *exchanges*, the sentiments and reception toward each theme is more nuanced. The fact that *relations* and *development* have no negative references suggests optimism in outlook, while the evident caution in *market* points to a more measured approach toward economic collaborations. Understanding these nuances contributes to a comprehensive view of the complex diplomatic landscape between China and Portugal expressed through the political narratives during this period.

**Table 2.** Analysis on Sino-Portuguese HLPN from March 2013 to March 2018

Parent theme	Five most frequently mentioned child themes	Total number of references (among 32 events)	Sentiment		
			P o s i t i v e	N e g a t i v e	N e u t r a l
Cooperation	practical cooperation, third-party market cooperation, investment cooperation, multilateral cooperation, commercial cooperation	45	8	1	36
Relations	bilateral relations, China-Portugal relations, EU-China relations, Portugal relations, political relations	25	5	0	20
Development	common development, sustainable development, development strategies, development fund, development achievements	23	13	0	10
Exchanges	cultural exchanges, high-level exchanges, Portugal-China exchanges, political exchanges, personnel exchanges	14	4	0	10
Market	third-party market cooperation, mutual market openness, financial market, European market, market potential	10	4	1	5

Source: Authors

(2) From April 2018 to October 2022

From April 2018 to October 2022, high-level China-Portugal relations unfolded through a number of themes, each adding nuance to the diplomatic discourse: *cooperation*, *relations*, *development*, *exchanges*, which have also been featured in the previous period, as well as *partnership*, *trade*, and *trust*.

Of these themes, *cooperation* takes precedence as it amasses a notable number of references to reflect an intensification of commitment between the two nations. The five most prominent child themes—*practical cooperation*, *third-party market cooperation*, *bilateral cooperation*, *maritime cooperation*, and *economic cooperation*—exemplify the multifaceted nature of the collaborative efforts between China and Portugal, while the predominantly positive sentiments associated with these themes acknowledge not only the beneficial outcomes that such collaborations have already achieved but also the strategic cooperations that the two nations can look forward to. For example, as Chinese President Xi stated, China and Portugal should “lead the way in growing the blue economy



by promoting maritime cooperation” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 2018a).

As in the previous period, *relations*, which encompasses China-Portugal, China-EU, and international relations, remains a pivotal theme of the political narrative in the second period. Sustained diplomatic engagement is evident from the predominantly positive sentiments that underscore achievements in this regard, while the minimal number of negative references corroborates the notion that the overall outlook is optimistic. Specific attention on China-EU relations—e.g., in 2019, Chinese President Xi said: “It is believed that the Portuguese side will also continue to play an active role in maintaining the right direction of China-Europe relations” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 2019a)—further contextualizes and reveals a particular layer of nuance in the geopolitical dynamics as well as the broader diplomatic landscape.

Development continues to be a theme of focus as it embodies both sides’ aspirations for mutual growth, and its five main child themes, *development strategies*, *common development*, *ocean development*, *long-term development*, and *global development*, underscore a commitment to sustainable progress. However, while positive references outnumber negative ones, the fact that the latter is present, coupled with a significant number of neutral references suggests thoughtful cautiousness toward long-term developmental initiatives. In particular, references to *global development*—for example, in 2021, Chinese HoS Xi said, “China has always worked to safeguard world peace, contribute to global development, and preserve international order” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 2021)—show the visionary nature of *development*-themed narratives.

In terms of exchanges, the political narrative unfolds along high-level exchanges, friendly exchanges, cultural exchanges, bilateral exchanges, and personnel exchanges (these were the top five child themes)—a multifaceted spectrum that shows the richness and depth of the interactions between China and Portugal. Moreover, these interactions, especially the cultural ones, are characterizable by positive sentiments. This (and the absence of negative references) is in line with the overall positive outlook in bilateral interactions, which is evident via references such as Chinese HoS Xi’s expectations of the two countries “to expand bilateral exchanges and cooperation in the fields of economy, trade and culture”, and of Portugal to continue to support the B&RI and be a well-positioned hub of the initiative in Europe (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 2018a).

A partnership-based narrative—encompassing comprehensive strategic partnership, blue partnership, future-oriented partnership, and China-EU partnership—emerged in this period to show a diversification and evolvement of collaborations between China and Portugal. For example, in 2018, Chinese President Xi met with Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa and Prime Minister Antonio Costa. Together they reviewed both sides’ experience of developing bilateral relations. They also “drew blueprints for future cooperation, and agreed to intensify high-level exchanges, deepen political



mutual trust, improve the level of cooperation, consolidate traditional friendship, and enrich the connotation of comprehensive strategic partnership” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 2018b). Such is the positive tone that overlays the theme of partnership, particularly references to strategic partnership.

Economic dimensions come to the forefront through the theme of *trade*, which encompasses *free trade, two-way trade, multilateral trade, key trading partner, and international trade*. With 24 references, this theme signifies a concerted effort to strengthen economic ties. Positive sentiments highlighting economic opportunities are balanced by a few negative and a number of neutral references, reflecting cautiousness toward both opportunities and challenges in trade. This tone is evident in, for example, then Head of Government Li’s comment in 2019:

We are willing to work with European Union (EU) countries, including the Portuguese side, to jointly uphold multilateralism and free trade, strengthen cooperation under the framework of cooperation between China and the EU and between China and Portuguese-speaking countries, and further intensify communication and coordination the United Nations and other multilateral frameworks to jointly safeguard the world peace, stability and development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 2019b).

Finally, *trust* serves as a foundation for diplomatic engagements. With 20 references, the emphasis on *mutual trust* signifies its pivotal role. Positive sentiments underscore the importance of mutual confidence, while the absence of negative references indicates an optimistic expectation. Taking Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang’s words as example:

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Portugal nearly four decades ago, both sides have always enjoyed mutual respect, mutual understanding, mutual trust, and mutual support, as well as respected and accommodated each other’s core interests and major concerns, becoming a model of mutual learning and win-win cooperation between China and European countries as well as between the Eastern and Western civilizations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018c).

This analysis of HLPDs in China-Portugal relations during Period 2 (Table 3) illuminates an intensified commitment and nuanced dynamics. While *cooperation* and *relations* continue to dominate, themes like *development, exchanges, partnership, trade, and trust* reveal a complex and evolving tapestry, and the predominantly positive sentiments underscore an optimistic attitude.

**Table 3.** Period 2 (April 2018 to October 2022) China and Portugal's HLPN Analysis

Themes	Most frequently mentioned child themes	Total number of References (among 32 Events)	Sentiment		
			P o s i t i v e	N e g a t i v e	N e u t r a l
Cooperation	practical cooperation, third-party market cooperation, bilateral cooperation, maritime cooperation, and economic cooperation	92	17	7	68
Relations	bilateral relations, China-Portugal relations, diplomatic relations, China-EU relations, and international relations	60	20	1	39
Development	development strategies, common development, ocean development, long-term development, and global development	38	11	4	23
Exchanges	high-level exchanges, friendly exchanges, cultural exchanges, bilateral exchanges, and personnel exchanges	33	10	0	23
Partnership	comprehensive strategic partnership, blue partnership, future-oriented partnership, and China-EU partnership	24	6	2	16
Trade	free trade, two-way trade, multilateral trade, key trading partner, and international trade	24	11	3	10
Trust	mutual trust	20	9	0	11

Source: Authors

Using the lengths of CDA, we identify a hidden rationale and several messages that shape the political discourse. There is a deliberate hidden message that frames the entire narrative in terms of inclusive and exclusive areas of bilateral interaction. The inclusive narrative highlights the positive benefits associated with development and remains open to further advancements. This narrative promotes cooperation and mutual growth, emphasizing the potential for continued collaboration and progress.

On the other hand, the hidden exclusive narrative signals an unwillingness to expand the high-level political discourse (HLPD) to other areas of diplomatic engagement. This reluctance suggests a desire to maintain the current diplomatic status quo, avoiding



deeper or broader interactions that could lead to significant changes in the existing power dynamics, also corresponding to the permanent dynamics of the international environment. By keeping certain areas of engagement off the table, the exclusive narrative aims to preserve established relationships and prevent potential disruptions, furthermore preventing possible disruptions resulting from an unstable agenda setting that could reflect the different economic or political power each State has.

(3) Comparative Discussion

3.1 Economic Cooperation:

In the first period (March 2013 to March 2018), the discourse focused on economics-related themes like *cooperation* and *market*. Strategies for *common development* and exploration of various markets, with a particular emphasis on *third-party market cooperation*, were consistently highlighted. Notably, Portugal's strategic geographic location along the B&RI has rendered it a significant partner for China's global trade and investment endeavors. China, recognizing Portugal as an essential gateway to Europe, endeavors to enhance maritime cooperation, tapping into the nation's historical maritime influence.

In the second period (April 2018 to October 2022), the researchers observed a distinct evolution in the discourse surrounding economic cooperation. Themes like *bilateral cooperation* and *economic cooperation* took center stage, signaling a stronger emphasis on fostering collaboration across various sectors. *Trade* in particular was a significant theme that reflected a broader strategy aimed at global trade partnerships and strong advocacy for free trade. A pivotal moment during this period was the elevation of China and Portugal's collaboration to a comprehensive strategic partnership, underscoring China's recognition of Portugal's growing global importance and its multifaceted role as a valuable ally across trade, culture, and diplomacy.

In the context of trade, data has shown that Portugal consistently maintained a deficit with China from 2013 to 2021 (Eurostat, 2023). This trend, despite the occasional fluctuations, showcases an overall upward trajectory in trade in services between the two nations. The signing of the B&RI MoU in 2018 was a significant turning point for bilateral trade in services, highlighting the instrumental role of the B&RI in enhancing economic ties (Ministry of Commerce People's Republic of China, 2018; Leandro, 2023).

The B&RI emerged as a transformative opportunity, perceived by both China and Portugal, to deepen their commercial cooperation. Leveraging their historical ties, both nations have sought to intensify collaboration across various domains through this initiative (Leandro, 2023), and the B&RI provides an overarching framework for investment, trade, and multi-level cooperation, particularly in major infrastructure projects between them. As the driving force behind the B&RI, China envisions not only infrastructural development but also a strategic move to bolster its global position and achieve a sustainable and prosperous society. This initiative has transcended conventional boundaries, offering mechanisms for global governance on both tangibles and intangibles, thereby reshaping the landscape of international relations (Leandro & Duarte, 2020).



China emphasizes strategically venturing into third-party markets, with Portugal playing an irreplaceable part in amplifying China's influence in this domain. Forum Macao notably emerges as a key platform for collaborations between China and PSCs (the PSCs together constitute approximately 7% of the global territories above sea level, surpassing China's 6.3%, and their excellent locations allow them to be promising partners for China). Such collaborations represent extensive prospects in natural resources and marine industries within the PSCs. Portugal has astutely recognized the potential of Sino-Portuguese economic collaboration since the advent of Forum Macao. In turn, Portugal is perceived not only as an entry point to the European Union but also as a catalyst for triangular cooperation with the PSCs, a symbiotic relationship that promotes economic cooperation and strategic partnerships involving China and the PSCs (Leandro, 2023).

3.2 Bilateral Relations and Diplomacy

In the domain of bilateral relations and diplomacy during the first period, the discussions primarily centered around *relations* and *development*. The discourse underscored the significance of bilateral relations, particularly in the context of the B&RI, which Portugal has officially endorsed. Portugal's proactive engagement demonstrated its willingness to align with China's long-term development vision and foster stronger diplomatic ties. The emphasis on development strategies was indicative of a shared aspiration for sustainable growth and mutual economic prosperity.

In the second period, the discourse broadened to include *diplomatic relations*, *China-EU relations*, and *international relations*. This widening scope indicated China's increasing prominence in global affairs, which aligned with its rise as a major global actor. Notably, *trust* emerged as a significant theme to show that both nations recognize the importance of nurturing stronger ties through promoting transparency and cooperation in various domains.

Noteworthy events marked significant milestones in Sino-Portuguese relations. In 2018, a joint statement was issued to strengthen their comprehensive strategic partnership and formalize their commitment. The signing of a B&RI MoU in the same year further solidified their collaboration. In July 2021, a significant diplomatic exchange took place, as China and Portugal held their first round of strategic dialogue at the foreign minister level. This dialogue aimed to enhance cooperation in several critical fields such as scientific and technological innovation, materials, marine, language, and cultural heritage. Portugal's distinction as the second EU country to establish foreign minister-level strategic dialogue with China underscores the depth of their engagement (Leandro, 2023).

The relationship between China and Portugal has been marked by other milestones, including China's support for Antonio Guterres's candidacy for the United Nations' Secretary-General, first in 2016 and again in 2021 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2016d; Xinhuanet, 2021). These milestones highlight the collaborative and supportive dynamics that characterize their interactions, further reinforcing their relationship.



3.3 Cultural Exchanges and Soft Power

Cultural exchanges and soft power have been a mainstay of the discourse between China and Portugal throughout the two periods of analysis. The discourse initially centered around *exchanges*, which showed the two sides' keen interest in enhancing cultural understanding and exploring potential markets. In particular, cultural exchanges signify the two nations' mutual desire for growth and cooperation.

An essential aspect of these cultural exchanges was personnel exchanges. Over the years, both China and Portugal have taken strategic steps to strengthen educational ties and facilitate academic interactions (Leandro, 2023). For instance, in 2013, China and Portugal signed a protocol aimed at simplifying the mutual recognition of academic diplomas and encouraging Chinese students to study abroad. Subsequently, in 2018, a cooperation memorandum devoted key points to the education sector, indicating their commitment to academic collaborations. Moreover, the establishment of "language campuses" such as Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms contributes to promoting China's cultural transmission in Portugal. These establishments have actively engaged with academic institutions, local schools, and education centers to foster a deeper understanding of the Chinese language and culture to residents (China Daily, 2019; DIG Mandarin, 2023; França, 2021). Exchange of cultural knowledge was further enriched through programs in language and international studies offered in Portuguese academic institutions as well as pilot programs of the Chinese language implemented in public and private secondary schools.

The extensive cultural exchanges and strategic educational initiatives underscore the concerted effort by both China and Portugal to deepen understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures, as well as to strengthen their relationship on multiple fronts. These stand as a testament to the enduring nature of their engagement and the value they place on intercultural conversation and cooperation.

4. Conclusion (highlights and future prospects)

In conclusion, this analysis to decode the political discourse between China and Portugal has elucidated a nuanced narrative. Economic cooperation forms the solid foundation of their engagement, reflecting a strategic alignment of their interests on the global stage. Bilateral relations and diplomacy serve as the conduit for realizing these cooperative goals, emphasizing the importance of direct dialogue and collaboration. Embedded within this discourse is a prominent focus on cultural exchanges and soft power dynamics, reflecting their commitment to mutual understanding and influence, thereby illustrating the multifaceted nature of their evolving relationship.

During the two terms in office of Chinese President Xi, from March 2013 to October 2022, in examining China and Portugal's high-level political discourse through the lens of economic cooperation by NVivo 14 (Table 3), bilateral relations and diplomacy, and cultural exchanges and soft power. The vivid narratives emerge, revealing the nuanced dynamics and aspirations that shape their engagement.

**Table 4.** Analysis on China and Portugal's HLPN from March 2013 to October 2022

Themes	Most frequently mentioned child themes	Total number of References (among 32 HLPCEs)	Sentiment		
			P o s i t i v e	N e g a t i v e	N E U T R A L
Cooperation	practical cooperation, third-party market cooperation, maritime cooperation, multilateral cooperation	137	25	8	104
Relations	bilateral relations, China-Portugal relations, Portugal-China Relations, China-EU relations, cooperative relations	85	25	1	59
Development	development strategies, common development, sustainable development, ocean development, global development	61	24	4	33
Exchanges	cultural exchanges, high-level exchanges, bilateral exchanges, political exchanges, nongovernmental exchanges	47	14	0	33
Partnership	comprehensive strategic partnership, blue partnership, future-oriented partnership, China-EU partnership	30	6	2	22
Trade	free trade, two-way trade, global trade, bilateral trade, multilateral trade	28	14	5	9
Source: Authors					

Economic cooperation stands at the forefront, as indicated by the prominence of the theme *cooperation* in the discourse, mentioned a staggering 137 times. This reveals a strategic orientation towards fostering practical and fruitful collaborations. The examples of practical cooperation, third-party market cooperation, and maritime cooperation highlight the diverse avenues for economic collaboration. These initiatives suggest a concerted effort to leverage each other's strengths in global trade and development. Trade, the sixth most frequently mentioned theme, further underscores their commitment to fostering economic interdependence and facilitating global trade partnerships. It suggests a concerted effort to align their goals, leveraging each other's strengths in trade and development. Notably, the phrase "multilateral cooperation" suggests a broader ambition to extend economic engagements beyond bilateral relations, encompassing a global network of partnerships.



In parallel, the discourse underscores the paramount importance of bilateral relations and diplomacy, mentioned 85 times. The frequent use of phrases such as "bilateral relations," "China-Portugal relations," and "Portugal-China relations" emphasizes the significance of direct communication and cooperation between the two nations. This discourse emphasizes the essential role of diplomatic interactions in forging stronger bonds and facilitating agreements that promote shared interests. Besides, "cooperative relations" reinforces the intent to cultivate a mutually beneficial relationship, where collaboration and understanding take center stage, further underlining the importance of diplomacy in advancing their shared goals. Embedded within this discussion of cooperative relations is the recurring theme of partnership (30 times), specifically within the context of bilateral relations and diplomacy. This highlights the intent to elevate the relationship to a strategic and comprehensive level. The term "comprehensive strategic partnership" underscores Sino-Luso's close and healthy relationship, reflecting a commitment to deep engagement in various domains such as trade, economics, culture, and politics, promoting a multifaceted alliance for mutual growth and prosperity.

Cultural exchanges and soft power also emerge as significant aspects of the discourse, with the theme *exchanges* appearing 47 times. This reflects a pronounced focus on fostering cultural understanding and political dialogue. Phrases like "cultural exchanges," "high-level exchanges," and "political exchanges" signify a conscious effort to promote mutual understanding and cooperation through cultural interaction.

China and Portugal share a dynamic relationship with a strong focus on economic cooperation, a fact that has gained increasing importance as China's global influence continues to expand. The engagement between these nations extends beyond mere economic transactions, encompassing strategic partnerships and collaborative ventures. In recent years, both countries have actively pursued economic agreements and partnerships, aiming to bolster trade and investment ties. China's ambitious B&RI has piqued Portugal's interest due to its strategic geographical position, presenting an opportunity for enhanced trade and connectivity. Portugal, with its well-established port infrastructure, particularly in Lisbon and Sines, emerges as a favorable partner who is aligned with China's maritime trade objectives (Wise, 2020).

Portugal, as an EU member, views economic engagement with China as advantageous for capitalizing on China's growing consumer market and investment potential. The two nations have explored cooperative ventures in sectors such as renewable energy, technology, and finance, seeking avenues for mutual growth. Portugal's stability and economic progress position it as an attractive investment destination for China that is aligned with China's strategy of diversifying its global economic engagements (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Barbados, 2021).

However, the economic collaboration prompts considerations regarding potential geopolitical influence and economic interdependence. Portugal, in line with other EU nations, carefully manages this aspect to ensure that economic partnerships with China adhere to EU regulations and do not compromise national and regional interests. Striking a balance between economic benefits and the EU's concerns remains a challenge facing China-Portugal relations (Faget, 2019).

In addition, the political discourse is shaped by both inclusive and exclusive narratives.



The inclusive narrative fosters development and openness to new opportunities, while the exclusive narrative seeks to maintain the status quo by limiting the scope of high-level political discourse. This dual approach reflects a strategic balancing act, where the benefits of cooperation are promoted, but the boundaries of engagement are carefully managed to avoid unsettling the existing diplomatic framework.

Looking ahead, it is anticipated that China and Portugal will continue to nurture economic ties while addressing concerns related to fairness, sustainability, and alignment with international norms. Maintaining stability between economic cooperation and preserving national and regional interests will be vital as they navigate the evolving dynamics of their relationship within the intricate global landscape (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2022).

Similarly, the relationship between China and Brazil presents a fascinating study of how HLPD shapes bilateral cooperation, which will be explored in future research.

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A COOPERAÇÃO TÉCNICO-POLICIAL COM OS PAÍSES AFRICANOS LUSÓFONOS

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Resumo

A Cooperação Técnico-Policial (CTP) entre Portugal e os Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa (PALOP) visa fortalecer a capacitação institucional e promover a segurança pública por meio da formação de quadros superiores. Desde 1988 que a Polícia de Segurança Pública (PSP), através do Instituto Superior de Ciências Policiais e Segurança Interna (ISCPSI), tem desempenhado um papel fundamental nesse processo, no qual a língua portuguesa se destaca como um elemento-chave na cooperação, facilitando a transferência de conhecimento e a adoção de boas práticas. Nessa senda, a CTP tem sido formalizada por meio de acordos bilaterais com Angola, Moçambique, Cabo Verde, Guiné-Bissau e São Tomé e Príncipe, resultando na formação de mais de 250 oficiais de polícia dos PALOP. A experiência adquirida no ISCPSP impacta a governança e as estratégias de policiamento nos países africanos lusófonos, consolidando Portugal como um ator relevante na segurança internacional, contribuindo para o fortalecimento das instituições democráticas e para a modernização das forças policiais africanas. Trata-se de uma cooperação que, inequivocamente, reforça a influência estratégica de Portugal no espaço lusófono e promove a estabilidade e o desenvolvimento institucional nos PALOP.

Palavras-chave

Capacitação, Cooperação, Desenvolvimento, ISCPSP, Segurança.

Abstract

Technical-Police Cooperation (TPC) between Portugal and the Portuguese speaking African Countries (PALOP) aims to strengthen institutional capacity and promote public security through the training of senior staff. Since 1988, the Public Security Police (PSP), through the Higher Institute of Police Sciences and Internal Security (ISCPSI), has played a key role in this process, in which the Portuguese language stands out as a key element in cooperation, facilitating the transfer of knowledge and the adoption of good practices. CTP has been formalized through bilateral agreements with Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe, resulting in the training of more than 250 police officers from the PALOP countries. The experience acquired at ISCPSP has an impact on governance



and policing strategies in Portuguese speaking African countries, consolidating Portugal as a relevant player in international security, contributing to the strengthening of democratic institutions and the modernization of African police forces. This cooperation unequivocally strengthens Portugal's strategic influence in the Portuguese speaking world and promotes stability and institutional development in the PALOP countries.

Keywords

Capacity building, Cooperation, Development, ISCPSI, Security.

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A COOPERAÇÃO TÉCNICO-POLICIAL COM OS PAÍSES AFRICANOS LUSÓFONOS

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Introdução

O artigo analisa a Cooperação Técnico-Policial (CTP) entre Portugal e os Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa (PALOP), evidenciando o papel estratégico da capacitação institucional e do intercâmbio de conhecimentos na promoção da segurança pública. A partir de uma perspetiva histórica e cultural, o estudo destaca a importância da língua portuguesa como elemento fundamental para o estabelecimento de laços duradouros e eficazes entre os países, permitindo a transferência de experiências e boas práticas entre as forças policiais.

No centro da análise está a atuação da Polícia de Segurança Pública (PSP) e, em especial, do Instituto Superior de Ciências Policiais e Segurança Interna (ISCPSI), que desde 1988 tem sido o principal polo de formação de quadros superiores dos PALOP. O texto identifica os diversos acordos bilaterais celebrados com Angola, Moçambique, Cabo Verde, Guiné-Bissau e São Tomé e Príncipe, que viabilizaram não só a realização de cursos de formação, mas também o desenvolvimento de iniciativas de assessoria e reestruturação institucional.

O artigo apresenta ainda uma análise quantitativa dos ciclos de formação no ISCPSI, evidenciando a evolução do número de alunos cooperantes, os quais, com o passar dos anos, passaram a integrar posições estratégicas nas respetivas instituições policiais. A formação intensiva, composta por componentes teóricas e práticas, com especial destaque para a realização de estágios e para a elaboração de dissertações de mestrado, são apontadas como fator decisivo na transformação dos paradigmas operacionais dessas polícias, contribuindo para uma mudança de paradigma de atuação, passando de uma polícia tradicionalmente repressiva para um modelo preventivo e orientado sobretudo para o respeito pelos direitos humanos.

Não obstante, o artigo apresenta e discute os desafios enfrentados pelos alunos cooperantes, que, além das dificuldades inerentes à adaptação cultural e ao afastamento dos seus países de origem, carregam a responsabilidade de adaptar e aplicar as metodologias aprendidas ao contexto específico de cada país. Trata-se de um processo analisado sob a ótica daquele que é designado como *Soft Power*, evidenciando como a CTP permite a Portugal consolidar a sua influência e fortalecer as relações diplomáticas e de segurança no espaço lusófono.



Em síntese, o trabalho demonstra que a cooperação formativa desenvolvida pela PSP, através do ISCPSI, no âmbito da segurança, não só contribui para a modernização das instituições policiais dos PALOP, mas também representa um importante instrumento de política externa para Portugal, capaz de promover o desenvolvimento institucional, a estabilidade democrática e a construção de uma comunidade de saberes que se prolonga muito para além das fronteiras portuguesas.

A Cooperação Técnico-Policial com os países africanos lusófonos

Com o objetivo de desenvolver competências em áreas específicas, concretizado através do aumento de conhecimento, “a CTP pode revestir a vertente de formação, assessoria dos quadros locais, e capacitação institucional.” (GUEDES & ELIAS, 2010, p. 149). Nesse sentido, e no que concerne à capacitação institucional, as forças de segurança portuguesas, no âmbito das suas atribuições, há várias décadas que colaboram na concretização de diversas ações de cooperação com os Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa (PALOP). No caso concreto da Polícia de Segurança Pública (PSP), a cooperação existente entre a PSP e os PALOP permite desenvolver e aprofundar o relacionamento através da troca de conhecimento especializado e das melhores práticas, onde a língua comum é inegavelmente assumida como um valor acrescentado dessa cooperação. Sendo Portugal um pequeno doador, é natural e sensato que utilize de forma eficaz os recursos que tem ao seu dispor para adicionar valor e diferenciar-se relativamente a outros doadores, pelo que “qualquer avaliação das vantagens comparativas de Portugal reconhecerá que a língua constitui um instrumento fundamental para a cooperação com países de língua Portuguesa” (IPAD, 2011, p. 7).

Importa ter presente que, de acordo com o Observatório da Língua Portuguesa (OLP)¹, o português é a terceira língua europeia mais falada no mundo, logo após o inglês e o espanhol, o que é demonstrativo da importância e da influência que a língua portuguesa possui a nível mundial. Perante a importância que a língua representa na Cooperação Técnico-Policial (CTP) com os países africanos lusófonos, Susana Durão considera que a lusofonia é o elemento fundador da cooperação policial, que está dinamizada há mais de duas décadas no Instituto Superior de Ciências Policiais e Segurança Interna (ISCPSI), e que tem a língua como justificação de um património comum (DURÃO, 2017).

Os laços históricos e a proximidade que existe entre Portugal e a África lusófona, muito devido ao denominador comum que é a língua, permite ao nosso país ter uma diferenciação objetiva face a outros países da União Europeia (UE).

A existência de uma língua comum é um fator importante para o desenvolvimento, considerando que promove o intercâmbio de informações e a proximidade cultural. Num contexto cooperativo a comunicação entre as partes tem de ser compreensível e clara, sendo que uma comunicação errada ou deficiente pode comprometer os projetos que se pretendem desenvolver. Nesse sentido, a existência de uma língua comum permite que Portugal “tenha uma vantagem comparativa em termos de ensino e formação. Tudo o que o saber acumulado, a experiência e a história nos legou de matrizes comuns em

¹ Informação de 11 de maio de 2019, e disponível em: <https://observalinguaportuguesa.org/o-portugues-e-a-terceira-lingua-europeia-mais-falada-no-mundo/>.



algumas áreas confere a Portugal potencialidades acrescidas nos domínios da governação, serviços e instituições do Estado” (MOREIRA, 2005, p. 125).

Perante a importância que a língua comum possui em torno da cooperação, a Secretaria-Geral do Ministério da Administração Interna considerou de vital importância que o estágio realizado no ISCPSI para Oficiais que desempenham funções de Comando e Direção dos Países da Comunidade de Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP) se desenvolvesse no quadro de uma rede de Escolas de Polícia de Língua Portuguesa (PALMA, A. et al., 2019). Face ao exposto, é possível constatar que a cooperação portuguesa tem a particularidade de se basear em laços culturais e onde a língua, considerada património comum, assume um papel fundamental no crescimento e desenvolvimento dos países, e onde a troca de ideias, de pensamentos e de discursos se manifestam em português.

Tendo a cooperação técnica a capacidade de contribuir para o apoio ao desenvolvimento da capacitação institucional, seja através de atividades formativas, da reorganização da administração pública ou pela implementação de políticas que potenciam o reforço das instituições democráticas, a CTP é entendida como uma forma de cooperação muito específica que permite a existência de intercâmbio de boas práticas. Simultaneamente, trata-se de uma forma de cooperar que promove a troca de informações e ainda se caracteriza na materialização de protocolos de cooperação e formação, os quais consubstanciam as principais diretrizes para a PSP (PSP, 2016). Nesse sentido, e conforme referido por Armando Guedes & Luís Elias, desde 2005 que a CTP se apresenta “como uma componente inovadora da construção da segurança humana de países marcados pelas sequelas de conflitos e pela fragilidade, através da capacitação das respectivas instituições policiais” (GUEDES & ELIAS, 2010, p.142).

Porque analisamos a cooperação existente entre Portugal e os países africanos lusófonos, importa referir que a CTP entre a República de Moçambique e a República Portuguesa teve o seu início no final do século XX, sendo assente no “Acordo de Cooperação em matéria de Segurança Interna”, assinado entre o Ministério do Interior de Moçambique e o Ministério da Administração Interna de Portugal, em 12 de setembro de 1995, e publicado no Decreto n.º 57/97, de 8 de outubro. Com a sua assinatura estava dado o primeiro passo para uma cooperação técnica ao nível da segurança interna. Desde essa data, foram vários os documentos assinados que tiveram como finalidade reforçar a aproximação entre os dois países no âmbito da CTP. Decorrente de uma investigação realizada, Mónica Freitas apurou que a CTP “existente entre Portugal e os PALOP fundamenta-se exclusivamente nos acordos formais de cooperação que são consolidados na área da formação” (FREITAS, 2019, p. 75).

Por sua vez, a CTP com Angola teve o seu início em 1997 através da assinatura do Acordo Especial de Cooperação em Matéria de Segurança Interna, assinado entre o Ministério da Administração Interna de Portugal e o Ministério do Interior de Angola e aprovado pelo Decreto n.º 25/97, de 31 de maio. A sua assinatura originou a participação de alunos angolanos na formação académica policial ministrada em Portugal, no único estabelecimento de ensino superior policial que existe no nosso país, o ISCPSI, apesar dessa cooperação académica se ter iniciado mais cedo.

No que concerne a Cabo Verde, destaca-se a CTP Portugal-Cabo Verde 2007-2009, no qual a capacitação de um conjunto de instituições da administração pública cabo-



verdiana é apresentada como objetivo, sendo de realçar a área policial e em concreto a Polícia Nacional de Cabo Verde (PNCV), “para contribuir para a manutenção dos níveis de segurança que consolidem o Estado e promovam a Boa Governação e a Democracia” (IPAD, 2010, p. 43). Trata-se de um programa de CTP que se encontra integrado no Programa Indicativo de Cooperação (PIC) Portugal-Cabo Verde 2008-2011, que identifica como um dos objetivos a elevação do nível de formação técnico-profissional.

Relativamente à Guiné-Bissau e tendo como base o “Acordo Especial de Cooperação no Domínio da Administração Interna”, celebrado entre os dois países e aprovado pelo Decreto n.º 26/97, de 3 de junho, a CTP procurou desenvolver competências técnicas e operacionais das forças de segurança e também incrementar a assessoria técnica para as áreas organizacionais e funcionais (GUEDES & ELIAS, 2010). Todavia, é através do PIC Portugal-Guiné-Bissau 2008-2011 que a CTP assume maior relevância e onde a sua ligação com a segurança interna é entendida como área prioritária, nomeadamente no reforço do trabalho desenvolvido ao nível da assessoria técnica especializada na vertente policial e na reforma da Instituição Policial.

Por último, mas não menos importante, aborda-se a CTP com São Tomé e Príncipe, iniciada com a assinatura do Acordo de Cooperação Técnica no Domínio Policial, assinado em 1989, e materializada no Decreto n.º 25/90, de 5 de julho, onde ambos os Estados se comprometem a realizar uma cooperação concretizada através de ações de formação dos recursos humanos, com a possibilidade de frequência nas unidades ou estabelecimentos de ensino da polícia.

Apesar de existirem outras forças de segurança portuguesas a promoverem formação aos quadros superiores dos PALOP, a PSP, através do ISCPSI, sendo a única instituição de ensino superior público universitário policial existente em Portugal, apresenta-se como a principal força de segurança portuguesa a cooperar na vertente formativa, tendo entre 1988 e 2024 e unicamente no Curso de Formação de Oficiais de Polícia (CFOP), recebido trezentos e onze alunos oriundos dos PALOP. O detalhe do ensino, a sua longa duração e a conferência de grau académico acabam por promover um impacto superior na formação dos quadros superiores oriundos dos países africanos lusófonos, especialmente quando comparado com as formações ministradas por outros estabelecimentos de ensino policiais ou militares. O mesmo destaque é dado por Guedes & Elias quando referem que “a percursora da cooperação com os PALOP acabou por ser a Escola Superior de Polícia (actual ISCPSI). Na verdade, desde 1988 é ministrada formação a quadros policiais dos PALOP no curso de formação de Oficiais de Polícia (CFOP)...ao abrigo de acordos de cooperação entre Portugal e os Países em referência, sem contabilizar outras ações formativas e técnicas para Oficiais” (2010, pp. 153-154).

A Cooperação PSP-PALOP na formação de quadros superiores

A procura de alcançar um objetivo comum permite que a cooperação seja considerada a principal forma de relacionamento entre os Estados (SILVA, 2011), sendo que a cooperação internacional para o desenvolvimento é usada por Portugal como uma ferramenta diplomática junto das suas antigas colónias africanas (MOREIRA, 2001). No entanto, a execução de uma verdadeira cooperação internacional implica a mobilização e envolvimento de vários atores que recorrem a diversos instrumentos de ajuda (PIGNATELLI, 2016), entre as quais se destaca a CTP existente entre vários Estados, a



qual é desenvolvida de distintas formas, nomeadamente através de ações de formação de quadros superiores. Dessa forma e de acordo com STALLIVIERI (2002), o ensino superior tem a capacidade de ambicionar uma cooperação baseada na solidariedade e na criação de uma cultura de paz e de desenvolvimento equilibrado para as diferentes nações.

Para a concretização dos acordos bilaterais de CTP assinados entre Portugal e os PALOP no âmbito da CTP, muito contribuiu o empenho e a determinação das forças de segurança portuguesas, designadamente o desenvolvido pela PSP, que assumiu um papel preponderante ao estabelecer programas de cooperação com as entidades congéneres dos países africanos lusófonos.

Decorrente de uma pesquisa desenvolvida sobre os alunos cooperantes em formação no ISCPSI e os oficiais de polícia formados em Portugal, concretamente no ISCPSI, Susana Durão & Daniel Lopes concluíram que “a maioria deles desempenha funções de comando em esquadras, onde o equilíbrio entre o exercício dos poderes judiciais e o respeito aos direitos dos cidadãos têm se tornado questões prementes”, sendo “a geração ISCPSI reconhecida como parte de uma elite que é simultaneamente técnica e com reconhecimento burocrático” (DURÃO & LOPES, 2015, p. 133). Considerando que a formação ministrada no ISCPSI possui uma elevada carga horária em unidades curriculares relacionadas com o respeito pelos direitos, liberdades e garantias do cidadão, acredita-se que essa transmissão de conhecimento e de valores acabe por influenciar a postura de quem assume lugares de decisão.

Relativamente à formação de quadros policiais e à cooperação existente entre Portugal e Cabo Verde, também Júlio Melício² considera que a formação policial não deve ser ministrada somente na parte técnica, devendo ajustar-se “aos novos rumos da democratização do Estado que exigia o reforço da vertente de defesa dos direitos e liberdades das pessoas. Neste aspeto é de bom tom dizer que a cooperação com Portugal tem sido exemplar e tem contribuído para que a PN seja a cada dia uma instituição de reconhecidos méritos em resultado da formação de excelência ministrada neste instituto de referência em Portugal” (*cit in* DUARTE, 2021, p.105). O Instituto referido é o ISCPSI.

O Instituto Superior de Ciências Policiais e Segurança Interna

O nascimento do ISCPSI surge num momento em que se torna necessário afastar o controlo político exercido pelas polícias políticas e o cariz militar, separando os poderes militares dos poderes policiais. A sua criação “surge da ideia de uma polícia ao serviço do cidadão e ao serviço da democracia, defensora da democracia” (DURÃO, 2017, p.111) e pela “necessidade de uma nova mentalidade e um novo comportamento nas relações entre a Polícia e a comunidade” (ALVES & VALENTE, 2006, p. 27). Por força da Constituição da República Portuguesa (CRP), as Forças Armadas passam a ter como missão a defesa militar da República Portuguesa, ou seja, assumem a responsabilidade de proteger Portugal das ameaças consideradas externas, e a polícia passa a ter como “função defender a legalidade democrática e garantir a segurança interna e os direitos

² Superintendente da Polícia Nacional de Cabo Verde e Oficial de Ligação do MAI, junto à Embaixada de Cabo Verde em Portugal, em fevereiro de 2021.



dos cidadãos”³. Também o desejo político de Portugal aderir à Comunidade Económica Europeia, sendo uma das exigências para a sua concretização a necessidade de a CRP se encontrar subordinada à Convenção dos Direitos do Homem, teve um papel importante para a criação desse estabelecimento de ensino policial (DURÃO & LOPES, 2015).

Tendo presente que os quadros superiores da PSP eram todos oriundos dos quadros do exército, os quais eram requisitados e colocados em comissão de serviço, e considerando a necessidade de a PSP formar os seus próprios quadros superiores, tendo em vista imprimir uma feição acentuadamente civilista à corporação, foi criada, em 1982, a Escola Superior de Polícia (ESP)⁴. A sua criação “foi um dos grandes marcos da democracia portuguesa e foi a primeira [das academias de polícia] nesse modelo universitário, também a nível europeu, a nível internacional” (DURÃO, 2017, p. 111).

De realçar que aquando da criação da ESP já se encontrava prevista a possibilidade de ser ministrada formação aos quadros superiores de polícia de países estrangeiros, especialmente aos alunos provenientes das antigas colónias portuguesas, sendo as modalidades de ingresso e frequência definidas nos acordos de cooperação técnica em matéria policial celebrados com esses países.⁵

Porque se tratava do primeiro estabelecimento de ensino destinado à formação dos oficiais da PSP, foram necessários dois anos de trabalho na preparação do curso, pelo que somente em 1984 é que a ESP teve o seu início através da formação do I Curso de Oficiais de Polícia, sendo que a formação ministrada na ESP “procura apagar da opinião pública e do senso comum a imagem de práticas policiais violentas associadas a um dos mais longos períodos ditatoriais da história, entre 1926-1974” (DURÃO & LOPES, 2015, p. 126). A partir dessa data, a PSP tem reunidas as condições necessárias para promover a formação dos seus oficiais, os quais, paulatinamente, substituíram os oficiais oriundos do exército.

Já em 1999, a ESP passou a designar-se Instituto Superior de Ciências Policiais e Segurança Interna (ISCPSI)⁶, sofrendo uma reestruturação da sua estrutura orgânica, das suas missões e competências. Posteriormente, o ISCPSI⁷ passa a ser definido como “um instituto policial de ensino superior universitário que tem por missão formar oficiais de polícia, promover o seu aperfeiçoamento permanente e realizar, coordenar ou colaborar em projectos de investigação e desenvolvimento no domínio das ciências policiais”.

O ano de 2008 é considerado um momento histórico para a PSP, em geral, e para o ISCPSI, em particular. Pela primeira vez na sua história o ISCPSI teve como diretor um oficial da PSP, antigo aluno daquele estabelecimento de ensino, o Intendente Paulo Jorge Valente Gomes, aluno do 1.º CFOP. O mesmo oficial seria ainda o primeiro diretor nacional da PSP oriundo do ISCPSI, em 2012, ano em que, primeira vez, todos os oficiais da PSP são oriundos daquela que ficou conhecida como a casa mãe dos oficiais de polícia, a ESP.

³ Constituição da República Portuguesa, artigo 272.º, n.º 1.

⁴ Decreto-Lei n.º 423/82, de 15 de outubro. Diário da República n.º 239/1982, Série I de 1982-10-15.

⁵ *Ibidem*, artigo 2.º.

⁶ Lei n.º 5/99, de 27 de janeiro. Diário da República n.º 22/1999, Série I-A de 1999-01-27.

⁷ Artigo 50º, n.º 1 da Lei Orgânica da PSP, aprovada pela Lei n.º 53/2007, de 31 de agosto.



A necessidade de adequar o curso de licenciatura em Ciências Policiais ao enquadramento jurídico que se encontrava em vigor, aliada à criação de novos cursos abertos a toda a comunidade, consagrou o ISCPSI como um estabelecimento de ensino superior universitário policial aberto às demais áreas da Administração Pública. Não menos relevante foi a procura dada ao desenvolvimento da componente de investigação em ciências policiais e segurança interna.

No âmbito da cooperação é de destacar a possibilidade dos candidatos provenientes de outras forças, serviços e organismos de segurança nacionais e de países estrangeiros, nomeadamente da UE e da CPLP, terem acesso aos ciclos de estudo do ISCPSI, ficando as modalidades de ingresso e a frequência dos cursos definidas nos acordos de cooperação em matéria policial celebrados com esses países e instituições.⁸

De salientar que cerca de vinte anos antes da assinatura do protocolo entre Portugal e os países africanos lusófonos, que visou estreitar a cooperação no domínio da Segurança Pública, já o ISCPSI recebia dois alunos oriundos de Cabo Verde com o objetivo de iniciarem a sua formação policial em território nacional. Efetivamente, o ano de 1988 é apontado como um marco histórico a nível da cooperação técnico-policial no âmbito da formação de quadros superiores dos PALOP. Perante o número de oficiais de polícias dos PALOP já formados naquela que é a única instituição de ensino superior público universitário policial no nosso país, Portugal apresenta-se como um dos principais impulsionadores da formação de quadros superiores das polícias desses países.

O conhecimento do efeito das formações ministradas no ISCPSI, nomeadamente as possíveis alterações institucionais concretizadas pelos antigos alunos PALOP que concluíram com êxito a sua formação e que desempenham ou desempenharam funções de elevado relevo nos seus países, é ainda pouco desenvolvido face à reduzida investigação existente. Para Durão & Lopes (2015, p. 125) os oficiais oriundos dos países africanos lusófonos formados em Lisboa “constituem uma comunidade de saberes tendencialmente vocacionada para a transformação institucional e política das polícias nacionais.” Tendo presente o conhecimento adquirido através da formação recebida, seja derivada da aprendizagem teórica ou por intermédio da partilha de experiências, as comunidades de saberes podem ser entendidas como comunidades políticas que procuram alterar o estado de uma determinada coisa, tendo presente o conhecimento técnico que adquiriram.

O Curso de Formação de Oficiais de Polícia

Decorrente da assinatura de Acordos de Cooperação Técnica em matéria policial assinados entre Portugal e os PALOP, desde 1988 que a PSP, por intermédio do ISCPSI, ministra formação aos quadros policiais desses países. Todavia, esses protocolos de cooperação foram assinados em momentos diferentes com cada país, sendo o primeiro Acordo de Cooperação Técnica assinado em 1988 com Cabo Verde, seguido de Angola, em 1995, com Moçambique e a Guiné-Bissau, em 1998, e por último com São Tomé e Príncipe, em 1999.

⁸ *Idem*, artigo 20.º



Em consonância com os momentos distintos da assinatura dos vários protocolos, também a admissão dos alunos oriundos dos PALOP ocorreu em momentos diferentes e nem sempre coincidentes com a assinatura do respetivo protocolo. Conforme se verifica no gráfico 13⁹, os primeiros alunos dos PALOP a frequentarem a formação no ISCPSI foram dois alunos oriundos de Cabo Verde, em 1988. Posteriormente, em 1995, o ISCPSI recebia os primeiros nove alunos oriundos de Angola. Seguiram-se quatro alunos de Moçambique e um aluno da Guiné-Bissau, em 1998, e por último dois alunos de São Tomé e Príncipe, em 1999.

Perante as distintas datas de ingresso e de conclusão da formação no ISCPSI por parte dos alunos oriundos dos países africanos lusófonos, é possível dividir a CTP no âmbito da formação de quadros superiores dos PALOP em distintos momentos, todos eles de elevado significado. O primeiro momento ocorreu em 1988, com a chegada dos primeiros alunos cabo-verdianos ao Instituto, tendo terminado em 1994. De realçar que durante quase uma década o ISCPSI apenas recebeu alunos oriundos de Cabo Verde, facto que evidencia os laços de proximidade e as boas relações que existentes entre os dois países no âmbito da CTP.

O segundo momento teve o seu início em 1995 e prolongou-se até 2001. Trata-se de um período muito relevante em virtude da CTP se encontrar na sua fase mais ativa. Durante esses anos o ISCPSI, para além de continuar a receber alunos cabo-verdianos, recebeu alunos provenientes de Angola, Moçambique e de São Tomé e Príncipe, totalizando um total de noventa alunos cooperantes que se encontravam a receber formação durante esses sete anos.

O terceiro e último momento importante ocorreu em 2015, ano em que pela primeira vez um aluno guineense terminou a sua formação académica no ISCPSI. Trata-se de um marco histórico considerando que, a partir desse momento, todos os países africanos lusófonos passaram a ter no quadro das suas polícias oficiais formados pela PSP.

A análise do gráfico 1 permite ainda verificar que, por regra, anualmente, cada país não tem mais do que quatro alunos a concluir a formação. A exceção dessa tendência são os anos de 2000, 2001, 2002 e 2003, quando nove, cinco, sete e onze alunos angolanos concluíram o CFOP, e em 2004, quando cinco alunos moçambicanos também terminaram a sua formação académica no ISCPSI. Foram necessários 20 anos para se voltar a constatar essa exceção, quando nos anos de 2021 e 2022, seis alunos cabo-verdianos concluíram a sua formação no Instituto, e em 2024, quando quatro alunos moçambicanos também terminaram o curso.

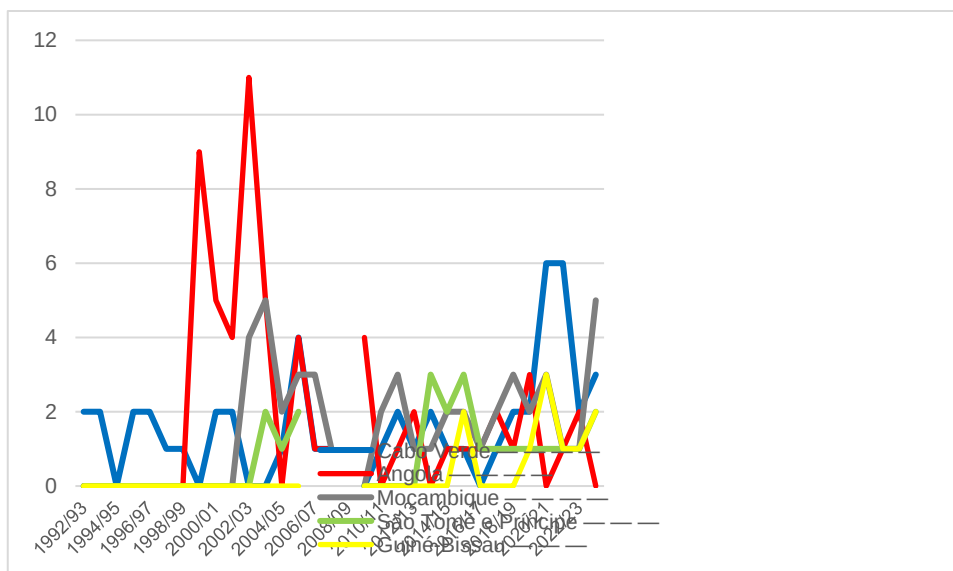
Tendo presente que desde 1988 o Instituto recebe ininterruptamente alunos dos PALOP, é possível verificar, através do gráfico 2, que desde essa data e até 2024, já frequentaram o ISCPSI um total de mil duzentos e oitenta e quatro alunos, dos quais novecentos e setenta e três são de nacionalidade portuguesa e trezentos e onze são oriundos dos países africanos de expressão portuguesa, denominados de “cooperantes” ou “PALOP”. Perante os números apurados constata-se que, decorrente dos acordos de CTP, os alunos oriundos dos PALOP representam 24% da totalidade de alunos do ISCPSI. Trata-se de um valor demonstrativo da relevância da CTP, no âmbito da formação de

⁹ Apesar do gráfico 1 identificar a conclusão dos alunos dos PALOP, deve-se considerar que a data de ingresso ocorreu cinco anos antes, atendendo à duração da formação.



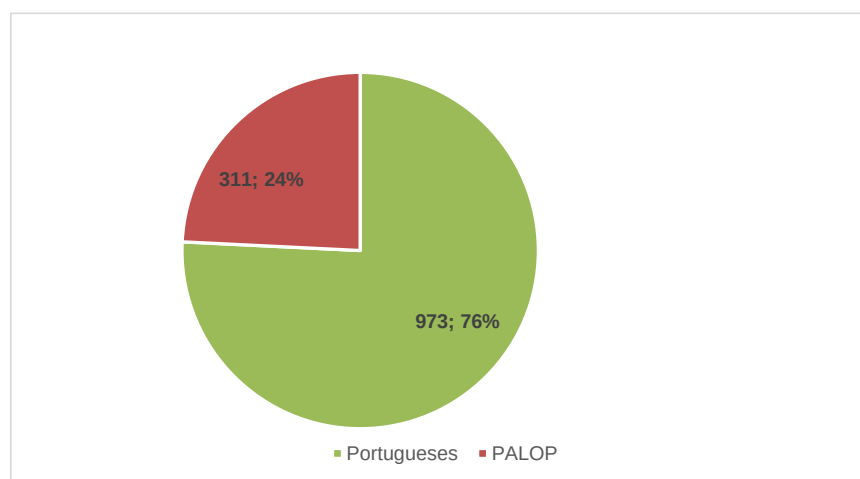
quadros superiores dos PALOP. A elevada representatividade dos alunos cooperantes nesse estabelecimento de ensino não pode ser considerada um valor residual. De referir ainda que, para além do CFOP, o ISCPSI ministra outras ações de formação que incluem oficiais da CPLP e, inclusive, são ministradas formações abertas à sociedade civil, as quais não se encontram contabilizados no gráfico 2.

Gráfico 1. Conclusão do CFOP dos alunos dos PALOP (1993-2024)



Fonte: ISCPSI (2024)

Gráfico 2. Alunos admitidos no CFOP (1988-2024)



Fonte: ISCPSI (2024)



Os valores apresentados no gráfico 2 permite afirmar com elevado grau de convicção, que a PSP, por intermédio do seu estabelecimento de ensino superior público universitário policial, assume um papel preponderante na concretização daqueles que são identificados como os objetivos da política externa portuguesa com as suas antigas colónias africanas, e que se encontram escritos nos diversos programas dos governos constitucionais. Através da leitura e análise desses programas é possível verificar que, sobretudo a partir do XII governo constitucional¹⁰, é manifestada com maior afínco a vontade de reforçar a cooperação com os PALOP, nomeadamente no âmbito da formação profissional, sendo essa uma área que, naturalmente, abrange a CTP.

À semelhança dos alunos portugueses, também os alunos cooperantes estão sujeitos a um regime intensivo de formação e treino, não obstante após terminarem a sua formação exercerem funções em contextos e cenários muito diferentes daquele que viveram no ISCPSI. Todavia, a formação que recebem não é apenas teórica. Os alunos, durante o período de frequência do ISCPSI e através dos estágios realizados, adquirem um conjunto de conhecimentos e de competências técnicas e individuais consideradas fundamentais para o desempenho da sua futura função.

As competências técnicas são derivadas do conhecimento adquirido por intermédio das matérias lecionadas, dos trabalhos realizados e da formação prática, sendo facilmente partilhados entre os indivíduos da organização e, por sua vez, as competências individuais são os traços da personalidade e os conhecimentos pessoais. São conhecimentos que apenas são possíveis de transmitir através do contacto pessoal, como conversas informais. No entanto, há ainda a considerar a cultura institucional que se traduz num conjunto de regras e vivências, que acabam por influenciar a aquisição de competências, como por exemplo o facto de os alunos no interior do ISCPSI serem obrigados a andarem fardados, ataviados, apurados e estarem presentes nas formaturas que se realizam diariamente. São vivências institucionais, comuns e partilhadas, que contribuem para a aquisição da cultura institucional do ISCPSI e da própria PSP (SOUSA & MENDES, 2016). No entender de Paymal (2008), a formação ministrada no ISCPSI abrange quatro componente: (i) aquela que é considerada a base universitária científica (currículo); (ii) as atividades desenvolvidas em complemento à base universitária científica (projetos); (iii) o índice técnico e tecnológico realizado durante a formação (estágios); (iv) aquela que é considerada a vertente deontológica (vida interna).

De acordo com Mizukami (1986), é com base nessa abordagem de ensino que o ser humano possui um conhecimento de carácter cumulativo, e que deve ser adquirido pelo indivíduo através da transmissão de conhecimentos que se realiza no estabelecimento de ensino. Os conhecimentos adquiridos durante o curso são uma mais-valia para o seu crescimento intelectual enquanto indivíduo e para a sua administração pública nacional. Essas administrações acabarão por retirar proveitos e contrapartidas pelo investimento realizado - investimento esse que passa, não só mas também, por permitir que essas pessoas estejam vários anos ausentes e sem prestar serviço efetivo no seu território nacional, como é o caso de vários oficiais, antigos alunos do ISCPSI, que desempenham ou desempenharam funções de relevo nos respetivos países de origem, seja de comando

¹⁰ O XII governo constitucional iniciou as suas funções em 1991, tendo-as desempenhado até 1995.



ou de direção, nas funções de diretor nacional, comandante-geral, comandantes provinciais, ou até ao nível ministerial.

O ingresso na carreira de oficial de polícia na PSP faz-se após a conclusão do Curso de Formação de Oficiais de Polícia (CFOP) ¹¹, o qual tem a duração de cinco anos letivos. Trata-se de um período longo que acarreta para os alunos cooperantes um afastamento do seu país de origem e uma necessidade de readaptação à chegada, desempenhando a língua portuguesa, como património comum, um papel relevante em termos de facilidade de aplicação de ideias e conceitos ensinados no ISCPSI. A duração do curso e o facto de ser ministrado na língua portuguesa são particularidades que permitem criar laços de amizade que se prolongam para além da formação e que contribuem para a criação de comunidades de saberes partilhados que se encontram orientadas para a transformação das instituições policiais dos seus países (DURÃO & LOPES, 2015). Também o facto de a frequência do CFOP ser em regime de internato (apenas em casos especiais pode ser facultado o regime de externato¹²), tendo os alunos direito à alimentação e ao alojamento¹³, são fatores que contribuem indubitavelmente para a criação de amizades duradouras, potenciadas pelo tempo que acabam por passar juntos, inclusive fora da sala de aulas.

Com a publicação dos Avisos n.º 22491/2021 e n.º 22492/2021, em conjugação com o Decreto-Lei n.º 13/2022, de 12 de janeiro, o curso encontra-se dividido em dois ciclos de estudo.

O primeiro ciclo de estudos corresponde à licenciatura em Ciências Policiais e integra os três primeiros anos do curso, tendo como áreas científicas as Ciências Policiais, o Direito, as Ciências Sociais e Políticas, e as Ciências Empresariais. O segundo ciclo de estudos corresponde ao mestrado em Segurança Pública, do qual fazem parte o quarto e o quinto ano do curso, e apresenta como áreas científicas as Ciências Policiais e as Ciências Sociais e Políticas.

Para a obtenção do grau ou diploma da licenciatura em Ciências Policiais o aluno necessita de obter cento e oitenta créditos ECTS, os quais se encontram divididos pelas áreas científicas do curso, salientando-se que as áreas científicas de Ciências Policiais e de Direito possuem 66,5 e 65,5, respetivamente, dos créditos desse ciclo de estudos, pelo que as duas áreas científicas juntas representam 73% dos créditos existentes. Trata-se de um valor ilustrativo da importância que as diferentes áreas das Ciências Policiais¹⁴ e do Direito¹⁵ possuem nos primeiros anos de formação no ISCPSI, assumindo maior relevância tendo presente que o respeito pelos Direitos Humanos, pela democracia e pelo Estado de direito são vetores chave na cooperação para o desenvolvimento com países terceiros (MNE, 2017).

¹¹ Conforme previsto no Decreto-Lei n.º 13/2022, de 12 de janeiro. Diário da República n.º 8/2022, Série I de 2022-01-12.

¹² *Idem*, artigo 35.º.

¹³ Conforme previsto no Decreto-Lei n.º 271/77, de 2 de julho. Diário da República n.º 151/1977, Série I de 1977-07-02.

¹⁴ Integram a área das Ciências Policiais as seguintes unidades curriculares: Introdução às Ciências Policiais; Organização e História Policial; Armamento, Explosivos e Munições; Teoria Geral da Segurança; Estratégia e Táticas das Forças de Segurança; Técnica do Serviço Policial; Prevenção e Segurança Rodoviária; Investigação Criminal; Comando e Liderança Policial.

¹⁵ Integra a área do Direito as seguintes unidades curriculares: Introdução ao Estudo do Direito; Direito Constitucional; Direito Administrativo; Direito Civil; Direito Penal; Direito Policial; Direito Processual Penal; Direito da União Europeia; Direito de Mera Ordenação Social; Análise de Problemas de Segurança.



No ciclo de estudos do Mestrado em Segurança Pública destaca-se a importância do estágio e da dissertação de mestrado. Possuindo um caráter pedagógico, e com o objetivo de analisar e avaliar a capacidade de adaptação a diferentes cenários, aliada à capacidade de colocar em prática os conhecimentos adquiridos durante os primeiros quatro anos de formação académica, o estágio tem como objetivo aproximar o aluno à realidade daquela que será a sua futura atividade profissional, na qualidade de oficial de polícia. Trata-se de uma formação essencialmente prática e que consiste numa aprendizagem importante para a formação dos alunos cooperantes, não obstante a realidade dos seus países de origem ser distinta. A frequência do estágio é uma mais valia, permitindo conhecer pormenorizadamente as valências da PSP e acompanhar de perto o trabalho da polícia realizado em diversos cenários.

A apresentação da dissertação representa o final de um longo caminho para os alunos do CFOP, no qual dedicaram cinco anos da sua vida a uma formação profissional específica que permite iniciar a tão ambicionada carreira de oficial de polícia. No entanto, o percurso académico termina oficialmente com um momento solene: quando os alunos, formados, procedem ao compromisso de honra. A exceção serão os alunos de nacionalidade portuguesa que já eram polícias, e que por esse motivo fizeram o seu compromisso de honra na EPP quando terminaram a sua formação de agentes, e os alunos cooperantes. Trata-se de um momento repleto de emoção que representa o culminar da formação académica e o início de uma nova etapa.

Se para os alunos portugueses o futuro como oficial de polícia é garantido, considerando que o número de vagas é coincidente com o número de alunos que terminam com sucesso a formação, para os alunos cooperantes a situação pode ser diferente. De acordo com Susana Durão “os cooperantes que chegam ao final do ciclo, presentes na formatura, festejam e temem. Festejam pela dimensão técnica adquirida, a “bagagem” que levam para o seu país, pelo fim do sacrifício da deslocação prolongada, pela capacidade de sobrevivência financeira, pela ultrapassagem das dificuldades de adaptação cultural, pela possibilidade de serem considerados “filhos da Escola”, como muitos me disseram, e poderem eventualmente voltar. Temem pela incógnita face ao futuro, no plano de carreira e no plano pessoal e familiar” (DURÃO, 2017. pp. 110-111).

Conclusão

A CTP desenvolvida entre Portugal e os PALOP evidencia-se como uma estratégia multifacetada na promoção dos interesses nacionais em segurança e no fortalecimento institucional entre países. Ao longo das últimas décadas, por meio de acordos formais e da articulação de ações formativas, a Polícia de Segurança Pública, através do Instituto Superior de Ciências Policiais e Segurança Interna, estabeleceu um ensino superior público universitário policial, estabeleceu uma rede de cooperação que vai além da simples transferência de conhecimento técnico. Trata-se de uma parceria que é baseada na partilha de uma língua comum e de laços históricos, e que tem permitido a consolidação de um conjunto de saberes que se reflete na capacitação dos quadros superiores dos países africanos lusófonos, contribuindo para a modernização das suas instituições e a implementação de práticas preventivas.

O modelo de cooperação adotado destaca o papel crucial da formação, que integra componentes teóricas e práticas – desde estágios intensivos até à elaboração de



dissertações – promovendo não só o desenvolvimento técnico, mas também a interiorização de valores deveras importantes, como o respeito pelos direitos humanos e o respeito pelo cumprimento do Princípio da Legalidade. Trata-se de um processo transformador que tem permitido a transição de paradigmas operacionais, passando de uma atuação predominantemente repressiva para uma abordagem preventiva e orientada ao serviço da comunidade, o que fortalece a cultura institucional e fomenta a criação de laços de amizade e de pertença entre os formandos.

Além disso, a CTP desempenha um papel estratégico na política externa portuguesa, contribuindo para a consolidação da influência de Portugal no espaço lusófono. A capacidade de atuar como um doador eficiente, utilizando os seus recursos de forma diferenciada e valorizando a lusofonia como instrumento de diplomacia, evidencia o potencial daquele que é designado como *soft power*. Essa influência é observada, por exemplo, na ascensão de oficiais dos PALOP a posições de comando nas suas instituições, resultado direto do intercâmbio de boas práticas e da formação de excelência ministrada em Portugal.

Em síntese, a cooperação promovida pelo ISCPSI transcende os limites da capacitação técnica, inserindo-se num contexto de desenvolvimento institucional e no fortalecimento das relações históricas e culturais entre Portugal e os países africanos lusófonos. O investimento na formação de quadros superiores tem influência na melhoria dos sistemas de segurança e na criação de uma comunidade de saberes capaz de promover a transformação necessária para o desenvolvimento institucional. Apesar dos desafios enfrentados pelos alunos cooperantes – que incluem a adaptação cultural e a incerteza em relação ao futuro profissional – os resultados alcançados reforçam a importância dessa parceria como instrumento estratégico para a promoção da estabilidade, do Estado de Direito e do desenvolvimento sustentável nos países africanos lusófonos.

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Legislação

Constituição da República Portuguesa

Decreto n.º 25/90, de 5 de julho, Acordo de Cooperação Técnica no Domínio Policial;

Decreto n.º 25/97, de 31 de maio, Acordo Especial de Cooperação em Matéria de Segurança Interna;

Decreto n.º 26/97, de 3 de junho, Acordo Especial de Cooperação no Domínio da Administração Interna;

Decreto n.º 57/97, de 8 de outubro, Acordo de Cooperação em matéria de Segurança Interna;

Decreto-Lei n.º 271/77, de 2 de julho,

Decreto-Lei n.º 423/82, de 15 de outubro, cria na PSP a Escola Superior da Polícia;

Decreto-Lei n.º 13/2022, de 12 de janeiro, aprova o Regime Jurídico do Ensino Superior Público Policial;

Lei n.º 5/99, de 27 de janeiro, Lei de Organização e Funcionamento da PSP;

Lei n.º 53/2007, de 31 de agosto, Lei

PARADIPLOMACY OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH: SURABAYA'S APPROACH TO GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGES (2016-2020)

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of paradiplomacy in Surabaya's approach to addressing global sustainability challenges from 2016 to 2020. As a key city in Indonesia, a Global South country, Surabaya illustrates how local governments can leverage international partnerships to address pressing urban and environmental issues. The study highlights how Surabaya's strategic collaborations with cities such as Kitakyushu and Liverpool align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly focusing on environmental sustainability and urban development. Despite facing significant socio-economic inequalities and institutional constraints due to Indonesia's decentralisation laws, Surabaya has utilised paradiplomacy to integrate global standards into local policies effectively. The city's partnerships have facilitated knowledge exchange and resource mobilisation, aiding in tackling issues like waste management and infrastructure development. This approach demonstrates a shift from traditional state-centric diplomacy to a more nuanced, subnational engagement that empowers cities in the Global South. Through Surabaya's experiences, the paper provides valuable insights into how other cities with similar challenges can adopt paradiplomatic strategies to enhance their sustainability efforts and contribute to global discussions on sustainable urban development.

Keywords

Paradiplomacy, Indonesia, Surabaya, global south.

Resumo

Este artigo analisa o papel da paradiplomacia na abordagem de Surabaya para enfrentar os desafios globais de sustentabilidade entre 2016 e 2020. Como uma cidade-chave na Indonésia, um país do Sul Global, Surabaya ilustra como os governos locais podem alavancar parcerias internacionais para abordar questões urbanas e ambientais prementes. O estudo destaca a forma como as colaborações estratégicas de Surabaya com cidades como Kitakyushu e Liverpool se alinham com os Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (ODS), centrando-se particularmente na sustentabilidade ambiental e no desenvolvimento urbano. Apesar de enfrentar desigualdades socioeconómicas significativas e restrições institucionais devido às leis de descentralização da Indonésia, Surabaya utilizou a paradiplomacia para integrar eficazmente as normas globais nas políticas locais. As parcerias estabelecidas pela cidade facilitaram a troca de conhecimentos e a mobilização de recursos, ajudando a resolver questões como a gestão de resíduos e o desenvolvimento de infraestruturas. Esta abordagem demonstra uma mudança da diplomacia tradicional centrada no Estado para um envolvimento



subnacional mais matizado que dá poder às cidades do Sul Global. Através das experiências de Surabaya, o artigo fornece informações valiosas sobre como outras cidades com desafios semelhantes podem adotar estratégias paradiplomáticas para melhorar os seus esforços de sustentabilidade e contribuir para debates globais sobre o desenvolvimento urbano sustentável.

Palavras-chave

Paradiplomacia, Indonésia, Surabaya, sul global.

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Introduction

The rapid expansion of urban populations globally is transforming cities into influential international actors. According to the United Nations, the global urban population surged from 751 million in 1950 to 4.2 billion in 2018, with projections suggesting that 68% of the world's population will reside in urban areas by 2050 (United Nations, 2018). This demographic shift has significantly altered the role of cities, positioning them not merely as administrative units but as dynamic participants in global affairs.

Short et al. (2000) argue that globalisation has redefined cities as new international actors, while Giddens (2003) highlights how this shift has empowered local governments to become crucial nodes in global networks. Paradiplomacy, or subnational diplomacy, has thus emerged as a critical mechanism through which cities directly engage in international relations. By establishing autonomous connections with foreign cities, international organisations, and other non-state actors, cities address global challenges while enhancing their global standing (Barber, 2013; Curtis, 2016). However, the traditional approaches to paradiplomacy often fail to capture the unique complexities faced by cities in the Global South. These cities grapple with rapid urbanisation, socio-economic disparities, and developmental constraints, challenges that are not fully addressed by conventional paradiplomatic frameworks.

In the current globalised era, urban centres in the Global South face complex socio-political landscapes while aiming for sustainable development. Surabaya is among many cities that utilises paradiplomatic strategies to align its local efforts with global sustainability goals. Traditional paradigms often disregard the distinctive obstacles these cities face—rapid urban growth, limited resources, and limited institutional capacities—necessitating a re-assessment of paradiplomacy. By focusing on Surabaya's approach to environmental sustainability, this paper explores how paradiplomatic efforts in cities of the Global South can create significant international collaborations that address urgent local concerns while contributing to global sustainability discourse.

Global South cities like Surabaya in Indonesia, which has made notable efforts to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into its paradiplomatic strategies, provide insight into how such frameworks can be adapted to local realities. Focusing



particularly on environmental sustainability, Surabaya's engagement with paradiplomacy offers an example of how local governments in the Global South can navigate the intersection of global aspirations and local needs.

Surabaya's international relations framework, particularly its partnerships with sister cities, demonstrates the potential of paradiplomacy in facilitating the exchange of knowledge and sustainable practices. Surabaya's transformation from an industrial city to a sustainable urban hub reflects its alignment with the SDGs, focusing on environmental sustainability as a foundation for socio-economic growth (Wijoyo et al., 2023). This shift marks a significant departure from traditional state-centric diplomacy, elevating the role of subnational entities like Surabaya in global governance.

As Surabaya implements these strategies, it becomes a relevant case study for understanding the intersection of local realities and global aspirations in the Global South. The city's creative environmental initiatives provide a model for how other urban centres in similar contexts might integrate SDGs into their diplomatic efforts. By emphasising a comprehensive approach that aligns urban development with international sustainability standards, Surabaya's paradigm shift can serve as a replicable framework for other cities looking to navigate the complexities of urbanisation, socio-economic disparities, and global governance (Nganje, 2013).

Ultimately, this paper seeks to present a more nuanced perspective on paradiplomacy, one that attends specifically to the intricacies of urban governance and international cooperation in the Global South. By examining the case of Surabaya, this research contributes to the evolving discourse on how subnational entities can bridge the gap between local needs and global goals, advancing sustainable urban growth within the global community.

Paradiplomacy and the Global South

Paradiplomacy refers to the international activities undertaken by subnational entities—such as cities, regions, and states—that seek to engage directly with foreign actors and influence global affairs. The genesis of paradiplomacy represents a departure from traditional state-centric diplomacy, where national governments hold exclusive authority over international relations. Paradiplomacy allows local governments to pursue their own foreign policies and international partnerships, enabling them to address global challenges and leverage opportunities that align with their unique interests and needs (Lecours, 2002; Aldecoa and Keating, 2013).

The evolution of paradiplomacy can be traced back to the late 20th century when cities and regions began asserting themselves as significant international actors following the rise of federalism (Keating, 2013). As globalisation intensified, local governments increasingly recognised the potential to shape global outcomes through direct engagement with international partners.

Lecours (2008) outlines three main motives of paradiplomacy, namely economic motive, knowledge motive, and political motive. However, Tavares (2016) details it even more to seven motives. These include capitalising on global opportunities, especially in economic development; improving citizen services, particularly in cross-border contexts;



enhancing local competencies and programmes in areas such as healthcare and education; advocating for domestic decentralisation and addressing local demands; advancing the personal ambitions of local political leaders, including potential electoral benefits; fostering cultural uniqueness and nationalism; and overcoming political and geographic isolation.

Paradiplomacy differs from traditional diplomacy in several key ways. First, traditional diplomacy is state-centric, with national governments holding the primary responsibility for conducting international relations and representing the interests of their countries. In contrast, paradiplomacy allows subnational entities to engage directly with foreign actors, bypassing national governments. However, considering that the authority to engage in paradiplomacy is granted by the national government with certain limitations, paradiplomacy is generally carried out only on low political issues that are not directly related to national security. This is why, borrowing Lecours (2008) and Utomo (2019), paradiplomacy falls within the "gray" area of the constitution because traditionally, foreign activities are an exclusive right of the national government. However, paradiplomacy has now been regarded as a common practice, complementing and democratising foreign policy, not regarded as an anomaly anymore (Cornago, 2010).

The study of paradiplomacy has its roots in North America and Europe, where the concepts of federalism and decentralisation have long been established (Tremblay, 1990). To mention some, there is Martínez (2017) who explores the paradiplomatic efforts of Canadian provinces, detailing their interactions with the United States and Mexico, which underscores the region-specific focus of the research. He provides an in-depth analysis of North American subnational governments and their international activities, further emphasizing the emphasis on this region. In Europe, Kamiński and Ciesielska-Klikowska (2023) examine the integration of paradiplomacy into EU foreign policymaking, highlighting the mechanisms and limitations within a European context. McHugh (2015) adds to this focus by investigating the foreign policy ambitions of Quebec and other Canadian provinces, illustrating the continued scholarly attention on North American paradigms. Collectively, these studies reflect a significant concentration of paradiplomacy research in North America and Europe, pointing to a need for broader exploration of paradiplomacy in other contexts.

In contrast, the scholarship on paradiplomacy remains underdeveloped in the Global South, where the dynamics of decentralisation and subnational autonomy differ markedly from those in the developed regions. Although paradiplomacy scholarship has made notable strides in both North America and Europe, the Global South still requires more comprehensive exploration. Studies such as Salomon (2016), de Macedo et al. (2023), and Nganje (2014) have started to shed light on paradiplomacy in the developing world, with a focus on developing countries like Brazil and South Africa. These articles generally highlight the unique challenges that shape the Global South's approach to paradiplomacy. Issues like rapid urbanisation, socio-economic disparities, and institutional constraints are prevalent in these regions, influencing how local governments engage in international relations compared to the more developed regions. Paradiplomacy in the Global South often focuses on addressing these pressing local issues while navigating a complex global landscape.



Surabaya at a Glance

Surabaya, the capital of East Java Province and Indonesia's second-largest city after Jakarta, is a key gateway to Eastern Indonesia, with direct shipping and flight connections to major eastern cities such as Denpasar, Makassar, and Jayapura. Its role as a major industrial hub highlights the city's economic significance. Its port, Tanjung Perak, is the second busiest in the country after Jakarta's Tanjung Priok, playing a crucial role in regional and international trade. Surabaya's economy is diverse, with prominent sectors including shipbuilding, heavy equipment, and food and beverages. Its growing appeal as a market for new technologies and innovations makes it a prime location for investment in the digital and creative sectors.

The city's status as a trade centre was established during the Dutch colonial period, which began in the early 17th century. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) recognised Surabaya's potential for trading spices, sugar, and other valuable goods, leading to the expansion of its port facilities and its pivotal role in VOC's maritime trade routes across Asia and Europe. The colonial era saw Surabaya grow economically and culturally, with Dutch architectural and urban planning influences evident in its European-style buildings and organised street layouts.

With a population of over 3 million, modern Surabaya remains a vibrant and diverse city. While the Javanese are the predominant ethnic group, the city also hosts significant minorities, including Chinese Indonesians, Arab Indonesians, and the Madurese from the nearby Madura Island. Historically, foreign ethnic groups such as Armenians and Indians were also present, though they are now largely absent. Surabaya's strategic position at the northeastern tip of Java Island enhances its logistics and connectivity, making it a key node on the *pantura* (north coast) road, which links it to other major cities like Jakarta and Semarang and nearby towns.

From the 1970s to the late 1990s, Surabaya was known as the *Indamardi* city (Bagijo, 1992). The concept itself is an acronym of *Industri, Perdagangan, Maritim, and Pendidikan*, meaning "industry, commerce, maritime, and education" in Indonesian, respectively. This era saw significant industrial growth, maritime activities bolstered by Tanjung Perak port, and the city's emphasis on education through its universities such as Universitas Airlangga and the Tenth of November Institute of Technology.

As a metropolis, Surabaya faces significant challenges related to pollution and rising temperatures. The rapid urbanisation and industrial activities have contributed to worsening air quality, while the city's dense population and heavy traffic exacerbate these issues. In addition to pollution, Surabaya grapples with the challenge of high temperatures, which are exacerbated by the urban heat island effect. Surabaya is one of the hottest Indonesian cities, where the hottest daily temperature was recorded as high as 34.8 Celsius degrees (Detik, 2024).

In response to that, since the 2000s, Surabaya has been shifting its identity from a predominantly industrial city to a more touristy destination. This transformation was driven by the establishment of the "Sparkling Surabaya" brand, launched by the Department of Tourism in collaboration with the Surabaya Tourism Promotion Board to highlight the city's rich cultural heritage and urban development. The initiative aimed to



rebrand Surabaya as a vibrant, modern metropolis that offers a diverse range of attractions for both domestic and international tourists.

Through these comprehensive efforts, Surabaya has tried to redefine itself as a city that balances historical tourism with a strong commitment to sustainability, all under the "Sparkling Surabaya" brand. This reimagined identity not only appeals to enhance the city's appeal to tourists but also underscores Surabaya's dedication to sustainable urban development. As the city continues to evolve, its efforts to integrate sustainability into all aspects of its growth have become increasingly aligned with global standards. This leads naturally to a deeper exploration of Surabaya's initiatives, particularly in the context of its drive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Surabaya's Paradiplomatic Approach to Sustainable Development

Adopted by all UN member states in 2015, The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as a universal call to action to address global challenges, such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation, by 2030 (United Nations, 2015). On the other hand, it has become a key source of inspiration for national development in Indonesia, as mandated by the government. In its official statement, the National Development Bureau (Bappenas) mentions that the achievement of the SDGs is recognised as a "national development priority that requires policy planning synergy at the national, provincial, and city/regency levels" (Bappenas, 2020). This reflects the country's commitment to integrating global development objectives into its governance framework, emphasising the importance of coordinated efforts across all levels of government to address pressing issues such as poverty, inequality, and environmental sustainability. For cities like Surabaya, the SDGs offer both opportunities and challenges. The city must balance global targets with its unique, rapidly urbanising context.

Surabaya's efforts towards SDGs gained significant momentum under the leadership of Mayor Tri Rismaharini, who led initiatives that localised the SDGs within the city's development plans. The stipulation of SDGs coincided with the second term of her leadership, meaning that she also had to navigate the policies in accordance with the global vision. The overall vision of Surabaya at that time was "Surabaya, a Prosperous City with Character and Global Competitiveness based on Ecology." While the city's Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) 2016-2020 did not explicitly mention the SDGs, her governance focused on fulfilling SDG 11, which promotes inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities (Utomo, 2022).

These efforts align with Giddens' (2003) observation that globalisation operates on both global and local levels, with global agendas increasingly being contextualised to meet local needs. During those periods, Surabaya conducted two significant paradiplomatic cooperations: with Kitakyushu (Japan) and with Liverpool (United Kingdom).

The partnership between Surabaya and Kitakyushu, a city recognised for its environmental and technological advancements, has been pivotal in Surabaya's environmental management strategies. Since 2012, Surabaya has worked closely with Kitakyushu on waste management and environmental sustainability. Kitakyushu's



expertise in waste treatment played a key role in Surabaya's solid waste management initiatives.

According to Damayanti (2020), there are three different stakeholders in the collaboration between Surabaya and Kitakyushu. First, the Surabaya Government takes on a central role in regulating, evaluating, and managing the program to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability. Meanwhile, civil society actively contributes through social networking and community empowerment, fostering local engagement and awareness. Additionally, Nishihara Corporation serves as a key facilitator in knowledge transfer, providing technical expertise and support to enhance waste processing initiatives.

In collaboration with Nishihara Corporation, particularly, Kitakyushu has assisted in implementing waste management systems that address the city's growing waste problem. Nishihara Corporation's role has been particularly vital in enhancing waste collection and recycling efforts in Surabaya's communities, including notable projects in the Wonorejo area.

Wonorejo itself has become a model site for environmental sustainability in Surabaya. The development of the Wonorejo Mangrove Ecotourism area, supported by Kitakyushu, exemplifies how the city utilises natural resources for both conservation and economic purposes. This collaboration is part of a broader effort to rehabilitate the mangrove forest along the coast of Surabaya, which plays a crucial role in protecting the city from coastal erosion and provides a habitat for various species. Kitakyushu's input into the development of this ecotourism area has helped local stakeholders understand the importance of integrating sustainable practices into tourism and urban planning.

Moreover, through these partnerships, Surabaya has been able to integrate the SDGs into specific projects, particularly in addressing environmental issues. With Kitakyushu's support, Surabaya has advanced its work towards SDG 11, creating more sustainable and resilient communities by tackling key environmental challenges. These efforts have been further institutionalised through various agreements and technical exchanges between the two cities, demonstrating how city-to-city cooperation can be a critical mechanism for localising global goals.

Between 2016 and 2020, Surabaya actively fostered partnerships with Kitakyushu through various collaborative initiatives aimed at sustainable urban development. In 2016, the cooperation began with a Kitakyushu municipal grant for tap water management in Surabaya, enhancing the city's water infrastructure. This was followed in 2017 by a workshop on energy source management, emphasizing the importance of efficient and sustainable energy use. In 2018, both cities worked together on a workshop addressing dengue fever mitigation and medical waste treatment, highlighting their commitment to public health and environmental sustainability. The collaboration continued in 2019 prior to the Covid-19 pandemic with a workshop on forest conservation and ecotourism development (Utomo and Widiana, 2024).

In addition to its cooperation with Kitakyushu, Surabaya's relationship with Liverpool further highlights how the city integrated the SDGs into its local governance. The partnership with Liverpool, formalised in 2018, covers a wide range of areas, including economic development, port management, and education. This cooperation aligns



particularly with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), focusing on sustainable urban development.

One of the most notable aspects of the Surabaya-Liverpool partnership is the focus on inclusivity, particularly in education. Both cities share a commitment to improving the quality of education for children with special needs. Surabaya's collaboration with Liverpool in this area—through joint initiatives like school visits, capacity-building for special education teachers, and curriculum development—directly supports SDG 4 (Quality Education). The focus on Special Educational Needs (SEN) and inclusivity reflects Surabaya's commitment to creating an educational environment that caters to all children, regardless of their abilities.

Furthermore, Liverpool's expertise in port management offered Surabaya opportunities to enhance its maritime infrastructure, crucial for economic growth. With Liverpool's support, Surabaya engaged in projects like the development of Java Integrated Industrial and Port Estate (JIPE) and Tanjung Perak's expansion, which are vital for regional trade and economic development. These initiatives align with SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and SDG 8 by promoting sustainable industrialisation and supporting economic development in the region.

The cooperation also extended to the creative economy, with Liverpool providing support through the Developing Inclusive Creative Economy (DICE) program. By fostering entrepreneurship and supporting creative industries in Surabaya, DICE aligned with SDG 8's focus on promoting sustained economic growth and productive employment. This partnership signifies how cities can foster economic resilience and inclusivity through international cooperation.

Finally, the sports diplomacy aspect of the Surabaya-Liverpool relationship, particularly in football, not only strengthened cultural ties but also promoted youth engagement and development. Surabaya sent young football talents to train in Liverpool, showcasing how sports can be leveraged as a tool for youth development, contributing to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) by encouraging physical activity and promoting teamwork and social inclusion.

Through these two paradiplomatic partnerships—with Kitakyushu and Liverpool—Surabaya demonstrates how cities in the Global South can integrate global goals like the SDGs into their local governance frameworks, leveraging international collaborations to address specific urban challenges while contributing to global sustainability efforts.

Lessons from the Global South: Indonesia

The complex challenges faced by cities in the Global South, like Surabaya, pinpoints the necessity for innovative approaches that transcend traditional governance models. Surabaya's experience highlights how paradiplomacy can effectively address these issues by fostering strategic partnerships with other cities and international organisations. This approach has allowed Surabaya to align local efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a particular focus on environmental sustainability—a pressing concern for rapidly urbanising cities (Utomo, 2022). The integration of local circumstances with global objectives illustrates the city's capacity to navigate socio-economic inequalities



and institutional limitations. These partnerships succeed because Surabaya can translate global standards into practical local policies, thereby enhancing resilience against urban challenges. This dynamic demonstrates how paradiplomacy can bridge local and global contexts while advancing sustainable development in Global South urban settings (Mierzejewski et al., 2018).

In contrast to developed countries, where paradiplomacy often operates within well-established frameworks and with greater institutional support, cities in the Global South like Surabaya face additional constraints. Developed nations typically benefit from robust legal and administrative infrastructures that facilitate international collaboration and implementation of global standards. These countries often have the resources and capacity to engage in high-level diplomatic negotiations and to integrate international policies seamlessly into their local governance structures.

Paradiplomacy predominantly flourishes in developed states, particularly within federal systems, where multiple levels of government share diplomatic responsibilities. In federal countries, regional governments often have formal roles in foreign affairs, which allows them to engage in paradiplomacy effectively. For example, in countries like the United States, Canada, and Germany, the federal structure supports active regional participation in international relations, enabling states or provinces to form partnerships, engage in trade agreements, and influence global policies (Fathun, 2022). This systemic approach provides these regions with the institutional backing and autonomy required to conduct international affairs, thus fostering a more dynamic and collaborative form of paradiplomacy.

In contrast, developed unitary states, such as France, the Netherlands, and the Czech Republic, have more centralised control over foreign policy, which can limit the scope of paradiplomacy at the regional level. While these states may still engage in paradiplomatic activities, the absence of a federal structure means that regional entities often lack the formal authority to participate extensively in international affairs (Ksenicz, 2023). However, those countries benefit from the developed institutional infrastructures and greater access to resources, allowing them to overcome these constraints more easily than cities in the Global South. Even within the limitations of a centralised system, regions in developed unitary states can still engage in meaningful international partnerships due to their ability to leverage advanced governance mechanisms and strong diplomatic networks.

For cities in the unitarian settings and in the Global South like Surabaya, the situation is not only shaped by institutional capacities but also by specific regulatory frameworks that can either facilitate or hinder paradiplomatic efforts. While the Indonesian Laws No. 37/1999 and No. 24/2000 provide a legal foundation for local governments to engage in international relations, they do not inherently create barriers to effective paradiplomacy. Instead, the challenge lies in the varying capacities of local governments to navigate these frameworks and meet the additional requirements necessary to pursue international cooperation effectively.

As taken from Mukti (2013), there are some specific regulations which can be sources of limitations. For example, local governments are advised to maintain official websites that clearly outline regional conditions and potential areas for investment or cooperation,



particularly in English. This allows foreign entities to access vital information and encourages engagement. However, not all cities possess the resources to develop such digital infrastructures or maintain regular contact with consular offices like the Indonesian Consulate General or Indonesian embassies, which play an essential role in facilitating negotiations.

In addition to digital capacity, local governments must also collaborate with experts or professionals to accurately identify potential foreign partners. This collaboration provides valuable insights and helps to navigate the complex international environment. Once potential partners have been identified, local governments can proceed to initiate contact through Indonesian consulates or embassies, setting the stage for formal negotiations. The technical team established to oversee the partnership will then manage the execution of the agreed-upon projects, aligning them with the local budget and ensuring that the necessary resources, including human capital and financial backing, are in place. Finally, the partnership is subject to regular evaluation to ensure its effectiveness. Successful collaborations can fast-track regional development, while inefficient partnerships may drain resources and slow progress.

In essence, the laws governing paradiplomacy in Indonesia do not inherently block international partnerships. However, many cities in the unitarian settings, like Indonesia, may struggle with the institutional capacity and bureaucratic steps necessary to engage in such collaborations. The process requires not only regulatory compliance but also technical expertise, proactive identification of opportunities, and robust communication channels, all of which can prove difficult for resource-constrained cities.

Furthermore, the socio-economic inequalities prevalent in the Global South exacerbate these challenges. Unlike their counterparts in developed countries, cities like Surabaya must contend with more pronounced disparities that affect their ability to implement and benefit from international partnerships. These inequalities are deeply rooted in governance and social structures, which hinder equitable progress and often make it difficult to address urban sustainability issues effectively (Sukmana et al., 2022).

In summary, while paradiplomacy offers significant potential for cities in the Global South to engage in global sustainability discussions and advance local development, it operates within a distinct set of constraints compared to developed nations. The unique challenges faced by cities like Surabaya highlight the need for tailored approaches that address both local needs and global goals while overcoming the specific barriers encountered in the Global South (Alatas, 2021; Surwandono et al., 2020).

Conclusion

The results show that cities in the Global South, particularly Surabaya, have the potential to significantly enhance their sustainability efforts through effective paradiplomacy. Surabaya's active involvement with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) demonstrates how local governments can balance socio-economic challenges with broader environmental objectives (Nganje, 2013). The city's partnerships, especially with sister cities, highlight the need for frameworks that not only support such relationships but also empower local authorities to navigate complex global contexts (Utomo, 2022).



Despite limitations imposed by central government policies, local initiatives remain crucial, shifting diplomacy from traditional models to a deeper understanding of subnational dynamics.

In conclusion, this article shows that by adopting integrative diplomatic strategies, Surabaya and similar cities can position themselves as key players in global sustainability discussions, paving the way for future collaborations within the Global South (Mierzejewski et al., 2018). The analysis of Surabaya's paradiplomacy reveals a complex relationship between local governance and global ambitions, particularly in relation to sustainable development. The findings suggest that Surabaya not only built international partnerships with cities like Kitakyushu and Liverpool but also successfully integrated the SDGs into its policies. This integration offers a practical approach to addressing environmental challenges while navigating Indonesia's post-decentralisation institutional limitations, a topic of much scholarly debate (Utomo, 2022). Moreover, Surabaya's involvement reflects a shift from a centralised diplomatic model to one that empowers local governments, in line with a broader trend in the Global South where cities use paradiplomacy to improve socio-economic conditions. These findings highlight Surabaya's leadership in global sustainability initiatives and offer valuable insights for other cities facing similar challenges.

Surabaya's strategic use of paradiplomacy serves as an important example for other cities in the Global South that are navigating complex urban challenges while pursuing sustainable development. By forming global partnerships and prioritising environmental sustainability, Surabaya provides a model that can be adapted to similar situations of rapid urban growth and limited resources. The city's collaborations show how effective partnerships can facilitate the exchange of knowledge and resources needed to address local challenges. Additionally, the article also suggests that cities engaging in paradiplomacy can use international partnerships to amplify their voices on global platforms, reducing traditional power hierarchies. Therefore, the implications for other cities in the Global South are clear: they should embrace innovative diplomatic strategies that align with both local goals and global agendas.

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THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE SECURITIZATION OF THE ROHINGYA REFUGEE ISSUE IN ACEH, 2023: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The media coverage of the intricate humanitarian catastrophe stemming from the influx of Rohingya refugees in Aceh, Indonesia, in 2023 significantly influences public perception and governmental decision-making. This situation is intricately linked to security concerns. This study conducts a comprehensive analysis of the media's portrayal of the Rohingya refugee situation in Aceh as a national security issue, with a specific emphasis on the arrivals in 2023. The research employed a qualitative methodology encompassing discourse analysis, case studies, and document analysis to investigate the evolution of media frameworks and their impact on public opinion and governmental actions. The findings illustrate the interaction of conflicting narratives—frames emphasizing security risks, cultural differences, and humanitarian issues. This case study analyzes the media's representation of the initial humanitarian emphasis and its subsequent shift towards securitization. Research indicates that media coverage significantly impacts public opinion, perceptions of refugees, and the mechanisms of securitization that rationalize stronger security measures and impede social integration efforts. This study underscores the difficulties of managing conflicting narratives, combating disinformation, and improving media literacy. The findings underscore the necessity of many perspectives, media literacy, and ethical journalism to mitigate the adverse impacts of securitization and promote a more inclusive, rights-oriented framework for refugee protection. These findings contribute to overarching dialogues regarding media framing, securitization, and the protection of refugees.

Keywords

Rohingya refugee crisis, securitization, media framing, Aceh, Indonesia, humanitarian response.



Resumo

A cobertura mediática da complexa catástrofe humanitária decorrente do afluxo de refugiados Rohingya em Aceh, na Indonésia, em 2023, influencia significativamente a percepção pública e a tomada de decisões governamentais. Esta situação está intrinsecamente ligada a preocupações de segurança. Este estudo apresenta uma análise exaustiva da representação mediática da situação dos refugiados Rohingya em Aceh como uma questão de segurança nacional, com ênfase nas chegadas em 2023. A investigação utilizou uma metodologia qualitativa que engloba a análise do discurso, estudos de caso e análise de documentos para investigar a evolução dos enquadramentos dos meios de comunicação social e o seu impacto na opinião pública e nas ações governamentais. Os resultados ilustram a interação de narrativas contraditórias - quadros que realçam os riscos de segurança, as diferenças culturais e as questões humanitárias. Este estudo de caso analisa a representação mediática da ênfase humanitária inicial e a sua subsequente mudança para a securitização. A investigação indica que a cobertura mediática tem um impacto significativo na opinião pública, nas percepções dos refugiados e nos mecanismos de securitização que racionalizam medidas de segurança mais fortes e impedem os esforços de integração social. Este estudo sublinha as dificuldades de gerir narrativas contraditórias, combater a desinformação e melhorar a literacia mediática. As conclusões sublinham a necessidade de muitas perspetivas, de literacia mediática e de jornalismo ético para mitigar os impactos adversos da securitização e promover um quadro de proteção dos refugiados mais inclusivo e orientado para os direitos. Estas conclusões contribuem para diálogos abrangentes sobre o enquadramento dos media, a securitização e a proteção dos refugiados.

Palavras-chave

Crise dos refugiados Rohingya, securitização, enquadramento mediático, Aceh, Indonésia, resposta humanitária.

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THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE SECURITIZATION OF THE ROHINGYA REFUGEE ISSUE IN ACEH, 2023: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS

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Introduction

The arrival of Rohingya refugees into Aceh, Indonesia, in 2023 has given rise to intricate humanitarian challenges and security dilemmas (BBC, 2023). The media wields significant power in shaping public perception and guiding policy decisions, which could lead to this matter being regarded as a national security concern (Usman et al., 2023). The transformation of media reporting has shifted from original narratives emphasizing the humanitarian dimensions of the refugee experience to a paradigm that centers on security concerns, including human trafficking and extremism (BBC, 2023; VOA, 2023). Changes in the framing of media narratives have yielded tangible outcomes, including heightened animosity towards refugees, more stringent border policies, and enforced deportations (AFP, 2023; Yuniar, 2023). The contentious dynamics surrounding the Rohingya situation in Aceh underscore the pressing necessity for a comprehensive analysis of media participation in the securitization process.

Prior studies have investigated the influence of media narratives on public perceptions of refugees and the potential for securitization (J. Lee, 2021; Lie, 2023). Studies have highlighted the impact of negative media representations on fostering resistance to refugees and legitimizing the adoption of restrictive policies (McCann et al., 2023; Ricchiardi, 2018). There is a notable deficiency in acknowledging the absence of indigenous perspectives in current media narratives concerning the Rohingya issue in Aceh (BRIN, 2023; Human Rights Watch, 2024). The absence of diverse perspectives impedes a thorough comprehension of the issues and challenges confronting local communities (BRIN, 2023). The evolving nature of media reporting and its connection to political objectives and social dynamics necessitates further investigation (Viartasiwi & Missbach, 2023).

Therefore, this article aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the media's role in the securitization of the Rohingya refugee crisis in Aceh, Indonesia, focusing on refugee arrivals in 2023. The study employs qualitative methods, including discourse analysis,



case studies, and document analysis, to identify the dominant media frame, which evolves over time, and to examine the impact of these changes on policy decisions and public opinion. This study investigates the interplay among media narratives, local issues, and international influences to understand the intricate dynamics shaping responses to the refugee crisis. The report examines alternative storylines and emphasizes the significance of broadening perspectives to enhance holistic understanding.

Our primary argument is that the securitization of the Rohingya refugee crisis in Aceh has been significantly driven by media coverage, which has in turn influenced public perception and legitimized more stringent security protocols. Ratcliffe and Syakriah (2024) and Yuniar (2023) assert that the proliferation of misinformation and hate campaigns has rendered narratives concerning security more significant than those focused on altruism, hence hindering initiatives aimed at fostering unity. This study posits that a more equitable and empathetic approach to addressing refugee concerns can be achieved by meticulously examining the media's influence on public perception and considering diverse perspectives, particularly those from local sources. This research's findings can inform policy debates, promote ethical journalism, and facilitate the development of effective solutions that prioritize the rights and well-being of Rohingya refugees while addressing valid security issues.

Literature Review

Media narratives significantly influenced public opinion and state responses on the securitization of Rohingya refugees in Aceh, Indonesia, in 2023 (Usman et al., 2023). The influx of refugees prompted debates on the equilibrium between humanitarian obligations and security concerns, resulting in controversy (BBC, 2023). Scholars have examined the intricate relationship between media framing of issues, public opinion, and the securitization process, emphasizing the necessity of a comprehensive understanding of the matter (J. Lee, 2021; Lie, 2022).

The Copenhagen School's perspective on securitization theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how issues are transformed into security threats through discourse (Buzan et al., 1998). This concept illustrates the significance of securitizing agents, such as the media, use speech acts to instill a sense of threat and provoke irrational behavior (Balzacq, 2005). The media narrative of the Rohingya crisis in Aceh has significantly shifted from a focus on humanitarian issues to a security-oriented approach (BBC, 2023; VOA, 2023). This change in viewpoint has yielded quantifiable outcomes, such as heightened animosity towards refugees and the endorsement of more stringent border policies (AFP, 2023; Yuniar, 2023).

J. Lee (2021) and Lie (2023) assert that media framing significantly influences public sentiment towards immigration. Studies indicate that adverse portrayals in the media can lead individuals to dismiss refugees and endorse policies that impose restrictions (McCann et al., 2023; Ricchiardi, 2018). Media coverage of the Rohingya crisis in Aceh has predominantly emphasized security-related concerns, including human trafficking and possible connections to extremism, so overshadowing the humanitarian aspects of the situation (BBC, 2023; VOA, 2023). The rise of securitized media narratives is fueled



by the proliferation of misinformation and the advancement of hate campaigns, particularly on social media platforms (Ratcliffe & Syakriah, 2024; Yuniar, 2023).

BRIN (2023) and Human Rights Watch (2024) have recognized the absence of local viewpoints in prevailing media narratives as a significant deficiency in comprehending the complexities of the Rohingya predicament in Aceh. Security-centric narratives have marginalized the interests and perspectives of local communities, hence hindering initiatives aimed at fostering unity and peaceful coexistence. The lack of diverse perspectives in media reporting contributes to the polarization of public opinion and the marginalization of alternative narratives that emphasize humanitarian issues (Viartasiwi & Missbach, 2023).

The securitization process is more complicated by alterations in media coverage and its interplay with societal dynamics and political agendas (Viartasiwi & Missbach, 2023). Usman et al. (2023) assert that the congruence between media and governmental narratives on the Rohingya issue has intensified security-oriented responses, bolstered more stringent measures, and influenced policy determinations. The surge of refugees in 2023 has heightened the necessity for a comprehensive and nuanced comprehension of the media's impact on public perceptions and policy responses in emergencies (BBC, 2023).

Researchers have emphasized that promoting alternative narratives and amplifying marginalized views is a crucial tactic for addressing the challenges posed by the securitization of the Rohingya refugee crisis in Aceh (BRIN, 2023; Human Rights Watch, 2024). Promoting responsible journalism, addressing misinformation, and enhancing media literacy are essential measures for fostering a more equitable and compassionate approach to this issue (Ratcliffe & Syakriah, 2024). To resolve this issue, it is essential to formulate effective policies that prioritize the rights and welfare of Rohingya refugees while concurrently addressing legitimate security concerns (Viartasiwi & Missbach, 2023). By conducting a thorough analysis of media influence and actively promoting multiple perspectives, policymakers and stakeholders may work together to create inclusive and sustainable solutions for the Rohingya problem in Aceh.

Method

This research uses qualitative methods to analyze the intricate interplay between media coverage and the securitization process of the Rohingya refugee crisis in Aceh, Indonesia, particularly on the arrival of hundreds of migrants in 2023. The research scope is on analyzing media coverage of the Rohingya crisis in Aceh, encompassing article analysis, news reports, editorials, opinions, and online content from several sources, including national newspapers, local news websites, and social media platforms.

The research design employs a multifaceted methodological approach that integrates discourse analysis, targeted case studies, and document analysis. We performed discourse analysis to examine the media framework that depicts the dynamics of Rohingya refugees and their challenges. Analysis of themes to investigate the portrayal of the Rohingya ethnicity in narratives about security threats, humanitarian challenges, and cultural disparities. It also examines the evolution of depictions over time. This study



analyzes the presentation of frames, language selections, and referenced sources to uncover power dynamics and possible biases that affect media discourse.

The primary sources of information for research encompass diverse media, governmental documents, and pertinent stakeholders. These sources comprise national and local newspapers, online news portals, and social media channels. Government documents, such as policy statements, press releases, and official reports, offer significant insights into possible correlations between media narratives and policy actions. This study incorporates viewpoints from essential stakeholders, including refugee organizations, civil society groups, and local community members, to offer a more nuanced and thorough understanding of the situation.

The data collection approach required the aggregation and thorough analysis of news items, official papers, and relevant online information released between November 2023 and March 2024, coinciding with the influx of Rohingya refugees in Aceh. The chosen timeline enables the analysis of first media reactions, narrative developments, and their possible influence on policy choices. Articles and documents were collected via an exhaustive search of media databases, government websites, and social media platforms using pertinent keywords and phrases related to the Rohingya crisis in Aceh.

We gathered data through a comprehensive analytical approach employing diverse qualitative methods. Thematic analysis is used to uncover reoccurring themes, patterns, and narratives in media coverage. The evaluation includes language selections, the presentation of the subject matter, the portrayal of the individuals involved, and the overarching sentiment expressed in the coverage. Comparative analysis is employed to investigate the similarities and variations in media narratives across various sources and temporal contexts. Critical discourse analysis is employed to reveal the latent power dynamics, beliefs, and biases inherent in media discourse.

Results and Discussion

Securitization Theory and the Rohingya Case: Revealing the Dynamics of Threat Construction

The plight of the Rohingya ethnic group in Myanmar and their exodus to neighboring countries, including Aceh, Indonesia, underscores the intricate interplay between humanitarian issues and security perceptions. Current news articles, scholarly research, and documentation of human rights abuses indicate a transition from prioritizing humanitarian assistance to emphasizing security protocols. This transition has resulted in substantial implications for the well-being of refugees and the social framework of Aceh (BBC, 2023; Viartasiwi & Missbach, 2023; Human Rights Watch, 2024). The idea of securitization elucidates how these concerns are framed as "security threats," potentially resulting in the implementation of drastic measures that beyond standard democratic procedures. This section examines the theoretical underpinnings and complexities of the securitization paradigm for the Rohingya issue, drawing on recent literature and research.



Elements of Securitization in the Rohingya Case

The Copenhagen School's securitization theory posits that discursive processes can convert non-security matters into security concerns. Multiple factors in Aceh in 2023 render the Rohingya refugees susceptible to incarceration. The primary objective is to establish a scenario that induces substantial and immediate peril. The sustained persecution, denial of citizenship, and egregious brutality faced by the Rohingya ethnic group in Myanmar constitute unequivocal proof of a genuine and substantial threat. Their presence is readily associated with a narrative of national security apprehension, further bolstered by anxieties around illegal immigration, constrained resources, and the potential for religious extremism. The formulation of this danger is evident in remarks made by Indonesian politicians, such as Bobby Rizaldi, a DPR member who underscored the necessity of clarifying the status of individuals entering Indonesian territory. Rizaldi asserted that not all Rohingya migrants possess refugee status (BBC, 2023). When these variables are considered collectively, it becomes evident that the Rohingya situation is conducive to securitization, as numerous stakeholders and narratives perceive them as a significant threat.

The involvement of securitization agents and their discursive actions is a crucial element of the Rohingya situation's securitization process. Governments, including those in Myanmar and receiving nations like Indonesia, can significantly enhance security through formal declarations, regulations, and media communications. Non-state actors, including Buddhist nationalist groups in Myanmar and local people in Aceh, can influence the securitization narrative via public discourse, protests, and online speeches. President Joko Widodo's reaction to the rising influx of Rohingya refugees into Indonesia reflects his profound skepticism regarding the role of criminal human trafficking syndicates (Republic of Indonesia Cabinet Secretariat, 2023). The conclusion is that the alignment of state and non-state actors in framing the Rohingya issue as a security threat amplifies the securitization process.

Consent from the target market, which may encompass the general public, decision-makers, or international organizations, is a crucial third component for successful securitization. The media has a significant impact in molding societal perceptions and influencing the acceptability of the issue as a serious security threat. The consistency in depicting the Rohingya crisis throughout media outlets, despite varying editorial perspectives and political alignments, underscores the prevalent security-focused framing. An analysis of media narratives reveals a shift from a primary focus on humanitarian concerns to a heightened emphasis on security threats (BBC, 2023; VOA, 2023).

Nuances and Complexities of Applying Securitization Theory

Securitization theory provides a valuable framework for analyzing the Rohingya crisis; yet, its application to this particular context necessitates an examination of its subtleties and complexity. A crucial element to consider is the challenge to prevailing viewpoints in media discourse over the Rohingya crisis. The coexistence of the "security threat" frame and the "humanitarian crisis" frame engenders competition and tension, hence affecting policy decisions. The shift in media reporting reflects this contention, as it initially



highlighted the plight of refugees but progressively transitioned to focus on security concerns (BBC, 2023; VOA, 2023). It is essential to analyze these divergent viewpoints to comprehend the dynamics of securitization in the Rohingya context.

The interplay between local and global dynamics merits consideration, encompassing interactions among national governments, regional organizations, and global media discourse at both local and international levels. The intricacy of this issue stems from the frequent marginalization of local communities' perspectives, particularly in Aceh, within media narratives. The inadequate representation of local viewpoints and issues in mainstream media discourse is corroborated by information from BRIN (2023) and Human Rights Watch (2024). The absence of varied viewpoints obstructs a comprehensive comprehension of the circumstances and effects of securitization in practice.

It is also crucial to acknowledge the varying effects of securitization processes on distinct groups. Securitization may also marginalize the perspectives and requirements of the most vulnerable populations, including the Rohingya refugees. This issue arises from the tendency of securitization narratives to prioritize state security requirements over human rights issues. Evidence supports the occurrence of forceful evictions and the challenging living conditions faced by Rohingya refugees in temporary shelters (AFP, 2023; Yuniar, 2023). In conclusion, the use of securitization theory necessitates an examination of power relations and the potential for exacerbating the marginalization of vulnerable populations.

Securitization theory offers a valuable perspective for analyzing the formation of threats about the Rohingya. The Rohingya situation in Aceh exemplifies aspects of securitization, encompassing the assessment of existential threats, the participation of individuals engaged in the securitization process, and the endorsement of appropriate authorities. To apply this theory to the case, we must acknowledge the nuances involved, including differing views, the interplay of local and global influences, and the disparate effects on various groups. By examining these components more deeply, we may attain a comprehensive understanding of the securitization process and its implications, which will assist us in determining how to aid the Rohingya refugees in Aceh who are facing difficulties.

Media Frames and Narrative Construction: Shaping Rohingya Discourse in Aceh

The media has a crucial role in shaping public opinion and policymaking concerning the intricate Rohingya refugee issue in Aceh. Media frameworks, established via the construction of certain narratives, possess the capacity to elevate humanitarian issues or provoke security concerns, so affecting the reception and treatment of refugees. This section examines various elements of influential language to demonstrate how the usage and framing of specific words and phrases significantly affect public perceptions regarding the perceived threat of Rohingya refugees.



Dominant Frames and Narrative Shifts

The emphasis is on identifying and analyzing three principal media frames—the humanitarian frame, the security threat frame, and the cultural differences frame—that influence the discourse on the Rohingya minority in Aceh. These frameworks are being analyzed for their capacity to influence public opinion, governmental decisions, and the overarching narrative of the refugee crisis. Current information indicates that a humanitarian viewpoint portrays Rohingya refugees as individuals who have endured violence and persecution, emphasizing their suffering and evoking empathy (BBC, 2023). The primary focus is on the dire circumstances and immediate requirements of refugees who have endured perilous journeys, with the humanitarian emphasis reinforced by imagery and narration illustrating the plight of vulnerable populations, including women, children, and the elderly. The primary focus on humanitarian operations was bolstered by media coverage highlighting the dire conditions in refugee camps, the lack of essential resources, and substantial local support and relief efforts (BBC, 2023). The security threat paradigm characterizes refugees as a menace to national security, highlighting the dangers of human trafficking, illegal immigration, and extremist infiltration (VOA, 2023). The cultural differences framework highlights perceived disparities in culture and religion that may obstruct initiatives aimed at social inclusion (BBC, 2023).

These frameworks ultimately interact and evolve throughout time. Various factors, such as political events, public sentiment, and global attention, affect the variations in a specific group's dominance. This dynamic manifests as a rapid surge in refugee arrivals or a notable security incident that can swiftly alter the narrative, redirecting attention from a humanitarian viewpoint to a security-focused perspective (AFP, 2023; Yuniar, 2023). This change in narrative was distinctly observed in media coverage, which started to highlight apprehensions regarding the impact of refugees on social stability, economic strain, and their possible association with criminal activity (VOA, 2023). Moreover, the media's amplification of local voices and issues may influence the predominance of cultural difference frameworks (BBC, 2023). The investigation determines that the interplay and development of these predominant frameworks influenced the intricate narrative concerning the Rohingya crisis in Aceh. This has significant implications for society's comprehension, policy emphasis, and general strategy regarding the refugee crisis.

Promoting media literacy, endorsing responsible journalism, and amplifying multiple perspectives are methods to address the complexities arising from this evolving narrative. The objective is to formulate a more intricate and equitable approach to addressing the issue, considering humanitarian responsibilities, security factors, and the necessity of fostering community cohesion. This is seen in the ongoing requirement for dialogue, collaboration, and commitment to ethical journalism that emphasizes accuracy, neutrality, and empathy throughout a complex humanitarian crisis (Ratcliffe & Syakriah, 2024). Stakeholders may collaboratively develop a more comprehensive and equitable narrative that honors the rights and dignity of Rohingya refugees, while simultaneously addressing the concerns of host communities, by meticulously analyzing the existing framework and its effects.



Legitimizing Security Measures

It is crucial to recognize how securitized media narratives can rationalize severe security measures in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis in Aceh. This phenomenon arises when the media portrays Rohingya refugees as a security threat, hence legitimizing actions that go beyond conventional political conventions. Enhanced border restrictions, augmented surveillance, and the implementation of arrests and expulsions signify these phenomena (AFP, 2023; Yuniar, 2023).

Stigmatized media narratives initially generate a sense of urgency and fear to rationalize extreme measures. The VOA (2023) indicates that the media's persistent emphasis on potential security threats associated with Rohingya refugees, such as their participation in human trafficking, illegal immigration, or extremist organizations, heightens public anxiety and underscores the necessity for immediate and resolute action. This sense of urgency may justify the enforcement of stringent security measures, notwithstanding potential infringements on the rights and freedoms of refugees.

Secondly, securitization Media narratives portraying security measures as a response to the purported threat presented by refugees may legitimize such policies. Ongoing portrayals of hazards and challenges associated with refugee admissions in the media may generate public expectation for the government to implement decisive measures to address these issues (BBC, 2023). This assumption can inform more judicious financial allocations towards border security, surveillance infrastructure, and other security-related initiatives, even at the expense of funding programs that assist individuals or facilitate their integration. Media narratives can normalize and justify security measures by framing them as a logical and essential response to a perceived danger.

Ultimately, by omitting dissenting perspectives and critiques, securitized media narratives may also serve to legitimize security measures. When the media predominantly emphasizes security threats and the necessity for prompt response, it may marginalize individuals advocating for a more empathetic approach or expressing concerns regarding the implications of security measures on the rights and welfare of refugees (Ratcliffe & Syakriah, 202[^]). The marginalization of the Acehnese populace, civil society organizations, and local authorities in addressing refugee accommodation is seen in the little media coverage that examines their perspectives (Viartasiwi & Missbach, 2023). The absence of local viewpoints in media portrayals of the Rohingya issue in Aceh obstructs a comprehensive understanding of the situation and the development of inclusive solutions. The adverse effect is the reduction in support and cohesion, along with the challenges encountered by local governments in addressing the needs of refugees and host communities (BBC, 2023). In conclusion, the omission of other perspectives might impede the capacity of activists and civil society organizations to ensure governmental accountability for any abuses or disproportionate measures undertaken in the name of security. Conversely, the media possesses an option to foster a favorable environment without showcasing opposing perspectives of rival viewpoints. The media, as an influential entity, must recognize its substantial role in shaping public opinion and endeavor to deliver equitable and accountable reporting by acknowledging the intricacies of issues and the human rights of all parties concerned.



Influencing Public Opinion and Shaping Attitudes

The media's utilization of narratives and frameworks can cultivate empathy and compassion or incite fear and animosity. Studies indicate that humanitarian narratives highlighting the pain and vulnerability of migrants can effectively garner public support for aid and protection efforts (BBC, 2023). The residents of Aceh shown local solidarity by supplying food, housing, and other necessities to the refugees. Civil society organizations have organized to advocate for the rights and welfare of refugees (Viartasiwi & Missbach, 2023). Conversely, narratives around security threats may lead to negative attitudes, social isolation, and bias (VOA, 2023). Evidence of this phenomenon is apparent in the augmented security measures adopted by government entities, including heightened border checks, monitoring activities, and the creation of refugee camps (Human Rights Watch, 2024).

The media influences public opinion of the Rohingya refugee crisis by selective information presentation and emphasis on specific aspects, potentially fostering either acceptance or hostility. The media's consistent focus on the humanitarian adversities faced by refugees, encompassing detailed accounts of their obstacles and traumas, fosters empathy and a sense of ethical obligation within the broader populace (BBC, 2023). The potency of these narratives fosters backing for humanitarian efforts, contributions, and appeals for governmental intervention to safeguard and aid refugees. Conversely, when the media disproportionately emphasizes potential security issues, such as criminal behavior or cultural disparities, it engenders dread, worry, and animosity throughout the populace (VOA, 2023).

The media's language and framing methods can profoundly affect public perception and engagement with Rohingya refugees. Employing humanizing language, such as "families," "children," and "individuals," can cultivate sentiments of connection and empathy, prompting individuals to perceive refugees as fellow humans in need of assistance (BBC, 2023). The employment of dehumanizing or criminalizing language, such as "illegal immigrants," "infiltrators," or "threats," engenders notions of exceptionalism and dread, leading to the stigmatization and marginalization of refugees (VOA, 2023). The employment of this phrase can significantly influence public opinion, affecting the perceived worthiness of refugees for empathy.

The media's portrayal of the Rohingya refugee crisis can significantly influence public opinion and behavior over time. Consistent exposure to narratives that illustrate the qualities, beneficial effects, and future potential of refugees helps foster a more inclusive and open society (BBC, 2023). These narratives can challenge and eliminate prejudice, promote understanding, and enhance public support for policies and programs that facilitate the assimilation and empowerment of refugees. Conversely, the continual consumption of news on security dangers perpetuates gloomy beliefs, exacerbates prejudice, and obstructs the advancement of societal cohesion (VOA, 2023). The enduring effects of media framing on public perceptions may influence the environment for refugee reception and their opportunities for reintegration into host communities.

Our conclusion is that public opinion and overall acceptance of Rohingya refugees in Aceh are significantly shaped by media decisions. They are obligated to provide unbiased, precise, and thorough reports that consider the intricate realities of the refugee situation.



Promoting narratives that foster empathy, comprehension, and communal cohesion helps cultivate a more hospitable and inclusive environment for refugees, while contesting those that incite fear and division. The media's impact on public perception underscores the necessity of competent and ethical journalism concerning the Rohingya refugee crisis.

Pressing Policy Decisions

It is crucial to note that governments may face significant pressure from securitized media coverage to prioritize security concerns over humanitarian responsibilities in addressing the Rohingya problem. This phenomenon arises as public apprehensions, magnified by media narratives, influence policy decisions and dictate resource allocation. A discernible shift in focus towards security measures and border control may lead to a reallocation of resources away from humanitarian assistance and integration initiatives (Viartasiwi & Missbach, 2023).

Media narratives can affect policy decisions by instilling a sense of urgency in the public and prompting demands for action. The media frequently discusses security issues related to Rohingya refugees, particularly their potential involvement with criminal or extremist organizations, leading the public to anticipate prompt and decisive government action to mitigate these threats (VOA, 202<). Public pressure may compel governments to prioritize security activities, like augmenting border patrols, enforcing harsher screening protocols, or perhaps closing crossings entirely to exhibit their commitment.

Securitized media narratives can influence the allocation of cash and resources in addressing the Rohingya refugee problem. Media coverage emphasizing security issues can redirect public attention and government priorities towards efforts aimed at enhancing border control, surveillance systems, and law enforcement capabilities (Viartasiwi & Missbach, 2023). Emphasizing security may lead to a diversion of resources from humanitarian aid, including food, shelter, and health care, as well as initiatives that promote the long-term integration of refugees, such as education, job, and social inclusion. The media's portrayal of issues can directly affect budgetary decisions and resource allocation, thereby jeopardizing the fulfillment of the fundamental needs and rights of refugees.

Subsequently, political discourse and policy deliberations over the Rohingya refugee crisis may be shaped by media narratives that emphasize security concerns. Characterizing refugees as a potential threat may restrict the scope of policy discussions and obstruct the investigation of alternative approaches that prioritize human rights, international law, and humanitarian principles (Ratcliffe & Syakriah, 2024). Enduring challenges are seen in the prolonged resettlement of refugees, restricted access to education and employment opportunities, and strained relations between refugees and host communities (Viartasiwi & Missbach, 2023). To effectively tackle the challenges faced by Rohingya refugees in Aceh, it is essential to sustain a long-term commitment to inclusive dialogue, evidence-based policies, and a framework that emphasizes human rights. A focus on security may marginalize and diminish the impact of those advocating for more compassionate and inclusive policies. These policies may encompass measures such as enhancing legal avenues for refugee protection, devoting money to community-based integration initiatives, or addressing the root causes of displacement. The media's



influence on policy discourse can constrain decision-makers' options and skew policy towards a more restricted and enforcement-oriented paradigm.

Media-driven narratives can shape policy objectives and directly affect the lives of Rohingya refugees in Aceh. This concludes that media narratives significantly influence refugees. Policymakers and campaigners must recognize that the media can influence policy decisions. Consequently, they are obligated to scrutinize media narratives and advocate for a more equitable and evidence-based approach to addressing refugee matters. Critiques securitization viewpoints that overlook human rights and humanitarian considerations, advocating for policies that align with international obligations and prioritize the safety and welfare of refugees. To facilitate this, funds must be allocated for educating individuals on effective media utilization and for fostering informed public discourse that acknowledges the intricacies of forced displacement and the global need to seek sustainable solutions. The media's influence on governmental decisions underscores the necessity of responsible and accountable journalism in shaping the response to the Rohingya refugee crisis.

Navigation Complexity

Understanding the intricate relationship between media coverage and securitization is essential, as it highlights the challenges associated with addressing the multifaceted aspects of the refugee issue. Ratcliffe and Syakriah (2024) assert the necessity of navigating opposing narratives, combating misinformation, and promoting media literacy to cultivate a more balanced and nuanced comprehension of the issue.

Identifying and addressing the contradictory narratives that shape public discourse around the Rohingya refugee crisis is crucial for navigating complexity. Humanitarian tales underscore the adversity faced by refugees, accentuating their pain, vulnerability, and rights, while appealing for compassion, protection, and assistance (BBC, 2023). Conversely, security-oriented narratives emphasize national interests, border regulation, and the potential dangers linked to the influx of refugees (VOA, 2023). Contradictory narratives can generate discord and division, hindering consensus and the formulation of effective solutions. To navigate this intricate scenario, we must employ a nuanced strategy that acknowledges the legitimacy of humanitarian and security concerns while striving for a balanced solution that upholds human rights and fosters enduring, sustainable results.

Addressing misinformation that incites hatred, fear, and violence towards Rohingya refugees is a crucial aspect of tackling complexity. In the contemporary age of social media, the swift dissemination of information, together with the proliferation of erroneous or misleading news, can rapidly attain popularity and influence public opinion (Ratcliffe & Syakriah, 2024). This encompasses exaggerated claims on security threats, baseless conjectures about criminal conduct, or degrading stereotypes that depict refugees as encumbering or intrusive. This issue necessitates a proactive and collaborative approach that engages several stakeholders, including media entities, fact-checking organizations, civil society groups, and governmental bodies. This entails advocating for accurate and reliable information, countering deceptive claims, and cultivating a culture of critical thinking and media literacy throughout the populace.



Advancing media literacy and ethical journalism in the coverage of the Rohingya refugee crisis is essential to navigate its complexities. Media literacy is equipping individuals with the capability and comprehension to meticulously investigate and evaluate media content, differentiating between factual data, subjective opinions, and propaganda (Ratcliffe & Syakriah, 2024). This enables society to render educated assessments and mitigate the impact of sensationalist or biased journalism. Responsible journalism necessitates compliance with ethical standards that emphasize honesty, fairness, and impartiality in reporting on refugee matters. The procedure entails offering contextual information, presenting many perspectives, and avoiding stereotypes or inciting fear. Promoting media literacy and ethical journalism helps cultivate a more informed and productive public discourse over the Rohingya situation. This discourse will transcend simplistic answers and promote a deeper awareness of the intricate issues faced by refugees and local communities.

Critical Reflection

An examination of the media framing of the Rohingya refugee crisis and its securitization in Aceh, Indonesia, uncovers a complex array of interrelated factors that shape public perception, legislative actions, and the lived realities of refugees. The objective of this discourse is to consolidate the principal findings and ideas from the research, highlighting the significant significance of media narratives in the formation and perpetuation of securitization processes. The reasoning for this is that comprehending the media's influence is essential in developing ways to alleviate the negative consequences of securitization and promoting more inclusive and rights-based approaches to safeguard refugees. Case studies about the influx of Rohingya refugees in Aceh in 2023, coupled with assessments of media framing and its repercussions, underscore the pressing necessity to critically assess the media's role and advocate for responsible journalism (BBC, 2023; Viartasiwi & Missbach, 2023; Human Rights Institute, 2024).

This research's primary finding is that media narratives are fluid and possess the capacity to progressively alter public opinion and policy priorities. The primary concept is that the initial focus on humanitarian issues in media reports regarding the entrance of Rohingya refugees in Aceh progressively transitioned to a security-oriented viewpoint that underscored the potential dangers and risks linked to their stay. This shift may result from various factors, including the extended duration of the crisis, the strain on local resources, and the influence of political and public discourse. The shift in narrative is seen in the prevalence of security themes throughout media coverage, encompassing concerns regarding societal stability, economic difficulties, and potential criminal activity (VOA, 2023).

This research reveals the media's role in normalizing and legitimizing extreme acts and policies in response to security threats. Media coverage emphasizing security facilitates restrictive and discriminatory measures that may infringe upon the rights and welfare of refugees. Depicting refugees as potential security threats can heighten public apprehension and compel authorities to prioritize security concerns over humanitarian responsibilities. This phenomenon is manifested by the enforcement of stringent border



laws, the establishment of restricted refugee camps, and the imposition of limitations on access to critical services and food procurement (Human Rights Watch, 2024).

This analysis also highlights the necessity of elevating varied perspectives in media coverage on the plight of Rohingya refugees in Aceh. The inadequate portrayal of local perspectives and the marginalization of refugee experiences in media narratives obstruct a comprehensive understanding of the situation and the development of inclusive solutions. This transpires due to an absence of perspective, resulting in an oversimplification of the situation and the reinforcement of prejudices and misconceptions concerning refugees and local people. The adverse effects of insufficient local media coverage are apparent in the polarization of public opinion, diminishing support and cohesion, and the challenges encountered by local governments in meeting the needs of refugees and host communities (BBC, 2023; Viartasiwi & Missbach, 2023). This analysis demonstrates that integrating diverse viewpoints from local residents and refugees is crucial in media reporting to promote a comprehensive and nuanced public discourse on the Rohingya refugee crisis in Aceh.

Additionally, this study underscores the significance of media literacy and the cultivation of ethical journalism concerning the Rohingya refugee situation in Aceh, acknowledging the media's capacity to shape public opinion and affect policy. Consequently, the media must prioritize honesty, justice, and the safeguarding of human rights. Biased or sensational journalism can intensify the isolation and persecution of refugees, while simultaneously diminishing public faith in the media. The significance of responsible journalism is exemplified by media and journalists striving to provide unbiased and thorough coverage of the Rohingya refugee crisis, highlighting individual stories and the complexities of the issue (Ratcliffe & Syakriah, 2024). To mitigate the adverse effects of securitization and foster a more informed and compassionate public discourse, it is essential to emphasize the enhancement of media literacy and the promotion of responsible journalism.

Furthermore, this study also underscores the necessity for a holistic and multi-faceted approach to tackle the challenges confronting Rohingya refugees in Aceh and beyond. A crucial point to emphasize is that the intricate interplay among media narratives, public perceptions, governmental responses, and the genuine experiences of refugees necessitates collaborative and ongoing efforts from all stakeholders concerned. The securitization of the Rohingya refugee crisis is driven not only by media coverage but also by overarching social, political, and economic forces. The necessity for a holistic strategy is apparent due to the persistent challenges faced by refugees, such as prolonged resettlement, restricted access to education and employment, and strained connections with host communities (Viartasiwi & Missbach, 2023). To adequately address the enduring needs of Rohingya refugees in Aceh and promote a holistic, human rights-centered strategy for refugee protection, it is essential to engage and collaborate with media representatives, policymakers, civil society organizations, and the refugee community. All parties involved must be vigilant and take action in addressing this intricate and varied situation. The interrelation of media narratives, public perceptions, policy responses, and the actual experiences of refugees is the primary reason, and fixing these elements cannot occur in isolation. Numerous evidentiary sources underscore the necessity of enacting initiatives that promote transparent and unbiased journalism,



counter misinformation, elevate refugee perspectives, and foster dialogue and comprehension between refugees and host communities (Viartasiwi & Missbach, 2023; Human Rights Watch, 2024; BBC, 2023).

This study offers substantial insight into the intricate processes that shape public perceptions, policy actions, and refugee experiences. This study highlights the significance of media narratives in developing and perpetuating the securitization process, along with the detrimental effects of insufficient local news coverage and the omission of alternative viewpoints. The research findings underscore the significance of media literacy advocacy, ethical journalism, and enhancing refugee narratives to mitigate the detrimental effects of securitization and promote a more informed and compassionate public discourse. To effectively tackle the challenges encountered by Rohingya refugees in Aceh and other areas, it is crucial to implement a comprehensive and cooperative approach that prioritizes human rights, inclusive solutions, and the active participation of refugee communities in shaping their own destinies.

Conclusion

This research primarily reveals the impact of media narratives on public views, policy responses, and the lived realities of Rohingya refugees in Aceh, Indonesia. An examination of media framing and securitization processes uncovers intricate linkages among components that shape and perpetuate security-centric narratives, which profoundly affect the treatment and welfare of refugees. The case study of the Rohingya refugees' arrival in Aceh in 2023 illustrates the evolution of media narratives, transitioning from an emphasis on humanitarian concerns to a predominant focus on security considerations. The media's presentation of information endorses and legitimizes extreme actions and policies that may infringe upon refugees' rights, thereby undermining public support and cohesion. This study underscores the necessity of enhancing different viewpoints, promoting critical media analysis, and endorsing ethical journalism to mitigate the detrimental impacts of securitization and cultivate a more informed and sympathetic public discourse.

This research greatly enhances the field of media and refugee studies by doing a thorough examination of the media's role in the securitization of the Rohingya refugee crisis in Aceh, Indonesia. This study extends prior scientific investigations by examining the particular circumstances of Rohingya refugees in Aceh and the alterations in media narratives that arise upon their arrival in 2023. The research offers extensive insight into intricate dynamics through a diverse analytical methodology that integrates discourse analysis, case studies, and document analysis. These findings offer significant insights into wider debates concerning media framing, securitization, and refugee protection. They underscore the significance of critically evaluating media narratives and comprehending their impact on public views and governmental choices. This research underscores the necessity of promoting media literacy, ethical journalism, and amplifying multiple perspectives to mitigate the detrimental effects of securitization and foster a more inclusive, rights-oriented approach to refugee protection.

This research has notable limitations that must be recognized, despite its significant contributions. This challenge emerges from the limited focus of the research, which



exclusively investigates the situation of Rohingya refugees in Aceh, Indonesia. Consequently, the generalizability of this research's findings to other refugee contexts or media environments may be constrained. Subsequent inquiry might analyze the media's role in framing the refugee crisis as a security concern across many geographic, political, and cultural contexts to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. This research predominantly used qualitative approaches, including conversation analysis and document analysis, which are vulnerable to researcher interpretation and potential bias. Employing quantitative approaches, such as content analysis or survey research, allows for the triangulation of findings and the acquisition of a more thorough understanding of public opinion and sentiment towards Rohingya refugees in Aceh. This research will be augmented by including primary data, including interviews with journalists, policymakers, and refugees. This will offer a more thorough comprehension of their experiences and viewpoints concerning the media's impact on the discourse related to the Rohingya refugee problem.

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BRIDGING WORLDS: SAHRAWI WOMEN'S FIGHT AGAINST COLONIALISM AND PATRIARCHY IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS AND THE SPANISH DIASPORA

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Abstract

This article seeks to understand the diverse roles of Sahrawi women in the refugee camps, in Algeria, and in the Spanish diaspora, relating to women's resistance efforts against Colonialism and Patriarchy. Drawing from academic literature and primary sources, this article discusses the historical role of women in the Sahrawi society, both in the survival of the people and within the resistance movement. A debate emerges between the perspectives of the Sahrawi women in the camps and those in the Spanish diaspora, which roughly present different standpoints on women's emancipation and rights. Through a Decolonial Feminism framework, I examine the differences between the day-to-day lives of the women in the camps, who must focus on survival, education, and health, and those in Spain, who present a distinct lens of issues from their outside perspective. Overall, the article advocates for the recognition and amplification of Sahrawi women's voices, emphasising their crucial role in the pursuit of liberation from both Colonial and Patriarchal oppression. Lastly, it calls for a greater focus on the occupation of Western Sahara and the liberation of the Sahrawi people.

Keywords

Emancipation, Liberation, Resistance, Western Sahara, Women.

Resumo

Este artigo procura compreender os diversos papéis das mulheres Saharauis nos campos de refugiados, na Argélia e na diáspora espanhola, relacionados com os esforços de resistência das mulheres contra o Colonialismo e o Patriarcado. Com base na literatura académica e em fontes primárias, este artigo discute o papel histórico das mulheres Saharauis, tanto na sobrevivência do povo como no movimento de resistência. Surge um debate entre as perspetivas das mulheres Saharauis nos campos e as da diáspora espanhola, que apresentam, grosso modo, diferentes pontos de vista sobre a emancipação e os direitos das mulheres. Através de um quadro de Feminismo Decolonial, examino as diferenças entre o quotidiano das mulheres nos campos, que têm de se concentrar na sobrevivência, na educação e na saúde, e o das mulheres em Espanha, que apresentam uma perceção distinta das questões a partir da sua perspetiva externa. De um modo geral, o artigo defende o reconhecimento e a amplificação das vozes das mulheres Saharauis, sublinhando o seu papel crucial na busca da libertação da opressão colonial e patriarcal. Por fim, apela a um maior enfoque na ocupação do Sahara Ocidental e na libertação do povo Saharaui.



Palavras-chave

Emancipação, Libertação, Resistência, Sahara Ocidental, Mulheres.

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BRIDGING WORLDS: SAHRAWI WOMEN'S FIGHT AGAINST COLONIALISM AND PATRIARCHY IN THE REFUGEE CAMPS AND THE SPANISH DIASPORA

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Introduction

The debate surrounding Sahrawi women's emancipation within their society is not recent. Some scholars (Juliano, 1998; Zunes & Mundy, 2010) understand the society as matriarchal and upholding women's rights. Yet, as will be discussed in this article, this perspective overlooks the voices and understandings of many Sahrawi women. This article engages with these conflicting perspectives, centring power dynamics, resistance, emancipation, and self-determination. This research challenges conventional narratives that overlook Sahrawi women's autonomy and resistance by prioritising their voices and perspectives. Centring Sahrawi women's voices not only enriches academic debates but also challenges the dominance of outsider perspectives in knowledge production.

The interest surrounding this research focus arose when I met five children from the refugee camps in Algeria, who had come to Europe in 2019 under the *Vacaciones en Paz* programme¹. I became acquainted with the struggle of the Sahrawi people from conversations I had with these children and their chaperone. These conversations, paired with a previous interest in liberation struggles and women's emancipation paved the way for an academic interest to be developed surrounding the role and perspectives of Sahrawi women on Colonisation and human rights violations, along with the Patriarchal system of oppression. Seeking to take on a feminist and decolonial approach to the problems which arise from the study of literature, as well as conversations with Sahrawi women, I listened to the various intakes of the women interviewed on the historical role of the Sahrawi women in the struggle and survival of their people.

For this reason, in this article, I generated a conversation between two groups of Sahrawi women: those living in the Algerian refugee camps, and those residing in Spain, forming part of the diaspora. It is under this focus that the research question which I aim at answering in this article arises: What are the current perceptions of Sahrawi women in the refugee camps and in the Spanish diaspora considering women's rights and emancipation? To answer this question, a dialogue was created between the existing

¹ *Vacaciones en Paz* is a programme officiated in the 1980s to host Sahrawi children by families of different countries – usually Spain, in this case, Italy - during the months of July and August.



literature on each group and my own previous research². I interviewed a total of nine women – five living in the refugee camps³, and four living in Spain. I contacted these women through a snowball sample approach or directly through organisations. After establishing initial contact, I conducted online interviews where the themes explored in this article were discussed. Consequently, I analysed the information provided by these interviews through Reflexive Thematic Analysis. Thus, I seek to understand the different perspectives these women presented regarding their status in the Sahrawi society and their critiques on what they consider to be women's lack of rights. This way, I aim at highlighting the importance of centring Sahrawi women's perspectives and understandings, rather than depicting a Western academia contribution focused mainly on the interpretations of Western scholars.

Positionality: a Decolonial contribution

Before proceeding, I must first acknowledge my positionality within both academic and societal frameworks. I am a white middle-class woman in my mid-20s, born and raised in Portugal – a country where history is largely taught through a Western, Eurocentric lens. This background inevitably shapes my perspective, requiring a conscious effort to critically engage with histories and narratives that have been actively suppressed by Colonial structures. The Portuguese society continues to struggle with recognising the deep and lasting scars of Colonialism. As a result, systemic inequalities – rooted in class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality – persist, often unacknowledged by those who are not directly affected or actively engaged with these issues.

For this reason, paired with Decolonial and Postcolonial concerns on the inherent issues of White Feminism, a reflection on this framework is fundamental. Françoise Vergès and Ashley J. Bohrer (2019) understand that Western countries tend to repress their Colonial history and the abuse that they carried out first-hand of people overseas. These countries seek to weaken the ties between slavery, Colonialism, and Imperialism, to preserve their feeling of innocence. Accordingly, White Feminism uses the oppression of women by men to create distance from the racist legacy of the Western world and thus ignore the various issues that constitute forms of oppression, by simplifying them.

For this reason, and considering my roots, I believe it to be imperative that a Decolonial perspective be taken on, to stand in the way of replicating issues such as this one. Decolonial Feminism focuses on strengthening the bonds between the allies in the Global North and the struggles of the women of the Global South, emphasising the need to disrupt Capitalism and Patriarchy (Vergès & Bohrer, 2019). This is where my research becomes relevant, to contribute to the amplification of Sahrawi women's narratives on their own terms, stemming from a country where little discussion on the resistance of Western Sahara is cultivated.

To discuss the resistance of a people in the Global South, one must bridge anti-Racist, anti-Capitalist, and anti-Colonial struggles together to further theories on liberation and emancipation. Furthermore, to discuss the resistance of a people from an Islamic country,

² Research conducted in my master's dissertation: Fernandes, C. A. (2023). Sahrawi Women's Resistance in the Refugee Camps and in the Spanish Diaspora.

³ Four of them interviewed with the aid of a translator.



it is also fundamental to understand that with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the mainstream Feminist Movement's work toward emancipation – criticism of religious authoritarianism, the analysis of heteropatriarchal domination of women, and the connections between Capital, State, and Sexism – were reduced to Secularism and criticism over Islam (Vergès & Bohrer, 2019). It is in this sense that one must contemplate Civilising Western Feminism as inherently racist and Western-centred, perceiving outsider values and cultures as oppressive, and disregarding the struggles of the feminist movement in the 1970s: the feminist struggle in Europe became a neoliberal ideology (Vergès & Bohrer, 2019).

The historical role of Sahrawi women

Nomadic ancestry

The Sahrawi people are inherently nomadic, of Berbere origin, descendants of Yemeni travellers. The Sanhaja Berbers arrived in what we now know as Western Sahara about 500 BCE (Suarez, 2016). The language spoken was developed over the centuries and remains alive today due to the efforts of the Sahrawi women (Sadiqi, 2008). The society follows patrilineal familial norms and gender hierarchy, posing women as dependent and inferior to men (Sadiqi, 2008). At the political level, the society leading up to the colonisation period was characterised by what Segato (2011, in Medina Martín, 2016) conceptualised as "low-intensity patriarchy", for the political decisions were discussed with women before being put into practice since their intake was deemed fundamental for decision-making.

Spanish Colonialism

Spanish Colonisation, which began in 1884, instigated change within the gender dynamics in place (López Tessore & Maiolino, 2022). The oppression and suppression of the Sahrawi culture hardened by 1940, when the settlers focused on weakening the nomadic culture of the Sahrawi people (Medina Martín, 2016). The provincialisation project carried out by Spain after the Civil War (1936-1939) planned to lay the basis of the assimilation of the colonised society, building an ambivalent relationship with the latter. Ambivalent because the policies at play served as a form of negation as well as identification with the colonised subject, in a state of neither one nor the other (Tirado, 2024). Spain defined the region of Western Sahara considering its Bedouin practices, the language of Hassanyia, and Muslim religion, to distinguish it from the metropole (Tirado, 2024).

From 1964 to 1975, the exploitation of phosphate increased, along with stronger colonisation efforts towards the weakening of the native culture (Rodríguez & Barrado, 2015 in Medina Martín, 2016). The colonisers were strongly against the gender dynamics in effect in this region (Medina Martín, 2016). They believed that the Sahrawi women stood in a position dangerous to the strengthening of men's power in society, namely through their somewhat independence, and the right to divorce (Medina Martín, 2016). In 1964, Franco's Falange party took the "Women's Section" to Western Sahara, hoping to shift the established gender dynamics – what Medina Martín (2016, p.258) refers to



as "gender colonialism", a concept developed by Maria Lugones⁴. Hence, the settling forces sought to create a shift in the traditional gender roles, looking to approach these towards westernised standards (Allan 2016). The changes undergone in this period led to a profound change in the role of women, as they became more economically dependent on men, and divorce became only possible through the payment of a fee (Medina Martín, 2016).

Nonetheless, the changes that the Women's Section sought to accomplish, or even was successful in developing, did not stand without indignation or contestation. The Sahrawi women advocated for teachings in non-oppressing gender dynamics (such as sewing and cooking as the main roles of women in society and the household); for example, literature classes were suggested to be made available (Allan, 2016). Their pressure to shift these teachings led the Section to move towards the reinforcement of the education of women. As the coloniser pressure grew, so did the need to resist the efforts to oppress and alter the culture. Women participated in all forms of resistance against male oppression and Colonisation (Allan, 2016). In 1973, the liberation movement, the Polisario Front, was established – and within it, the Ala Feminina (now Unión Nacional de Mujeres Saharaui⁵, UNMS), followed by the Sahrawi People's Liberation Army (SPLA). With the Ala Feminina, women became integral parts of the armed forces, of information devices and healthcare branches (Lippert, 1992; Strzelecka, 2023; Zunes & Mundy, 2010). Women organised protests and meetings and stood on the frontlines of contestation against Spanish Colonialism in the 1960s and 1970s (Juliano, 1998; Sebastián, 2021).

Once Morocco obtained independence from France in 1956, the country began showing interest in its surrounding regions, including Western Sahara (López Tessore & Maiolino, 2022). In 1974, in light of great pressure on the part of the United Nations, Spain announced its intention to conduct a referendum on the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara – or to be annexed by either Morocco or Mauritania (López Tessore & Maiolino, 2022; Lovatt & Mundy, 2021). Parallely, Embarca Mahamud, Arbía Mohamed Nas, and Fatima Taleb – who were working at the time for the Women's Section – began reinforcing their critiques of the organisation and its neglect of women's interests (Allan, 2016). This led to the bridging of the contestation against Patriarchy and Colonialism, and thus, the demand for the right of women to vote in said Referendum (Allan, 2016). As two different yet entangled systems of oppression, Patriarchy and Colonialism were perceived as two issues to be fought against for the liberation of the people, and of women in particular. Thus, to liberate the Sahrawi women, the independence of Western Sahara was deemed fundamental, yet in need of correlation with independence from the Patriarchal order established. However, Morocco considered that the Independence Referendum should not take place, as it considered that the territory of Western Sahara historically belonged to the Kingdom of Morocco. In this sense, the country requested a hearing from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) (Lippert, 1992; Zunes & Mundy, 2010). In 1975, a United Nations Mission was established to analyse this plea. The ICJ

⁴ Lugones (2008, 2011, 2012) developed the concept of "gender colonialism" in various works, including: Lugones, M. (2008). Colonialidad y género. *Tabula rasa*, (9), 73-102. Lugones, M. (2011). Hacia un feminismo descolonial. *La Manzana de la Discordia*, 6(2), 105-119. Lugones, M. (2012). Subjetividad esclava, colonialidad de género, marginalidad y opresiones múltiples. In P. Montes (Ed.), *Pensando los feminismos en Bolivia* (pp. 129-140). Conexión Fondo de Emancipación.

⁵ National Union of Sahrawi Women.



understood that there were ties between neither Morocco nor Mauritania to the territory of Western Sahara, all the while the claims for independence seemed strong ("Advisory Opinion on the Western Sahara," 1975).

Moroccan settling and the Western Sahara War

On the 6th of November 1975, Morocco and Mauritania invaded Western Sahara in the Green March, where 300.000 citizens and 20.000 troops invaded the region (Lovatt & Mundy, 2021; Zunes & Mundy, 2010). A week later, on the 14th, Spain, Morocco, and Mauritania signed the Madrid Accords, in which it was established that Spain passed over sovereignty over Western Sahara to Morocco and Mauritania (López Tessore & Maiolino, 2022; Lovatt & Mundy, 2021; Strzelecka, 2023) – thus recognising the invasion. The Polisario Front stood against these accords, backed by Algeria, while the United Nations did not recognise this transfer of power (Lovatt & Mundy, 2021). Neither Morocco nor Mauritania retreated, leading to the beginning of the Western Sahara War, and the flee to exile in Algeria of about 40% of the Sahrawi population, where refugee camps were established (Lovatt & Mundy, 2021). On the 27th of February 1976, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) was declared, standing as the government of the Sahrawis in exile, in the camps in Algeria (López Tessore & Maiolino, 2022; Lovatt & Mundy, 2021; Medina Martín, 2016; Strzelecka, 2023). The following day, on the 28th, the Spanish forces retreated from the occupied territory. The war with Morocco lasted until 1991, but Mauritania was defeated in 1979 (Lovatt & Mundy, 2021).

Between 1981 and 1987, Morocco built a 2,700 km wall, the *wall of shame*, surrounded by about 10 million antipersonnel mines, which divides the occupied (to the west) and liberated (to the east) regions of Western Sahara (Estrada & Costa, 2017; Lee, 2015; Lovatt & Mundy, 2021; Medina Martín, 2016) (see figure 1). The liberated zone was bombed with napalm and white phosphorus, and in the occupied region the Sahrawis were tortured and forced to disappear (Medina Martín, 2016).

Figure 1. Map of Western Sahara



Source: BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14115273>



Whilst the Sahrawis in the occupied zone were resisting the oppression undertaken by the Kingdom of Morocco, in the refugee camps everyday survival was in peril. With men at the frontlines of battle, the women were in charge of making sure that their people survived to see the following day: building the *jaimas* (tents) which would become the homes of the people living in the Algeria *hammada*, and organising the refugee camps to ensure the survival, education, and health of the people (Medina Martín, 2016). These camps are self-administered by the Polisario Front and SADR, yet dependent on international food and humanitarian aid (Strzelecka, 2023).

According to Juliano (1998), the Sahrawi women made use of three strategies to ensure their position in society. *Invisibility* was a form of criticising systems of oppression while seeking to influence positions and perspectives, through an invisible standpoint, which would allow for their influence in society. *Self-affirmation* allowed women to combat varied forms of oppression openly after having obtained some control to do so. *Motherhood* stands from a point of view in which women perceive motherhood as a form of active resistance against the occupation and oppression of their people. However, the survival priorities faced in the refugee camps enclosed the space for women to debate their stand as a collective, and thus their emancipation within the Patriarchal Sahrawi society (Medina Martín, 2016).

30 years of ceasefire

The stillness of the war led to the agreement of a ceasefire between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario Front in 1991 (Zunes & Mundy, 2010). From this point onward, the influence of women in society at the political level diminished, as the men returned from the battlefield to the refugee camps, re-occupying the spaces which had been the responsibility of women since 1975 (Medina Martín, 2016). The United Nations established a mission named Misión de Naciones Unidas para el Referendo en el Sáhara Occidental (MINURSO) which sought to monitor the ceasefire, reduce the Moroccan military force in the occupied region, along with identifying and register voters (Medina Martín, 2016). However, this is the only UN mission which does not oversee a clause to observe and report on human rights violations since 1978 (Lee, 2015; Medina Martín, 2016; Perez-Martin, 2014). Two attempts at referendums took place – in 1992 and 1997 – yet these were shut down after voter eligibility issues were raised (Zunes & Mundy, 2010). The hopes of conducting a referendum dimmed as the years went by, and by 2019, the Polisario Front, supported by the people, began perceiving the resumption of the war as the sole possible solution for the independence of Western Sahara. In November 2020, the ceasefire agreement was broken by Morocco, who violated the ceasefire in Guerguerat, in the liberated zone (Lovatt & Mundy, 2021).

Human Rights Violations in Occupied Western Sahara

The occupation of Western Sahara by Moroccan forces is highly repressive and oppressive. In 1976, about 500 women joined in a protest against human rights violations conducted by Morocco in occupied Western Sahara: repression, torture, and forced



disappearances being the focus of this gathering. This event placed women at the front of the resistance efforts (Medina Martín, 2016).

In 2022, hegoa⁶ published a report on the human rights violations of Sahrawi women in occupied Western Sahara. It detailed various forms of liberty and personal security violations, such as the violation of the right to life, since Sahrawis are often forced to disappear, are physically and psychologically tortured, and murdered. It accounted for the various ways in which Sahrawis are stripped of their cultural rights, as the traditional Sahrawi homes (*jaimas*) have been forbidden, and Sahrawi names, clothing and language (Hassanyia) have been banned. Concerning social rights, Sahrawis are subjected to the refusal of medical attention (and often suffer threats by Moroccan forces in hospitals). Children suffer harassment at school and can be followed home. Moreover, there are no universities in occupied Western Sahara, forcing Sahrawis pursuing higher education to relocate to Morocco (Azkue, et al., 2022).

Women and girls often recount suffering sexual violence from Moroccan forces. They describe touching, verbal aggression, rape or threats of rape, gangrape, and rape with objects, torture during pregnancy, forced miscarriages, being forced to listen to sexual violence against another person, sexual slavery, electric discharges to the breasts and/or genitals, sexual mutilation, and forced sterilisation (Azkue, et al., 2022).

When it comes to economic rights, Morocco actively seeks to exclude the Sahrawis from participating in society through economic and labour policies. The majority of Sahrawi women in occupied Western Sahara have no income or an extremely low one, which weakens their chances of affording basic goods, such as food and supplies, leaving them with less and less autonomy. Sahrawi people, mostly women, are discriminated against in the workforce, as they suffer from harassment at work, salary freezing, increased precariousness at work, and refusal of work permits. Activists who participate in activities in the defence of the Sahrawi people's rights are targeted economically, suffering reprisals (Azkue, et al., 2022).

Sahrawi women's Resistance in the refugee camps and in the Spanish diaspora

The perceptions of the Sahrawi women in the refugee camps and in the Spanish diaspora on gender oppression, gender-specific priorities, and forms of fighting against oppression are divergent (Fernandes, 2023; Medina Martín, 2016). The one aspect that gathers greater agreement between these two groups is the historical role of the Sahrawi women in society, which can be evidenced in all aspects of the resistance, particularly regarding the Green March onwards. At this time, women rose as the leaders of the people fleeing to and establishing in exile, in the Algerian *hammada*. Thus, the society is swift to acknowledge women as the ones responsible for the survival of the Sahrawi people, stemming from their role in building and organising the refugee camps, namely in the beginning stages, as quickly establishing the foundations of living in this region was the greatest priority, as evidenced by the following quotes (Fernandes, 2023):

⁶ Institute for Development and International Cooperation Studies of the University of the Basque Country.



"Despite all the suffering from the moment Sahrawi women were obliged to flee their land, and came to the refugee camps, they sought strength to build the camps, to be able to build the schools, build the centres, and provide health and education to the rest of the population. They got strength from nowhere to be able to build a whole society and continue the fighting and the struggle up until nowadays" (Amani)⁷.

"Even since the start of our struggle, after the population fled to the refugee camps, we can say that that was the point where Sahrawi women had the start of their significant presence within the society, because they were the ones to basically build the refugee camps. The women took charge in building the refugee camps. (...) Basically, you can say that the internal management and administration of the camps was at the hand of Sahrawi women" (Qadira).

Hence, despite the academic understanding of Sahrawi women's role in society from the Bedouin nomadic ages, the Green March stands as a shifting point in the role of women, as they become community and political leaders, responsible for the survival of the people, their culture, and their resistance – and this does not seem to be contested at any level. The oppression carried out by Morocco necessitated and intensified debates on oppression, women's issues, and emancipation, as Sahrawi women mobilised in resistance. With the men away on the frontlines of battle, women occupied the political arena, something that would otherwise not have been possible, as these spaces were merely ceded, not obtained. Nonetheless, this paved the way for women to stand in an unprecedented status, as they became recognised as the *"backbone of the struggle"* (Malika).

Throughout the following section, the perceptions of nine women interviewed will be presented. In the refugee camps, five women were interviewed (four from the Bojador camp, and one from Smara). These women were aged 30 to 61 years old at the time of the interviews. They work in several labour fields, from the health and educational sectors to commerce and political offices. Four of these women were interviewed with the assistance of a translator from Hassanyia to English. In the Spanish diaspora, the women interviewed were aged between 23 and 36. The youngest was a student, whilst others worked in the health or education sectors. All may be considered activists.

The refugee camps

Sahrawi women themselves articulate their central role in the refugee camps and diaspora, emphasising their leadership in education, administration, and community organisation. Their accounts, along with insights from scholars and civil society, highlight the ways they shape and sustain collective resistance. Delgado & Franco (2024) present four forms of women's resistance in the refugee camps. First, educational professional roles, as Sahrawi women actively participate in education and community leadership, placing them in a central role. Second, cultural and symbolic resistance, considering their

⁷ The names used in these quotes have undergone a process of anonymisation and pseudonymisation to ensure the protection of the interviewees.



vital role in transmitting the people's history, language, and traditions – overall, the culture of the Sahrawi people. Third, international advocacy, considering their role in raising awareness for the self-determination struggle globally. And fourth, daily acts of defiance, as Sahrawi women resist the erasure of their people and its culture, through the maintenance of the community cohesion.

However, there is no consensus about women's emancipation within the Sahrawi society. Whilst some perceive this society as feminist and even matriarchal (Lovatt & Mundy, 2021; Zunes & Mundy, 2010), others criticise this understanding (Medina Martín, 2016), by stating that this perception is skewed. Particularly in the refugee camps, there is some dispute between the priorities – or what some believe should be the priorities – of the people regarding various forms of resistance and oppression (Fernandes, 2023). The Sahrawi struggle in the refugee camps understands as its utmost priority the revolution towards independence and liberation (Ormazabal & López Belloso, 2011). This leads issues such as the feminist emancipatory struggle to be placed within the second plan, under justifications relating to resources and the division of the unity of the people (Juliano, 1998; Strzelecka, 2023). This means that in the refugee camps, the quotidian need to focus on obtaining and distributing goods and medicine, whilst focusing on the health and education of the people is the central issue. Women's rights and emancipation are considered secondary problems, which cannot be highlighted and addressed for now – merely once independence is achieved. This falls in line with different national liberation movements, which tend to prioritise the nationalist cause, neglecting other issues, such as women's emancipation (Strzelecka, 2023).

Sahrawi culture is inherently linked with Islam, and interpretations of Islamic law within Sahrawi society are shaped by historical, social, and political dynamics. Scholars such as Juliano (1998) have argued that certain Islamic customs – such as the prohibition of alcohol – may contribute to reducing gendered violence. However, this study does not aim to evaluate Islamic legal traditions or apply external perspectives onto them. Rather than adopting generalised assumptions about the Sharia Law as inherently beneficial or harmful to women, it is crucial to centre Sahrawi women's perspectives on their lives, interpretations of justice, and their role in shaping gender norms within their community. A factor understood by Juliano as guaranteeing some gender equality is the non-confinement of Sahrawi women to their homes, as it happens in other Islamic countries. Nonetheless, other perspectives, such as Piniella's (2018), stress that despite not confining women to the home, the Sahrawi society confines them to the private sphere. Furthermore, Juliano (1998) considers that the dowry is not understood as the purchase of a woman, but as a form of compensating the family as she moves out. In agreement with Piniella's overview – but in perspective dissonance –, Juliano (1998) defends as a positive aspect of women's status in society that women remain in the household taking care of their children, whilst the men are responsible for the economic aspect of the household, through their jobs. This debate can be reflected by the following quote:

"[Gender equality] could be improved, of course it could, but as in all aspects and all countries, equality is progressing everywhere and obviously even more so in a refugee camp. But today we can say yes. It can be improved, you can always improve what you already have, but yes, we have equality" (Karyme).



The status of women in the Sahrawi society suffered a shift in 1975, upon the Green March. Fleeing to safety in Algeria, women stood at the forefront of the survival responsibilities of their people – namely the elderly and the children – when establishing the camps (Fernandes, 2023; Medina Martín, 2016; Strzelecka, 2023). Six of the refugee camps established since then – El Aaiún, Auserd, Bojador, Smara and Dajla – were built by women (Medina Martín, 2016), Rabuni is the administrative capital. Until the ceasefire agreement signed in 1991, the women stood as leaders of the camps and of their people, while the men were on the frontlines of battle (Medina Martín, 2016), as women made up about 80% of the people in the camps (Caratini, 2006). Focusing on the health and education of the people, many women graduated from diverse areas in universities in Cuba, Spain, and Algeria (Lippert, 1992). Along with the establishment of the programme *Vacaciones en Paz*, as well as international support (namely provided by Algeria, Venezuela, and Cuba), the younger generations interacted with distinct cultures, learned new languages, and forged new opinions and interpretations of life in the camps. This brought new discussions and teachings to the refugee camps, particularly to guarantee the survival of the people, their origins, and their culture (Fernandes, 2023). The education of girls and women led to an increase in the average age of the first marriage from 17/18 to 24/25 (Juliano, 1998). The deficiency in healthcare services in the camps, particularly during the first years, led to an increase in the rates of female mortality, linked to pregnancies and childbearing (Juliano, 1998; Zunes & Mundy, 2010).

In the refugee camps, women were present in every aspect of the resistance and the survival of the people: in administration posts, in politics, in the economy, and in military roles (both in combat and related posts) (Medina Martín, 2016; Strzelecka, 2023). Until 1991, about 90% of the members of the body of the SADR were women (Zunes & Mundy, 2010). However, the urgency of establishing and organising the camps during the first years of the war did not allow for women to collectively think about their stand as women and form a political position (Barona, 2016).

The introduction of a monetary system in the refugee camps led to a negative shift in women's role: prostitution rose; labour, on its own, lost its value; and as Capitalism forced a shift in the priorities and needs of the people, the private sphere became hermetic to protect the goods of a household (Caratini, 2006; Juliano, 1998). The ceasefire led to the replacement of women by men at the political level and to a shift in the quotidian days of women and women's interests: the bride price and the full-body covering began being expected to be worn from age 11, for instance (Medina Martín, 2016; Zunes & Mundy, 2010). Furthermore, during the early years in the refugee camps, women focused on building kindergartens and childcare services. However, as the men returned from the war in 1991, the number of services provided greatly decreased. This led women to take charge in private care for children and elders, which led to the abandonment of careers and educational aspirations (Strzelecka, 2023). Thus, women's status, interests, and priorities were undermined by the return of the men. This is particularly interesting considering the perceptions of women regarding a gendered approach to the issues addressed at the leadership level, whether they are political or not (Fernandes, 2023):

"When you compare the position where men are in and positions where women are in, it's totally different. (...) Definitely women have proved they



are more successful in managing. (...) They are also more protective of resources, (...) they are also more inclusive towards people they work with" (Malika).

Notwithstanding, the role of women in the refugee camps and the resistance movement is central, and this is not only true regarding the economy and politics. At the cultural level, women have been responsible for the survival of the *Hassanyia* language, as well as of the Sahrawi customs and traditions, ever since Spanish Colonialism (Juliano, 1998).

The Spanish diaspora

The resistance of the Sahrawi women in the Spanish diaspora takes the form, mainly, of educating people who are not in contact with the struggle, activism, diplomatic efforts, and education (Fernandes, 2023). Here, the women must balance the expectations of the host community and the home community, as two different cultures present different understandings of what a woman's role and behaviour should be (Sebastián, 2021).

The Sahrawi women in the Spanish diaspora present a dissonant understanding of women's status in the refugee camps than those who live in the camps (Fernandes, 2023). Contrary to the refugee camps, where women tend to understand society as a defender of women's rights – albeit in need of further developments –, in the Spanish diaspora these issues are the object of a differentiated discourse. In this case, women understand that although the Sahrawi society may be perceived as matriarchal, this perception does not necessarily align with feminist standards, particularly regarding psychological and emotional violence against women. Such violence impedes their emancipation and full exercise of autonomy (Fernandes, 2023). While Sahrawi women in Spain are more likely to discuss issues relating directly to women, the women in the camps tend to speak more openly about national struggles. Notably, premature pregnancies and gender education disparities are issues vastly discussed in the diaspora (Fillol, 2021).

The divergence of perspectives between the women in the refugee camps and those in the Spanish diaspora can be found in many aspects. In the refugee camps, the utmost aspect to consider is the resistance, along with issues which affect the society as a whole – not those which mostly target women. Thus, women perceive education and health as primary subjects in need of focus and development (Fernandes, 2023; Medina Martín, 2016). This puts issues particular to women into the second plan. Therefore, the women in the refugee camps consider that only once independence is achieved can there be space and availability to discuss, address, and target gender inequality or even the oppression of women (Fernandes, 2023):

"I would say that women's needs and requirements will be covered more and taken more into account once we get our independence. Because right now the focus is mainly on the struggle and the return to our land, and then the other issues or needs are taken to second. They are not the priority, let's say. But I would say that once we get our independence, and we get control over



our natural resources, issues that affect women will be taken more into account and will be addressed properly” (Amani).

The persistence of the settlement and the non-completion of the referendum agreed to in 1991 may have also led to a shift in the revolutionary drive of younger generations, who become less keen on believing that an actual solution to the occupation (that is, independence), may occur shortly (Fernandes, 2023). In contrast, the Sahrawi women in the Spanish diaspora name several issues in need of development. Here, not only is the invasion and settlement of Moroccan settlers in the territory of Western Sahara presented as a focus of the people's resistance – which, on its own, is limiting of a fully independent life abroad –, but other aspects are also brought forward. Patriarchy is heavily criticised here, as women discuss the sociopolitical and economic subjugation of women to men under the Sahrawi culture, oppressive of their rights, status, and autonomy (Fernandes, 2023). Moreover, it is debated in the diaspora that the legal and political framework does not account for an effective social guarantee of women's rights. This is mostly jeopardised by the social norms and expectations imposed on women by society and their own families, as social opinion – or social gaze – controls and oppresses women's autonomy. This could potentially lead women to be disowned or ostracised from their families:

“We in Hassanyia, (...) we have a word... it is the social gaze. (...) The moment you step out of that line of what is expected of you, you are disowned, both you and your family. So, I think it's a lot... that, that is, it limits women especially, more than anything because of the weight they carry” (Nura).

Contrary to what is believed in the refugee camps, the women in the Spanish diaspora consider that the struggle for gender emancipation and the fight for the independence of Western Sahara and its people must go hand in hand, simultaneously. They understand that if this is not the case, the feminist struggle will ultimately be forgotten, comparing the Sahrawi feminist struggle with others where this neglect happened (Fernandes, 2023):

“Many, many Saharawis, both women and men, will tell you that the feminist struggle is a struggle that we must resume once we achieve independence as a country. But you know what's the catch? That this has been said to all women in all conflicts throughout history. We have always been told that our fight has to wait, that we are not the priority. And what history has shown us is that a country in which women are not free is not a country that can make progress or is going to make progress, socially, economically, or culturally. So, the film created is that we have to wait until we become independent as a people to fight for feminism. History has shown that it is false, that it cannot be done like this, because that objective is never achieved. So, the two struggles have to go hand in hand: the struggle for the freedom of the Saharawi people and the struggle for the freedom of Saharawi women. They can go hand in hand, and they should go hand in hand in order to move forward and achieve something.” (Nashwa).



Accordingly, Strzelecka (2023) highlights the tendency of national liberation movements to prioritise the nationalist cause, neglecting other issues, such as women's emancipation. This leads, on the one hand, to the lack of development of a feminist consciousness or ideology, and thus of a maintenance of the Patriarchal oppression system – as it so happens with Palestine.

In the Spanish diaspora, another aspect is brought to light. During the interviews, one of the women expressed concerns about the international perception of women's rights in the Sahrawi society. She suggested that the notion of the society as matriarchal might be constructed as political propaganda, rather than an objective reality. This would mean that instead of actively and effectively tackling the oppression of women, the understanding of the Sahrawi society as emancipated for women at the international level is used to obtain foreign solidarity with the struggle: *"But it also does not stop being political propaganda when we say that the Polisario and Saharawi society represent women the most, because that's not true"* (Nashwa).

In sum, this chapter explores the divergent perspectives of Sahrawi women in the refugee camps and in the Spanish diaspora, shaped by the distinct political, social, and material conditions of each context. While women in the refugee camps navigate everyday survival challenges – including scarce access to water, food, medicine, and goods –, Sahrawi women have actively shaped political resistance and community structures. In contrast, in the Spanish diaspora, exposure to different social frameworks paves the way for engagement with alternative feminist perspectives, including those shaped by Western norms.

The presence of Western feminist frameworks in the diaspora can create friction and dialogue with Sahrawi women's own feminist articulations – shaped by both Islamic and indigenous political traditions. Western and White feminist traditions have often positioned Islamic and Muslim feminisms as inherently in need of reform, imposing thresholds of emancipation that do not necessarily align with Sahrawi women's priorities. Rather than framing these perspectives as opposing poles, Sahrawi women in the diaspora may navigate complex positionalities that challenge such binaries.

Discussion

This paper highlights the diverse understandings and standpoints of Sahrawi women, aligning academia with the Sahrawi struggle for liberation and women's struggle for emancipation. The ongoing Moroccan settler Colonialism and repression in occupied Western Sahara not only constitute direct violence but also attempt to suppress autonomous discussions of feminism and gender roles. Despite these constraints, Sahrawi women continue to shape and define their own feminist frameworks, resisting both Colonial domination and external impositions. A decolonial feminist conversation must centre Sahrawi women's self-articulated perspectives resisting both the violent occupation and the imposition of hegemonic feminist paradigms.

The issues discussed above do not necessarily mean that the Sahrawi women disagree among them, but they do not necessarily agree on the priorities, either. The Sahrawi women interviewed recognise that these different perspectives exist, and they accept



where they stem from. This divergence of perspectives can be understood by a diversity of factors. The most relevant, in my view, arises from each region's specific culture and social meanings. Whilst in the refugee camps the daily lives of women are focused on the quotidian survival, and on the national struggle for the independence of a free Western Sahara, as there have not been many chances to discuss women's issues from a collective viewpoint; in the Spanish diaspora women are influenced by a country with different standards of gender norms, where their daily priorities are education and work, whilst advocating for the independence of their home country. Yet, this could also stem from the interpretations of women's emancipation and gender equality on its own, for women in the refugee camps seem to understand the society as somewhat keen on addressing women's issues, whilst contemplating a certain nonexistence of gender oppression. Contrarily, women in the diaspora appear to disagree with this perception, which could explain their vocality in addressing these issues – for they deem them more urgent and pressing.

Nonetheless, it is fundamental to discuss the role played by globalisation in the differences between the culture of the Sahrawi people living in the refugee camps and the people living in the Spanish diaspora, and how this affects women's autonomy, oppression, and emancipation. Here, it is relevant to understand that whilst living in one part of the world, one may still be influenced by the standards of another, making it harder to balance the distinct cultures and expectations at play. On the one hand, globalisation leads women living in Spain to need to find mechanisms of protecting themselves from the harms of the host and home cultures, as what is expected in one may be heavily criticised in the other. This means that they become accountable for their choices in the host country to their families and friends back home, often almost immediately, thanks to social media. On the other hand, the Sahrawi society in the camps may have had to become more enclosed to protect itself from Westernised standards and impositions, leading to a deepening of norms that are oppressive of women, in the name of protecting them and the culture. Thus, the Sahrawi society in the camps may have felt the need to resort to the very norms it proudly stands against, as a form of guaranteeing the protection of the Sahrawi culture (freedom versus safety).

This way, it is fundamental to comprehend the importance of ensuring a conversation between the society in the refugee camps and the one living in the diaspora. By debating the different approaches and perspectives of each society, there may be chances of further developing women's collective identity, and thus a unified resistance of women against the Patriarchal order that oppresses them. This can be done whilst actively resisting the oppression of the settling forces. As this article discussed, the two struggles can and must work together to ensure the freedom and emancipation of all people from different forms of oppression – Colonialism and Patriarchy.

The emancipation of the Sahrawi women must come both from the liberation from the Colonial past and from Westernised views – Patriarchal and White Feminist; as well as from the liberation from the Patriarchal and religious oppression of their society. The Sahrawi women must actively fight against all forms of oppression that they face, be it one that seeks to hide them or one that seeks to exploit them.



Conclusion

This article aims to explore the differing perspectives on women's emancipation and rights of Sahrawi women in the camps and the Spanish diaspora. Through a historical analysis, I examined the impact of Colonialism on women's roles, noting how nomadic Sahrawi society valued women's political opinions. Spanish Colonialism, particularly after 1964, institutionalised gender colonialism, attempting to reshape gender dynamics. Over decades of Spanish and Moroccan occupation, Sahrawi women have been at the forefront of the liberation struggle, namely in the occupied territory, where they resist repression, violence, and human rights violations. This article also explored the varying views of the interviewed women on their society's priorities and emancipation. While women in the camps focused on survival, education, and liberation from Colonial powers, women in the Spanish diaspora emphasised gender-specific issues for Sahrawi women's liberation.

The critical role of Sahrawi women in sustaining their people in the Algerian refugee camps is widely acknowledged both within Sahrawi society and in existing literature. However, there is a stark lack of discussion on the role of women during the resistance against Spanish Colonialism up until 1975, as well as their role in the military. Mainstream narratives often confine women to passive roles, despite clear evidence of their presence on the frontlines of battle. This leads to the invisibilisation of countless women, who have stood and fought with their peers for a free Western Sahara.

Thus, the Sahrawi women themselves must be able to express their concerns and viewpoints; and women's perspectives on their roles in the struggle must not be dictated solely by formal institutions but must emerge from diverse lived experiences. A broader, more inclusive feminist dialogue – one that bridges the experiences of women in the refugee camps with those in the Spanish diaspora – can strengthen collective identity and reinforce women's autonomy within Sahrawi society. This exchange fosters a deeper understanding of women's rights and emancipation in a Patriarchal and Colonised context, ensuring that no contribution is overlooked.

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UNIR MUNDOS: A LUTA DAS MULHERES SAHARAUIS CONTRA O COLONIALISMO E O PATRIARCADO NOS CAMPOS DE REFUGIADOS E NA DIÁSPORA ESPANHOLA

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Resumo

Este artigo procura compreender os diversos papéis das mulheres Saharauis nos campos de refugiados, na Argélia e na diáspora espanhola, relacionados com os esforços de resistência das mulheres contra o Colonialismo e o Patriarcado. Com base na literatura académica e em fontes primárias, este artigo discute o papel histórico das mulheres Saharauis, tanto na sobrevivência do povo como no movimento de resistência. Surge um debate entre as perspetivas das mulheres Saharauis nos campos e as da diáspora espanhola, que apresentam, grosso modo, diferentes pontos de vista sobre a emancipação e os direitos das mulheres. Através de um quadro de Feminismo Decolonial, examino as diferenças entre o quotidiano das mulheres nos campos, que têm de se concentrar na sobrevivência, na educação e na saúde, e o das mulheres em Espanha, que apresentam uma perceção distinta das questões a partir da sua perspetiva externa. De um modo geral, o artigo defende o reconhecimento e a amplificação das vozes das mulheres Saharauis, sublinhando o seu papel crucial na busca da libertação da opressão colonial e patriarcal. Por fim, apela a um maior enfoque na ocupação do Sahara Ocidental e na libertação do povo Saharaui.

Palavras-chave

Emancipação, Libertação, Resistência, Sahara Ocidental, Mulheres.

Abstract

This article seeks to understand the diverse roles of Sahrawi women in the refugee camps, in Algeria, and in the Spanish diaspora, relating to women's resistance efforts against Colonialism and Patriarchy. Drawing from academic literature and primary sources, this article discusses the historical role of women in the Sahrawi society, both in the survival of the people and within the resistance movement. A debate emerges between the perspectives of the Sahrawi women in the camps and those in the Spanish diaspora, which roughly present different standpoints on women's emancipation and rights. Through a Decolonial Feminism framework, I examine the differences between the day-to-day lives of the women in the camps, who must focus on survival, education, and health, and those in Spain, who present a distinct lens of issues from their outside perspective. Overall, the article advocates for the recognition and amplification of Sahrawi women's voices, emphasising their crucial role in the pursuit of liberation from both Colonial and Patriarchal oppression. Lastly, it calls for a greater focus on the occupation of Western Sahara and the liberation of the Sahrawi people.



Keywords

Emancipation, Liberation, Resistance, Western Sahara, Women.

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UNIR MUNDOS: A LUTA DAS MULHERES SAHARAUIS CONTRA O COLONIALISMO E O PATRIARCADO NOS CAMPOS DE REFUGIADOS E NA DIÁSPORA ESPANHOLA

CAROLINA FERNANDES

Introdução

O debate em torno da emancipação das mulheres Saharauís no seio da sua sociedade não é recente. Alguns académicos (Juliano, 1998; Zunes & Mundy, 2010) entendem a sociedade como matriarcal e defensora dos direitos das mulheres. No entanto, como será discutido neste artigo, esta perspetiva ignora as vozes e os entendimentos de muitas mulheres Saharauís. Este artigo aborda estas perspetivas contraditórias, centrando-se nas dinâmicas de poder, na resistência, na emancipação e na autodeterminação. Esta investigação desafia as narrativas convencionais que ignoram a autonomia e a resistência das mulheres Saharauís, dando prioridade às suas vozes e perspetivas. Centrar as vozes das mulheres Saharauís não só enriquece os debates académicos como também desafia o domínio de perspetivas externas na produção de conhecimento.

O interesse em torno deste foco de investigação surgiu quando conheci cinco crianças dos campos de refugiados na Argélia, que tinham vindo para a Europa em 2019 ao abrigo do programa *Vacaciones en Paz*¹. Fiquei a conhecer a luta do povo Saharaui através das conversas que tive com estas crianças e com o seu acompanhante. Estas conversas, aliadas a um interesse anterior pelas lutas de libertação e pela emancipação das mulheres, abriram caminho para o desenvolvimento de um interesse académico em torno do papel e das perspetivas das mulheres Saharauís sobre a Colonização e as violações dos direitos humanos, juntamente com o sistema Patriarcal de opressão. Procurando adotar uma abordagem feminista e decolonial dos problemas que surgem do estudo da literatura, bem como das conversas com as mulheres Saharauís, ouvi as várias intervenções das mulheres entrevistadas sobre o papel histórico das mulheres Saharauís na luta e sobrevivência do seu povo.

Por esta razão, neste artigo, criei uma conversa entre dois grupos de mulheres Saharauís: as que vivem nos campos de refugiados argelinos e as que residem em Espanha, como parte da diáspora. É neste contexto que surge a questão de investigação

¹ *Vacaciones en Paz* é um programa tornado oficial nos anos 80 para acolher crianças Saharauís por famílias de diferentes países – geralmente Espanha, neste caso, Itália – durante os meses de julho e agosto.



a que pretendo responder neste artigo: Quais são as percepções atuais das mulheres Saharais nos campos de refugiados e na diáspora espanhola sobre os direitos e a emancipação das mulheres? Para responder a esta pergunta, foi criado um diálogo entre a literatura existente sobre cada grupo e a minha própria investigação anterior². Entrevistei um total de nove mulheres – cinco vivem nos campos de refugiados³ e quatro a viver em Espanha. Contactei estas mulheres através de uma abordagem de amostragem em bola de neve ou diretamente através de organizações. Depois de estabelecer o contacto inicial, realizei entrevistas *online*, onde foram discutidos os temas explorados neste artigo. Consequentemente, analisei a informação fornecida por estas entrevistas através de Análise Temática Reflexiva. Assim, procuro compreender as diferentes perspetivas que estas mulheres apresentam relativamente ao seu estatuto na sociedade Saharaui e as suas críticas sobre o que consideram ser a falta de direitos das mulheres. Desta forma, pretendo realçar a importância de centrar as perspetivas e os entendimentos das mulheres Saharais, em vez de retratar uma contribuição académica ocidental centrada principalmente nas interpretações de académicos ocidentais.

Posicionamento: uma contribuição Decolonial

Antes de prosseguir, devo começar por reconhecer a minha posição no quadro académico e social. Sou uma mulher branca da classe média, na casa dos 20 anos, nascida e criada em Portugal – um país onde a história é maioritariamente ensinada através de uma lente Ocidental e Eurocêntrica. Este contexto molda inevitavelmente a minha perspetiva, exigindo um esforço consciente para me envolver criticamente com histórias e narrativas que foram ativamente suprimidas pelas estruturas Coloniais. A sociedade portuguesa continua a debater-se com o reconhecimento das cicatrizes profundas e duradouras do Colonialismo. Como resultado, as desigualdades sistémicas – enraizadas na classe, raça, etnia e sexualidade – persistem, muitas vezes não reconhecidas por aqueles que não são diretamente afetados ou estão ativamente envolvidos nestas questões.

Por esta razão, a par das preocupações Decoloniais e Pós-coloniais sobre as questões inerentes ao Feminismo Branco, é fundamental uma reflexão sobre este enquadramento. Françoise Vergès e Ashley J. Bohrer (2019) entendem que os países Ocidentais tendem a reprimir a sua história Colonial e os abusos que levaram a cabo em primeira mão sobre os povos no exterior. Estes países procuram enfraquecer os laços entre a escravatura, o Colonialismo e o Imperialismo, para preservar o seu sentimento de inocência. Da mesma forma, o Feminismo Branco usa a opressão das mulheres pelos homens para se distanciar do legado racista do mundo Ocidental e, assim, ignorar as várias questões que constituem formas de opressão, simplificando-as.

Por este motivo, e tendo em conta as minhas raízes, considero imperativo assumir uma perspetiva Decolonial, de modo a impedir a replicação de questões como esta. O Feminismo Decolonial foca-se no fortalecimento dos laços entre os aliados do Norte Global e as lutas das mulheres do Sul Global, enfatizando a necessidade de romper com o Capitalismo e o Patriarcado (Vergès & Bohrer, 2019). É aqui que a minha investigação

² Investigação realizada no âmbito da minha dissertação de mestrado: Fernandes, C. A. (2023). *Sahrawi Women's Resistance in the Refugee Camps and in the Spanish Diaspora*.

³ Quatro delas foram entrevistadas com a ajuda de uma tradutora.



se torna relevante, para contribuir para a amplificação das narrativas das mulheres Saharauis nos seus próprios termos, num país onde pouca discussão sobre a resistência do Sahara Ocidental é cultivada.

Para discutir a resistência de um povo do Sul Global, é necessário fazer a ponte entre as lutas anti-Racista, anti-Capitalista e anti-Colonial, de modo a aprofundar as teorias sobre libertação e emancipação. Além disso, para discutir a resistência de um povo de um país Islâmico, é também fundamental compreender que, com a queda do Muro de Berlim, o trabalho de emancipação do Movimento Feminista *mainstream* – a crítica ao autoritarismo religioso, a análise da dominação heteropatriarcal das mulheres e as ligações entre Capital, Estado e Sexismo – foi reduzido ao Secularismo e a criticismo sobre o Islão (Vergès & Bohrer, 2019). É neste sentido que se deve contemplar o Feminismo Ocidental Civilizador como inerentemente racista e centrado no Ocidente. Um feminismo que considera os valores e culturas de fora como opressivos, e desvaloriza as lutas do movimento feminista na década de 1970: a luta feminista na Europa tornou-se uma ideologia neoliberal (Vergès & Bohrer, 2019).

O papel histórico das mulheres Saharauis

Ancestralidade nómada

O povo Saharaui é intrinsecamente nómada, de origem Berbere, descendente de viajantes Iemenitas. Os Berberes Sanhaja chegaram ao que hoje conhecemos como Sahara Ocidental cerca de 500 A.E.C. (Suarez, 2016). A língua falada desenvolveu-se ao longo dos séculos e mantém-se viva atualmente graças aos esforços das mulheres Saharauis (Sadiqi, 2008). A sociedade segue as normas familiares patrilineares e a hierarquia de género, colocando as mulheres como dependentes e inferiores aos homens (Sadiqi, 2008). A nível político, a sociedade que antecedeu o período de colonização caracterizava-se por aquilo que Segato (2011, in Medina Martín, 2016) conceptualizou como “patriarcado de baixa intensidade”, pois as decisões políticas eram discutidas com as mulheres antes de serem postas em prática, uma vez que a sua participação era considerada fundamental para a tomada de decisões.

Colonialismo Espanhol

A Colonização Espanhola, iniciada em 1884, instigou a mudança nas dinâmicas de género existentes (López Tessore & Maiolino, 2022). A opressão e a supressão da cultura Saharaui endureceram até 1940, quando os colonos se concentraram em enfraquecer a cultura nómada do povo Saharaui (Medina Martín, 2016). O projeto de provincialização levado a cabo por Espanha após a Guerra Civil (1936-1939) previa lançar as bases da assimilação da sociedade colonizada, construindo uma relação ambivalente com esta. Ambivalente porque as políticas em jogo serviam para a negação e para a identificação com o sujeito colonizado, num estado de nem uma coisa nem outra (Tirado, 2024). Espanha definiu a região do Sahara Ocidental tendo em conta as suas práticas Beduínas, a língua Hassanyia e a religião islâmica, para a distinguir da metrópole (Tirado, 2024).

De 1964 a 1975, a exploração do fosfato aumentou, juntamente com esforços de colonização mais fortes no sentido do enfraquecimento da cultura nativa (Rodríguez &



Barrado, 2015 in Medina Martín, 2016). Os colonizadores opuseram-se fortemente às dinâmicas de género em vigor nesta região (Medina Martín, 2016). Acreditavam que as mulheres Saharauis estavam numa posição perigosa para o reforço do poder dos homens na sociedade, nomeadamente através da sua certa independência e do direito ao divórcio (Medina Martín, 2016). Em 1964, a Falange Espanhola levou a “Secção das Mulheres” para o Sahara Ocidental, na esperança de alterar as dinâmicas de género estabelecidas – aquilo a que Medina Martín (2016, p.258) se refere como “colonialismo de género”, um conceito desenvolvido por María Lugones⁴. Assim, as forças colonizadoras procuraram criar uma mudança nos papéis tradicionais de género, procurando aproximá-los de padrões ocidentalizados (Allan 2016). As mudanças ocorridas neste período levaram a uma profunda alteração do papel da mulher, que passou a depender mais economicamente do homem, e o divórcio passou a apenas ser possível mediante o pagamento de uma taxa (Medina Martín, 2016).

No entanto, as mudanças que a Secção das Mulheres procurou realizar, ou mesmo que conseguiu desenvolver, não ficaram isentas de indignação ou contestação. As mulheres Saharauis defenderam o ensino de dinâmicas de género não opressoras (como a costura e a cozinha como principais papéis das mulheres na sociedade e no lar); por exemplo, foi sugerida a disponibilização de aulas de literatura (Allan, 2016). A pressão para mudar o ensino levou a Secção a avançar para o reforço da educação das mulheres. À medida que a pressão dos colonizadores aumentava, crescia também a necessidade de resistir aos esforços para oprimir e alterar a cultura. As mulheres participaram em todas as formas de resistência contra a opressão masculina e a Colonização (Allan, 2016). Em 1973, foi criado o movimento de libertação, a Frente Polisário, e, no seu seio, a Ala Feminina (atualmente Unión Nacional de Mujeres Saharauis, UNMS), seguida do Exército de Libertação Popular Saharaui (ELPS). Com a Ala Feminina, as mulheres tornaram-se parte integrante das forças armadas, dos dispositivos de informação e dos ramos da saúde (Lippert, 1992; Strzelecka, 2023; Zunes & Mundy, 2010). As mulheres organizaram protestos e reuniões e estiveram na linha da frente da contestação ao Colonialismo Espanhol nas décadas de 1960 e 1970 (Juliano, 1998; Sebastián, 2021).

Depois de Marrocos se ter tornado independente de França em 1956, o país começou a interessar-se pelas regiões circundantes, incluindo o Sahara Ocidental (López Tessore & Maiolino, 2022). Em 1974, perante a grande pressão das Nações Unidas, Espanha anunciou a sua intenção de realizar um referendo sobre a autodeterminação do povo do Sahara Ocidental – ou de ser anexado por Marrocos ou pela Mauritânia (López Tessore & Maiolino, 2022; Lovatt & Mundy, 2021). Paralelamente, Embarca Mahamud, Arbía Mohamed Nas e Fatima Taleb – que trabalhavam na altura para a Secção das Mulheres – começaram a reforçar as suas críticas à organização e à sua negligência em relação aos interesses das mulheres (Allan, 2016). Isto levou a que se estabelecesse uma ponte entre a contestação ao Patriarcado e ao Colonialismo e, consequentemente, a exigência do direito de voto das mulheres no referido Referendo (Allan, 2016). Como dois sistemas de opressão diferentes, mas interligados, o Patriarcado e o Colonialismo foram vistos

⁴ Lugones (2008, 2011, 2012) desenvolveu o conceito de “colonialismo de género” em várias obras, incluindo: Lugones, M. (2008). Colonialidad y género. *Tabula rasa*, (9), 73-102. Lugones, M. (2011). Hacia un feminismo descolonial. *La Manzana de la Discordia*, 6(2), 105-119. Lugones, M. (2012). Subjetividad esclava, colonialidad de género, marginalidad y opresiones múltiples. In P. Montes (Ed.), *Pensando los feminismos en Bolivia* (pp. 129-140). Conexión Fondo de Emancipación.



como duas questões a combater para a libertação do povo, e das mulheres em particular. Assim, para libertar as mulheres Saharais, a independência do Sahara Ocidental foi considerada fundamental, carecia de correlação com a independência da ordem Patriarcal estabelecida. No entanto, Marrocos considerou que o Referendo da Independência não deveria ter lugar, por considerar que o território do Sahara Ocidental pertencia historicamente ao Reino de Marrocos. Neste sentido, o país solicitou uma audiência ao Tribunal Internacional de Justiça (TIJ) (Lippert, 1992; Zunes & Mundy, 2010). Em 1975, foi estabelecida uma Missão das Nações Unidas para analisar este processo. O TIJ entendeu que não existiam laços entre Marrocos e a Mauritânia com o território do Sahara Ocidental, enquanto as reivindicações de independência pareciam fortes ("Advisory Opinion on the Western Sahara", 1975).

Ocupação marroquina e a Guerra do Sahara Ocidental

A 6 de novembro de 1975, Marrocos e a Mauritânia invadiram o Sahara Ocidental com a Marcha Verde, onde 300.000 cidadãos e 20.000 soldados invadiram a região (Lovatt & Mundy, 2021; Zunes & Mundy, 2010). Uma semana depois, no dia 14, Espanha, Marrocos e Mauritânia assinaram os Acordos de Madrid, nos quais ficou estabelecido que Espanha passava a soberania sobre o Sahara Ocidental a Marrocos e à Mauritânia (López Tessore & Maiolino, 2022; Lovatt & Mundy, 2021; Strzelecka, 2023) – reconhecendo assim a invasão. A Frente Polisário opôs-se a estes acordos, apoiada pela Argélia, e as Nações Unidas não reconheceram esta transferência de poder (Lovatt & Mundy, 2021). Nem Marrocos nem a Mauritânia recuaram, o que levou ao início da guerra do Sahara Ocidental e à fuga para o exílio na Argélia de cerca de 40% da população Saharai, onde foram criados campos de refugiados (Lovatt & Mundy, 2021). A 27 de fevereiro de 1976, foi proclamada a República Árabe Saharai Democrática (RASD), que se tornou o governo dos Saharais no exílio, nos campos da Argélia (López Tessore & Maiolino, 2022; Lovatt & Mundy, 2021; Medina Martín, 2016; Strzelecka, 2023). No dia seguinte, 28, as forças espanholas retiraram-se do território ocupado. A guerra com Marrocos prolongou-se até 1991, mas a Mauritânia foi derrotada em 1979 (Lovatt & Mundy, 2021).

Entre 1981 e 1987, Marrocos construiu um muro de 2.700 km, o *muro da vergonha*, rodeado por cerca de 10 milhões de minas antipessoais, que divide as regiões ocupada (a oeste) e libertada (a este) do Sahara Ocidental (Estrada & Costa, 2017; Lee, 2015; Lovatt & Mundy, 2021; Medina Martín, 2016) (ver figura 1). A zona libertada foi bombardeada com napalm e fósforo branco, e na região ocupada os Saharais são torturados e sofrem desaparecimentos forçados (Medina Martín, 2016).

Enquanto os Saharais da zona ocupada resistiam à opressão do Reino de Marrocos, nos campos de refugiados a sobrevivência quotidiana estava em perigo. Com os homens na linha da frente da batalha, as mulheres encarregaram-se de garantir que o seu povo sobrevivesse para ver o dia seguinte: construíam as *jaimas* (tendas) que se tornariam as casas das pessoas que viviam na *hammada* argelina e organizavam os campos de refugiados para garantir a sobrevivência, a educação e a saúde das pessoas (Medina Martín, 2016). Estes campos são autoadministrados pela Frente Polisário e pela RASD, mas dependem da ajuda alimentar e humanitária internacional (Strzelecka, 2023).

**Figura 1.** Mapa do Sahara Ocidental⁵

Fonte: BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14115273>

De acordo com Juliano (1998), as mulheres Saharauis recorreram a três estratégias para garantir a sua posição na sociedade. A *invisibilidade* era uma forma de criticar os sistemas de opressão, procurando influenciar posições e perspectivas, através de um ponto de vista invisível, que permitisse a sua influência na sociedade. A *autoafirmação* permitiu às mulheres combater abertamente as várias formas de opressão, depois de terem obtido algum controlo para o fazer. A *maternidade* parte de um ponto de vista em que as mulheres entendem a maternidade como uma forma de resistência ativa contra a ocupação e a opressão do seu povo. No entanto, as prioridades de sobrevivência enfrentadas nos campos de refugiados fecharam o espaço para as mulheres debaterem a sua posição como um coletivo e, assim, a sua emancipação dentro da sociedade Patriarcal Saharaui (Medina Martín, 2016).

30 anos de cessar-fogo

A quietude da guerra levou a um acordo de cessar-fogo entre o Reino de Marrocos e a Frente Polisário em 1991 (Zunes & Mundy, 2010). A partir desta altura, a influência das mulheres na sociedade a nível político diminuiu, uma vez que os homens regressaram da frente de batalha para os campos de refugiados, reocupando os espaços que tinham sido da responsabilidade das mulheres desde 1975 (Medina Martín, 2016). As Nações Unidas estabeleceram uma missão denominada Misión de Naciones Unidas para el Referendo en el Sáhara Occidental (MINURSO) que procurou monitorizar o cessar-fogo, reduzir a força militar marroquina na região ocupada, bem como identificar e registar os eleitores (Medina Martín, 2016). No entanto, esta é a única missão da ONU que não

⁵ A Oeste (amarelo), a zona controlada por Marrocos. A Este (laranja), o território controlado pela Frente Polisário. O tracejado simboliza o muro contruído a separar as duas zonas, e o ponto verde indica a zona de passagem na fronteira, em Guerguerat.



supervisiona uma cláusula de observação e denúncia de violações de direitos humanos desde 1978 (Lee, 2015; Medina Martín, 2016; Perez-Martin, 2014). Realizaram-se duas tentativas de referendo – em 1992 e 1997 – mas estas foram encerradas depois de terem sido levantadas questões de elegibilidade dos eleitores (Zunes & Mundy, 2010). As esperanças de realizar um referendo diminuíram com o passar dos anos e, em 2019, a Frente Polisário, apoiada pelo povo, começou a perceber a retomada da guerra como a única solução possível para a independência do Sahara Ocidental. Em novembro de 2020, o acordo de cessar-fogo foi quebrado por Marrocos, que violou o cessar-fogo em Guerguerat, na zona libertada (Lovatt & Mundy, 2021).

Violação de Direitos Humanos no Sahara Ocidental Ocupado

A ocupação do Sahara Ocidental pelas forças marroquinas é altamente repressiva e opressiva. Em 1976, cerca de 500 mulheres juntaram-se num protesto contra as violações dos direitos humanos levadas a cabo por Marrocos no Sahara Ocidental ocupado: a repressão, a tortura e os desaparecimentos forçados foram o foco deste encontro. Este acontecimento colocou as mulheres na linha da frente dos esforços de resistência (Medina Martín, 2016).

Em 2022, o hegoa⁶ publicou um relatório sobre as violações dos direitos humanos das mulheres Saharauis no Sahara Ocidental ocupado. O relatório detalha várias formas de violação da liberdade e da segurança pessoal, como a violação do direito à vida, uma vez que os Saharauis sofrem frequentemente de desaparecimentos forçados, são torturados física e psicologicamente e assassinados. O relatório dá conta das várias formas de privação dos direitos culturais dos Saharauis, como a proibição das casas tradicionais (*jaimas*) e nomes Saharauis, vestuário e língua (Hassanyia). No que respeita aos direitos sociais, os Saharauis estão sujeitos à recusa de cuidados médicos (e são frequentemente ameaçados pelas forças marroquinas nos hospitais). As crianças são vítimas de assédio na escola e podem ser seguidas até casa. Além disso, não existem universidades no Sahara Ocidental ocupado, o que obriga os Saharauis que pretendem frequentar o ensino superior a deslocarem-se para Marrocos (Azkue, et al., 2022).

As mulheres e as raparigas contam frequentemente que foram vítimas de violência sexual por parte das forças marroquinas. Descrevem toques, agressões verbais, violações ou ameaças de violação, violações coletivas e violações com objetos, torturas durante a gravidez, abortos forçados, ser obrigadas a ouvir violências sexuais contra outra pessoa, escravidão sexual, descargas elétricas nos seios e/ou nos órgãos genitais, mutilações sexuais e esterilizações forçadas (Azkue, et al., 2022).

No que se refere aos direitos económicos, Marrocos procura ativamente excluir os Saharauis da participação na sociedade através de políticas económicas e laborais. A maioria das mulheres Saharauis no Sahara Ocidental ocupado não tem rendimentos ou tem um rendimento extremamente baixo, o que enfraquece as suas possibilidades de adquirir bens de primeira necessidade, como alimentos e provisões, deixando-as com cada vez menos autonomia. Os Saharauis, na sua maioria mulheres, são discriminados na força de trabalho, sendo vítimas de assédio no trabalho, congelamento de salários,

⁶ Instituto de Estudos sobre o Desenvolvimento e Cooperação Internacional da Universidade do País Basco.



aumento da precariedade no trabalho e recusa de autorizações de trabalho. Os ativistas que participam em atividades de defesa dos direitos do povo Saharaui são economicamente postos como alvo, sofrendo represálias (Azkue, et al., 2022).

A Resistência das mulheres Saharais nos campos de refugiados e na diáspora Espanhola

As percepções das mulheres Saharais nos campos de refugiados e na diáspora espanhola sobre a opressão de gênero, as prioridades específicas de gênero e as formas de luta contra a opressão são divergentes (Fernandes, 2023; Medina Martín, 2016). Um aspeto que reúne maior concordância entre estes dois grupos é o papel histórico das mulheres Saharais na sociedade, o que pode ser evidenciado em todos os aspetos da resistência, particularmente da Marcha Verde em diante. Nesta época, as mulheres surgiram como líderes do povo em êxodo e se estabeleceu no exílio, na *hammada* argelina. Assim, a sociedade rapidamente reconhece as mulheres como as responsáveis pela sobrevivência do povo Saharaui, resultante do seu papel na construção e organização dos campos de refugiados, nomeadamente nas fases iniciais, uma vez que estabelecer rapidamente as bases da vida nesta região era a maior prioridade, como evidenciam as seguintes citações (Fernandes, 2023):

"Apesar de todo o sofrimento desde o momento em que as mulheres Saharais foram obrigadas a fugir das suas terras e chegaram aos campos de refugiados, elas procuraram força para construir os campos, para poderem construir as escolas, construir os centros e fornecer saúde e educação ao resto da população. Elas obtiveram força do nada para poderem construir uma sociedade inteira e continuar a lutar e manter a luta até aos dias de hoje" (Amani)⁷.

"Mesmo desde o início da nossa luta, depois de a população ter fugido para os campos de refugiados, podemos dizer que este foi o ponto em que as mulheres Saharais tiveram o início da sua presença significativa dentro da sociedade, porque foram elas que basicamente construíram os campos de refugiados. As mulheres assumiram o comando da construção dos campos de refugiados. (...) Basicamente, pode dizer-se que a gestão e administração interna dos campos estava nas mãos das mulheres Saharais" (Qadira).

Portanto, apesar da compreensão académica do papel das mulheres Saharais na sociedade desde as eras nómadas Beduínas, a Marcha Verde apresenta-se como um ponto de mudança no papel das mulheres, à medida que se tornam líderes comunitárias e políticas, responsáveis pela sobrevivência do povo, da sua cultura e da sua resistência – e isto não parece ser contestado a qualquer nível. A opressão levada a cabo por Marrocos tornou necessária e intensificou os debates sobre a opressão, as questões femininas e a emancipação, à medida que as mulheres Saharais se mobilizavam na resistência. Com os homens nas linhas da frente da batalha, as mulheres ocuparam a

⁷ Os nomes utilizados nestas citações passaram por um processo de anonimização e pseudonimização para garantir a proteção das entrevistadas.



arena política, algo que de outra forma não teria sido possível, uma vez que estes espaços foram meramente cedidos, e não obtidos. No entanto, isto abriu caminho para que as mulheres assumissem um estatuto sem precedentes, ao serem reconhecidas como a “espinha dorsal da luta” (Malika).

Ao longo da secção seguinte, serão apresentadas as perceções de nove mulheres entrevistadas. Nos campos de refugiados foram entrevistadas cinco mulheres (quatro do campo de Bojador e uma de Smara). Estas mulheres tinham entre 30 e 61 anos à data das entrevistas. Trabalham em diversas áreas, desde os setores da saúde e da educação até ao comércio e cargos políticos. Quatro destas mulheres foram entrevistadas com a ajuda de uma tradutora de Hassanyia para inglês. Na diáspora espanhola, as mulheres entrevistadas tinham entre 23 e 36 anos. A mais nova era estudante, enquanto outras trabalhavam nos setores da saúde ou da educação. Todas podem ser consideradas ativistas.

Os campos de refugiados

As próprias mulheres Saharauís articulam o seu papel central nos campos de refugiados e na diáspora, enfatizando a sua liderança na educação, administração e organização comunitária. Os seus relatos, juntamente com as perceções de académicos e da sociedade civil, destacam as formas como moldam e sustentam a resistência coletiva. Delgado & Franco (2024) apresentam quatro formas de resistência das mulheres nos campos de refugiados. Em primeiro lugar, papéis profissionais educacionais, uma vez que as mulheres Saharauís participam ativamente na educação e na liderança comunitária, o que as coloca num papel central. Em segundo lugar, a resistência cultural e simbólica, considerando o seu papel vital na transmissão da história, da língua e das tradições do povo – em geral, da cultura do povo Saharaui. Terceiro, a advocacia internacional, considerando o seu papel na sensibilização para a luta pela autodeterminação a nível global. E em quarto lugar, atos diários de desafio, considerando a forma como as mulheres Saharauís resistem à eliminação do seu povo e da sua cultura, através da manutenção da coesão comunitária.

No entanto, não existe consenso sobre a emancipação da mulher na sociedade Saharaui. Enquanto uns percecionam esta sociedade como feminista e até matriarcal (Lovatt & Mundy, 2021; Zunes & Mundy, 2010), outros criticam este entendimento (Medina Martín, 2016), afirmando que esta perceção é distorcida. Particularmente nos campos de refugiados, existe alguma disputa entre as prioridades – ou aquilo que alguns acreditam que deveriam ser as prioridades – das pessoas em relação a várias formas de resistência e opressão (Fernandes, 2023). A luta Saharaui nos campos de refugiados entende como prioridade máxima a revolução rumo à independência e à libertação (Ormazabal & López Belloso, 2011). Isto faz com que questões como a luta emancipatória feminista sejam colocadas em segundo plano, sob justificações relacionadas com os recursos e a divisão da unidade do povo (Juliano, 1998; Strzelecka, 2023). Isto significa que, nos campos de refugiados, a necessidade quotidiana é concentrar-se na obtenção e distribuição de bens e medicamentos, enquanto o foco na saúde e na educação das pessoas é a questão central. Os direitos das mulheres e a emancipação são considerados problemas secundários, que não podem ser destacados e abordados agora – apenas quando a



independência for alcançada. Isto está de acordo com diferentes movimentos de libertação nacional, que tendem a priorizar a causa nacionalista, negligenciando outras questões, como a emancipação das mulheres (Strzelecka, 2023).

A cultura Saharaui está inerentemente ligada ao Islamismo, e as interpretações da lei Islâmica dentro da sociedade Saharaui são moldadas por dinâmicas históricas, sociais e políticas. Investigadores como Juliano (1998) defendem que certos costumes Islâmicos – como a proibição do álcool – podem contribuir para reduzir a violência de género. No entanto, esta investigação não tem como objetivo avaliar as tradições jurídicas islâmicas ou aplicar-lhes perspetivas externas. Em vez de adotar pressupostos generalizados sobre a Lei Sharia como inerentemente benéfica ou prejudicial para as mulheres, é crucial centrar as perspetivas das mulheres Saharauís sobre as suas vidas, interpretações da justiça e o seu papel na definição de normas de género na sua comunidade. Um fator entendido por Juliano como garante de alguma igualdade de género é o não confinamento das mulheres Saharauís nas suas casas, tal como acontece noutros países islâmicos. No entanto, outras perspetivas, como a de Piniella (2018), sublinham que, apesar de não confinar as mulheres ao lar, a sociedade Saharaui as confina à esfera privada. Além disso, Juliano (1998) considera que o dote não é entendido como a compra de uma mulher, mas sim como uma forma de compensar a família quando esta sai de casa. Em concordância com a visão de Piniella – mas em dissonância de perspetiva –, Juliano (1998) defende como aspeto positivo do estatuto da mulher na sociedade que a mulher permaneça no lar a cuidar dos filhos, enquanto os homens são responsáveis pelo aspeto económico do lar, através dos seus trabalhos. Este debate pode ser refletido na seguinte citação:

"[A igualdade de género] podia ser melhorada, claro que podia, mas como em todos os aspetos e em todos os países, a igualdade está a progredir em todo o lado e, obviamente, ainda mais num campo de refugiados. Mas hoje podemos dizer que sim. Pode ser melhorada, pode-se sempre melhorar o que já se tem, mas sim, temos igualdade" (Karyme).

O estatuto da mulher na sociedade Saharaui sofreu uma alteração em 1975, com a Marcha Verde. Fugindo para a segurança na Argélia, as mulheres estiveram na vanguarda das responsabilidades de sobrevivência do seu povo – nomeadamente dos idosos e das crianças – quando estabeleceram os campos (Fernandes, 2023; Medina Martín, 2016; Strzelecka, 2023). Seis dos campos de refugiados estabelecidos desde então – El Aaiún, Auserd, Bojador, Smara e Dajla – foram construídos por mulheres (Medina Martín, 2016), Rabuni é a capital administrativa. Até ao acordo de cessar-fogo assinado em 1991, as mulheres eram as líderes dos campos e dos seus povos, enquanto os homens estavam na linha da frente da batalha (Medina Martín, 2016), uma vez que as mulheres representavam cerca de 80% da população dos acampamentos (Caratini, 2006). Com o foco na saúde e educação do povo, muitas mulheres formaram-se em diversas áreas em universidades de Cuba, Espanha e Argélia (Lippert, 1992). A par do estabelecimento do programa *Vacaciones en Paz*, bem como do apoio internacional (principalmente prestado pela Argélia, Venezuela e Cuba), as gerações mais jovens interagiram com culturas distintas, aprenderam novas línguas e formaram novas opiniões e interpretações da vida nos campos. Isto trouxe novas discussões e ensinamentos aos campos de refugiados,



principalmente para garantir a sobrevivência das pessoas, das suas origens e da sua cultura (Fernandes, 2023). A educação das raparigas e das mulheres levou ao aumento da idade média do primeiro casamento de 17/18 para 24/25 anos (Juliano, 1998). A deficiência nos serviços de saúde nos campos, principalmente nos primeiros anos, levou ao aumento das taxas de mortalidade feminina, ligada à gravidez e à maternidade (Juliano, 1998; Zunes & Mundy, 2010).

Nos campos de refugiados, as mulheres estavam presentes em todos os aspetos da resistência e da sobrevivência do povo: em cargos administrativos, na política, na economia e em funções militares (tanto em combate como em cargos relacionados) (Medina Martín, 2016; Strzelecka, 2023). Até 1991, cerca de 90% dos membros do corpo da RASD eram mulheres (Zunes & Mundy, 2010). No entanto, a urgência de estabelecer e organizar os campos durante os primeiros anos da guerra não permitiu que as mulheres pensassem coletivamente sobre a sua posição enquanto mulheres e formassem uma posição política (Barona, 2016).

A introdução de um sistema monetário nos campos de refugiados levou a uma mudança negativa no papel das mulheres: a prostituição aumentou; o trabalho, por si só, perdeu o seu valor; e à medida que o Capitalismo forçou uma mudança nas prioridades e necessidades das pessoas, a esfera privada tornou-se hermética para proteger os bens da família (Caratini, 2006; Juliano, 1998). O cessar-fogo levou à substituição das mulheres por homens no plano político e a uma mudança nos dias quotidianos das mulheres e nos seus interesses: o dote regressou e a cobertura de corpo passou a ser obrigatória a partir dos 11 anos, por exemplo (Medina Martín, 2016; Zunes & Mundy, 2010). Além disso, durante os primeiros anos nos campos de refugiados, as mulheres concentraram-se na construção de jardins de infância e de serviços de assistência à infância. Entretanto, quando os homens regressaram da guerra em 1991, o número de serviços prestados diminuiu profundamente. Isto levou as mulheres a assumirem a responsabilidade pelos cuidados privados a crianças e idosos, o que levou ao abandono de carreiras e aspirações educacionais (Strzelecka, 2023). Assim, o estatuto, os interesses e as prioridades das mulheres foram prejudicados pelo regresso dos homens. Isto é particularmente interessante tendo em conta as perceções das mulheres relativamente a uma abordagem de género às questões abordadas ao nível da liderança, sejam elas políticas ou não (Fernandes, 2023):

"Quando se compara posições onde estão homens e posições onde estão mulheres, é totalmente diferente. (...) Definitivamente, as mulheres provaram que são mais bem-sucedidas na gestão. (...) São também mais protetoras dos recursos, (...) são também mais inclusivas em relação às pessoas com quem trabalham" (Malika).

Não obstante, o papel das mulheres nos campos de refugiados e no movimento de resistência é central, e isto não é verdade apenas em relação à economia e à política. No plano cultural, as mulheres têm sido responsáveis pela sobrevivência da língua Hassanyia, bem como dos costumes e tradições Saharauís, desde o Colonialismo Espanhol (Juliano, 1998).



A diáspora Espanhola

A resistência das mulheres Saharauis na diáspora espanhola concretiza-se, principalmente, na educação de pessoas que não estão em contacto com a luta, no ativismo, esforço diplomático e na educação (Fernandes, 2023). Aqui, as mulheres devem equilibrar as expectativas da comunidade de acolhimento e da comunidade doméstica; as duas culturas diferentes apresentam entendimentos diferentes sobre qual deve ser o papel e o comportamento da mulher (Sebastián, 2021).

As mulheres Saharauis na diáspora espanhola apresentam um entendimento dissonante do estatuto das mulheres nos campos de refugiados em relação às que vivem nos campos (Fernandes, 2023). Ao contrário dos campos de refugiados, onde as mulheres tendem a entender a sociedade como defensora dos direitos das mulheres – ainda que carente de maiores desenvolvimentos –, na diáspora espanhola estas questões são objeto de um discurso diferente. Neste caso, as mulheres entendem que, embora a sociedade Saharaui possa ser percebida como matriarcal, esta perceção não está necessariamente alinhada com os padrões feministas, particularmente em relação à violência psicológica e emocional contra as mulheres. Tal violência impede a sua emancipação e o pleno exercício de autonomia (Fernandes, 2023). Embora as mulheres Saharauis em Espanha sejam mais propensas a discutir questões diretamente relacionadas com as mulheres, as mulheres nos campos tendem a falar mais abertamente sobre lutas a nível nacional. Notavelmente, gravidezes precoces e disparidades de género na educação são assuntos amplamente discutidos na diáspora (Fillol, 2021).

A divergência de perspetivas entre as mulheres dos campos de refugiados e as da diáspora espanhola pode ser encontrada em muitos aspetos. Nos campos de refugiados, o aspeto mais importante a considerar é a resistência, juntamente com questões que afetam a sociedade como um todo – e não aquelas que têm como alvo principal as mulheres. Assim, as mulheres percecionam a educação e a saúde como questões primordiais na necessidade de foco e desenvolvimento (Fernandes, 2023; Medina Martín, 2016). Isto coloca questões específicas das mulheres em segundo plano. Por isso, as mulheres nos campos de refugiados consideram que só quando a independência for alcançada é que haverá espaço e disponibilidade para discutir, abordar e combater a desigualdade de género ou mesmo a opressão das mulheres (Fernandes, 2023):

"Diria que as necessidades e exigências das mulheres serão mais cobertas e cuidadas quando tivermos a nossa independência. Porque agora o foco está principalmente na luta no regresso à nossa terra, e depois as outras questões ou necessidades são colocadas em segundo plano. Não são a prioridade, digamos. Mas eu diria que quando obtivermos a nossa independência e o controlo sobre os nossos recursos naturais, as questões que afetam as mulheres serão mais tidas em conta e serão tratadas de forma adequada." (Amani).

A persistência da ocupação e a não conclusão do referendo acordado em 1991 podem também ter levado a uma mudança no ímpeto revolucionário das gerações mais jovens, que se tornam menos interessadas em acreditar que uma solução atual para a ocupação (isto é, a independência) possa ocorrer em breve (Fernandes, 2023). Em contraste, as



mulheres Saharauis na diáspora espanhola mencionam diversas questões que precisam de ser desenvolvidas. Aqui, não só a invasão e ocupação de colonos marroquinos no território do Sahara Ocidental é apresentada como um foco de resistência popular – o que, por si só, é limitativo de uma vida totalmente independente no estrangeiro –, como outros aspetos são também trazidos à luz. O Patriarcado é aqui fortemente criticado, uma vez que as mulheres discutem a subjugação sociopolítica e económica das mulheres aos homens sob a cultura Saharaui, opressora dos seus direitos, estatuto e autonomia (Fernandes, 2023). Além disso, discute-se na diáspora que o quadro jurídico e político não dá conta de uma garantia social efetiva dos direitos das mulheres. Isto é principalmente comprometido pelas normas e expectativas sociais impostas às mulheres pela sociedade e pelas suas próprias famílias, uma vez que a opinião social – ou o olhar social – controla e oprime a autonomia das mulheres. Isto poderia levar as mulheres a serem rejeitadas ou excluídas das suas famílias:

"Nós em Hassanyia, (...) temos uma palavra... é o olhar social. (...) No momento em que se sai dessa linha do que é esperado de nós, somos rejeitados, tanto nós como a nossa família. Portanto, acho que é muito... isto, isto é, limita as mulheres especialmente, mais do que qualquer outra coisa por causa do peso que carregam" (Nura).

Ao contrário do que se acredita nos campos de refugiados, as mulheres da diáspora espanhola consideram que a luta pela emancipação de género e a luta pela independência do Sahara Ocidental e do seu povo devem andar de mãos dadas, em simultâneo. Entendem que se assim não for, a luta feminista acabará por ser esquecida, comparando a luta feminista Saharaui com outras onde esse descaso aconteceu (Fernandes, 2023):

"Muitos, muitos Saharauis, tanto mulheres como homens, dizem que a luta feminista é uma luta à qual devemos retomar assim que alcançarmos a independência como país. Mas sabes qual é o problema? É que isto foi dito a todas as mulheres em todos os conflitos ao longo da história. Disseram-nos sempre que a nossa luta tem de esperar, que não somos a prioridade. E o que a história nos tem mostrado é que um país no qual as mulheres não são livres não é um país que pode progredir ou que irá progredir, social, económica ou culturalmente. Portanto, o filme criado é que temos de esperar até nos tornarmos independentes enquanto povo para lutar pelo feminismo. A história mostrou que isso é falso, que não se pode fazer assim, porque esse objetivo nunca é atingido. Por isso, as duas lutas têm de andar de mãos dadas: a luta pela liberdade do povo Saharaui e a luta pela liberdade das mulheres Saharauis. As duas lutas podem andar de mãos dadas, e devem andar de mãos dadas para avançar e alcançar algo" (Nashwa).

Em concordância, Strzelecka (2023) destaca a tendência dos movimentos de libertação nacional para priorizar a causa nacionalista, negligenciando outros assuntos, como a emancipação das mulheres. Isto leva, por um lado, à falta de desenvolvimento de uma consciência ou ideologia feminista e, portanto, à manutenção do sistema de opressão Patriarcal – como acontece com a Palestina.



Na diáspora espanhola, outro aspeto vem ao de cima. Durante as entrevistas, uma das mulheres manifestou preocupações sobre a perceção internacional dos direitos das mulheres na sociedade Saharaui. Ela sugeriu que a noção de sociedade como matriarcal poderia ser construída como propaganda política, em vez de uma realidade objetiva. Isto significaria que, em vez de combater de forma ativa e eficaz a opressão das mulheres, a compreensão da sociedade Saharaui como emancipada para as mulheres a nível internacional é utilizada para obter solidariedade estrangeira para a luta: *"Mas também não deixa de ser propaganda política quando dizemos que a Polisário e a sociedade Saharaui são as que mais representam as mulheres, porque isso não é verdade"* (Nashwa).

Em suma, este capítulo explora as perspetivas divergentes das mulheres Saharais nos campos de refugiados e na diáspora espanhola, moldadas pelas distintas condições políticas, sociais e materiais de cada contexto. Enquanto as mulheres nos campos de refugiados enfrentam desafios diários de sobrevivência – incluindo o escasso acesso a água, alimentos, medicamentos e bens –, elas têm moldado ativamente a resistência política e as estruturas comunitárias. Em contraste, na diáspora espanhola, a exposição a diferentes estruturas sociais abre caminho para o envolvimento com perspetivas feministas alternativas, incluindo as moldadas pelas normas Ocidentais.

A presença de estruturas feministas ocidentais na diáspora pode criar atrito e diálogo com as próprias articulações feministas das mulheres Saharais – moldadas pelas tradições políticas islâmicas e indígenas. As tradições feministas ocidentais e brancas posicionaram frequentemente os feminismos islâmico e muçulmano como inerentemente carentes de reforma, impondo limites de emancipação que não estão necessariamente alinhados com as prioridades das mulheres Saharais. Em vez de enquadrar estas perspetivas como polos opostos, as mulheres Saharais na diáspora têm a oportunidade de navegar posições complexas que desafiam estas perspetivas binárias.

Discussão

Este artigo destaca os vários entendimentos e pontos de vista das mulheres Saharais, alinhando a academia com a luta Saharaui pela libertação e a luta das mulheres pela emancipação. O atual Colonialismo marroquino e a repressão no Sahara Ocidental ocupado não só constituem uma forma de violência direta, como também tentam suprimir discussões autónomas sobre o feminismo e os papéis de género. Apesar destas restrições, as mulheres Saharais continuam a moldar e a definir as suas próprias estruturas feministas, resistindo tanto à dominação Colonial como às imposições externas. Uma conversa feminista decolonial deve centrar-se nas perspetivas articuladas pelas mulheres Saharais, que resistem tanto à ocupação violenta como à imposição de paradigmas feministas hegemónicos.

As questões acima abordadas não significam obrigatoriamente que as mulheres Saharais discordem entre si, mas também não concordam necessariamente quanto às prioridades. As mulheres Saharais entrevistadas reconhecem que estas diferentes perspetivas existem e aceitam de onde vêm. Esta divergência de perspetivas pode ser entendida por uma diversidade de fatores. O mais relevante, a meu ver, surge da cultura e dos significados sociais específicos de cada região. Enquanto nos campos de refugiados



a vida diária das mulheres se centra na sobrevivência quotidiana e na luta nacional pela independência de um Sahara Ocidental livre, não têm havido muitas oportunidades para discutir as questões das mulheres a partir de um ponto de vista coletivo; na diáspora espanhola, as mulheres são influenciadas por um país com diferentes padrões de normas de género, onde as suas prioridades diárias são a educação e o trabalho, ao mesmo tempo que defendem a independência do seu país de origem. No entanto, isto também pode resultar das interpretações da emancipação das mulheres e da igualdade de género por si só, uma vez que as mulheres nos campos de refugiados parecem compreender a sociedade como algo interessada em abordar as questões das mulheres, ao mesmo tempo que contempla uma certa inexistência de opressão de género. Por outro lado, as mulheres na diáspora parecem discordar desta perceção, o que pode explicar uma maior abertura para abordar estas questões – uma vez que as consideram mais urgentes e inadiáveis.

Contudo, é fundamental discutir o papel desempenhado pela globalização nas diferenças entre a cultura do povo Saharaui que vive nos campos de refugiados e as pessoas que vivem na diáspora espanhola, e como isso afeta a autonomia, a opressão e a emancipação das mulheres. Aqui, é relevante compreender que, mesmo vivendo numa parte do mundo, uma pessoa pode ainda ser influenciada pelos padrões de outra, o que torna mais difícil equilibrar as diferentes culturas e expectativas em jogo. Por um lado, a globalização leva as mulheres que vivem em Espanha a necessitarem de encontrar mecanismos para se protegerem dos danos da cultura de acolhimento e da cultura de origem, uma vez que o que é esperado numa pode ser fortemente criticado na outra. Isto significa que se tornam responsáveis pelas suas escolhas no país anfitrião perante as suas famílias e amigos em casa, muitas vezes quase imediatamente, graças às redes sociais. Por outro lado, a sociedade Saharaui nos campos pode ter tido de se tornar mais fechada para se proteger dos padrões e imposições ocidentalizadas, levando a um aprofundamento de normas opressivas sobre as mulheres, em nome da sua proteção e da cultura. Assim, a sociedade Saharaui nos campos pode ter sentido a necessidade de recorrer às mesmas normas que orgulhosamente rejeita, como forma de garantir a proteção da cultura Saharaui (liberdade versus segurança).

Desta forma, é fundamental compreender a importância de garantir um diálogo entre a sociedade dos campos de refugiados e aquela que vive na diáspora. Ao debater as diferentes abordagens e perspetivas de cada sociedade, poderá haver hipóteses de desenvolver ainda mais a identidade coletiva das mulheres e, assim, uma resistência unificada das mulheres contra a ordem patriarcal que as oprime. Isto pode ser feito enquanto se resiste ativamente à opressão das forças colonizadoras. Como este artigo discutiu, as duas lutas podem e devem trabalhar em conjunto para garantir a liberdade e a emancipação de todas as pessoas de diferentes formas de opressão – Colonialismo e Patriarcado.

A emancipação das mulheres Saharais deve advir tanto da libertação do passado colonial como das visões ocidentalizadas – patriarcais e de feminismo branco; bem como da libertação da opressão patriarcal e religiosa da sua sociedade. As mulheres Saharais devem lutar ativamente contra todas as formas de opressão que enfrentam, seja aquela que procura escondê-las ou aquela que procura explorá-las.



Conclusão

Este artigo tem como objetivo explorar as diferentes perspectivas sobre a emancipação das mulheres e os direitos das mulheres Saharauis nos campos e na diáspora espanhola. Através de uma análise histórica, examinei o impacto do Colonialismo nos papéis das mulheres, tendo reparado como já a sociedade nómada Saharaui valorizava as opiniões políticas das mulheres. O Colonialismo Espanhol, sobretudo depois de 1964, institucionalizou o colonialismo de género, tentando remodelar as dinâmicas de género. Ao longo de décadas de ocupação espanhola e marroquina, as mulheres Saharauis estiveram na vanguarda da luta de libertação, nomeadamente nos territórios ocupados, onde resistiram à repressão, à violência e às violações dos direitos humanos. Este artigo explorou também as diferentes visões das mulheres entrevistadas sobre as prioridades e a emancipação da sua sociedade. Enquanto as mulheres nos campos se concentravam na sobrevivência, educação e libertação dos poderes Coloniais, as mulheres na diáspora espanhola enfatizavam questões específicas de género para a libertação das mulheres Saharauis.

O papel fundamental das mulheres Saharauis na sustentação do seu povo nos campos de refugiados argelinos é amplamente reconhecido tanto na sociedade Saharaui como na literatura existente. No entanto, existe uma grande falta de discussão sobre o papel das mulheres durante a resistência contra o Colonialismo Espanhol até 1975, bem como sobre o seu papel nas forças armadas. As narrativas tradicionais confinam frequentemente as mulheres a papéis passivos, apesar das evidências claras da sua presença nas linhas da frente da batalha. Isto leva à invisibilização de inúmeras mulheres que se levantaram e lutaram com os seus pares por um Sahara Ocidental livre.

Assim, as próprias mulheres Saharauis devem poder expressar as suas preocupações e pontos de vista; e as perspectivas das mulheres sobre os seus papéis na luta não devem ser ditadas apenas pelas instituições formais, mas devem emergir de diversas experiências vividas. Um diálogo feminista mais amplo e inclusivo – que faça a ponte entre as experiências das mulheres nos campos de refugiados e as da diáspora espanhola – pode fortalecer a identidade coletiva e reforçar a autonomia das mulheres na sociedade Saharaui. Este intercâmbio promove uma compreensão mais profunda dos direitos e da emancipação das mulheres num contexto Patriarcal e Colonizado, garantindo que nenhum contributo é negligenciado.

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THE IMPACTS OF PAST TOTALITARIANISM ON THE TRANSITION PROCESS TOWARDS DEMOCRACY IN ALBANIA

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Abstract

More than 30 years have passed since the creation of one of the wildest totalitarianisms of Eastern Europe, the Albanian one. The Albanian totalitarian regime maintained constant control for almost 50 years in every social activity through terror and propaganda. Today, after a long and not easy transition, the country is still trying to find its way to full democratization. The lack of a functional democracy, the classification as a hybrid regime, as a partially free country and with a lack of active citizens as an institution of democracy are just some of the problems that are present in post-communist Albania and that will be discussed in this paper. The purpose of this paper is to offer a different perspective in the way we look Albania's path towards full democratization based on the influence of the totalitarian regime and the need to strengthen the concept of the active citizen and forms of active volunteering as a way to strengthen democracy, starting from a broader concept, from the citizen. The article provides a theoretical and practical perspective of totalitarian and post-communist period of Albania based on reports, statistical data and classic political studies scholar books.

Keywords

totalitarianism, post-communist, democratization, political culture, hybrid regime..

Resumo

Passaram mais de 30 anos desde a criação de um dos mais extremos totalitarismos da Europa de Leste, o albanês. O regime totalitário albanês manteve durante quase 50 anos um controlo constante de todas as atividades sociais através do terror e da propaganda. Hoje, após uma transição longa e nada fácil, o país ainda está a tentar encontrar o caminho para a democratização total. A ausência de uma democracia funcional, a classificação de regime híbrido, de um país parcialmente livre e a falta de cidadãos ativos como instituição da democracia são apenas alguns dos problemas presentes na Albânia pós-comunista e que serão discutidos neste artigo. O objetivo é oferecer uma perspetiva diferente sobre a forma como olhamos para o caminho da Albânia rumo à democratização plena com base na influência do regime totalitário e na necessidade de reforçar o conceito de cidadão ativo, bem como das formas de voluntariado como forma de fortalecer a democracia, partindo de um conceito mais amplo, o de cidadão. O artigo apresenta uma perspetiva teórica e prática do período totalitário



e pós-comunista da Albânia, com base em relatórios, dados estatísticos e livros clássicos de estudos políticos.

Palavras-chave

totalitarismo, pós-comunismo, democratização, cultura política, regime híbrido..

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THE IMPACTS OF PAST TOTALITARIANISM ON THE TRANSITION PROCESS TOWARDS DEMOCRACY IN ALBANIA

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Introduction

The recent developments in Europe, especially the war in Ukraine after the Russian aggression, brought back into focus the discussion of topics related to the national security of states, the stability of democracy as a response to the Russian autocratic political tendencies not only towards Ukraine, but also beyond. Moreover, there is a tendency to return to the study of authoritarianism and the ways in which today's democracies can be strengthened in order to be more flexible to the challenges of the future. In a significant number of studies, a trend towards a democratic stagnation of a significant part of the European states, including Albania, is noticed in the published results. From totalitarian dictatorship to democracy. Thus, the more than 30-year path of the Albanian state to overcome the long and arduous phase towards democratic transition can be summed up very briefly. The effort to establish essential democratic institutions, in function of the citizen and his involvement in them, directs us to focus on the influences of the period of the Albanian totalitarian state by analyzing its influences after 1991. From a regime that fought and excluded individuality as a human value, in a regime that embraces it and tries to represent it. It seems idyllic, but not so easy. The fall of the totalitarian dictatorship did not mean the collapse of the undemocratic political culture which is still present today.

Communist Albania was under the leadership of dictator Enver Hoxha for 45 years. After the natural death of dictator Hoxha and the assumption of leadership of the communist party by Ramiz Alia, the first signs of the weakening of Albanian dictatorship quickly emerged. The fall of Albanian totalitarianism occurred naturally at a time when every other regime of this nature in Eastern Europe and the Balkans had already capitulated. The emergence of the new social and political system, democracy, came about because the Albanian totalitarian state could no longer prevent the inertia of change coming from outside the political borders of Albania. The world had changed dramatically, and Albanian society was already aware of this. As a result, the first protests started with the students of the University of Tirana and later turned into nationwide protests against the communist regime.



"We want Albania like all of Europe" was the message of Albanian youth written on every banner in the city squares where demonstrations took place. However, the path to transition towards democracy would not be easy for the poorest and most isolated state in Europe. The fundamental change in the political, social, and economic regime would be radical, and the way citizens experienced this system change was also brutal. After more than 30 years of transition, this process is still unfinished, while democratization in many aspects has stagnated (European Commission, 2021). Albania is still classified as a semi-democratic system by international institutions such as Freedom House (Freedom House, 2021). One of the most lacking dimensions of democracy is the absence of active citizenship as a democratic consciousness of society.

For democracy scholars, democracy is seen from the perspective of two models: procedural democracy and substantive democracy. If procedural democracy emphasizes democratic standards, regulations, and the institutional-legal framework, substantive democracy (or substantial democracy) emphasizes citizen participation in the political system of a country and societal support for the political system as determining factors (Saikal, <https://pesd.princeton.edu/node/251>). Citizen participation in the political system, as political culture, is seen as one of the dimensions of the quality of democracy in different countries worldwide (Almond & Verba, 1963, 23). In this dimension of substantive democracy, which the post-communist Albanian society is still underdeveloped in, lies the interest of this work. Thus, the main aim of this work is to investigate the influence that totalitarian political culture has had on political developments in post-communist Albania, specifically to highlight the negative and obstructive role of this influence in building a substantive democracy in Albania. In this perspective, the role of political culture is considered quite important in the functioning of such a democracy, where active citizen participation in political processes and sensitizations is one of the key indicators. It is precisely here that we believe Albanian democracy struggles the most because, after more than 30 years of transition from the totalitarian system, an electoral and procedural democracy has been achieved, but the *democratic citizen* who is an active and determining political participant within a genuine substantive democracy has not been built.

Disappointed with the democratic successors of the transition period, or lacking a tradition of participatory democratic culture, Albanian citizens, for the most part, have been spectators and indifferent to political developments driven by partisan and clan interests of political parties in Albania during this post-communist period. Therefore, the purpose of this work is to analyze and interpret the influence that the totalitarian culture formed over almost half a century under the communist regime has had on Albanian society and how this influence has hindered other social agents in building an active and participatory citizenry in Albanian democracy. Has the long history under a totalitarian regime influenced the decline of volunteerism in Albanian society, and has it undermined the existence of a democratic political community in Albania during the post-communist period? Can there be substantive democracy without a solid political community that shares a common interest in democracy in this case? Have other social agents managed, and to what extent, to address the consequences of weakening the sense of community based on volunteerism in Albania? These and other dilemmas will be examined throughout this work.



The scholarly approach of this study will be based on qualitative research methods, as we aim to analyze and interpret the influence and role of the totalitarian culture in the fragility of present-day Albanian democracy. We consider all sources from various international organizations and institutions that provide statistical and analytical data on the extent and performance of democracy in Albania to be primary for this work, including the quality of elections, the functioning of institutions, civic accountability, and public involvement in political and decision-making processes. Another important part of the sources that will support this work will be the most significant texts of political theory, especially those that frame substantive democracy.

Enver Hoxha: L'état c'est moi

The Albanian totalitarian regime ruled over political Albania for almost five decades, of which 45 years were under the leadership of dictator Enver Hoxha. Statistical data published by the Institute of Studies on Crimes and Consequences of Communism clearly show the brutality of Albanian totalitarianism. The archive of the Ministry of Interior proves that up until the 1990s, 25,000 political prisoners were sentenced in Albania. However, researchers within this Institute claim that this number is between 30,000 and 34,000, as statistical data is missing for the years 1945-1946. In the 2016 report published by the Institute of Studies on Crimes and Consequences of Communism (ISSK) in Albania, it was stated that 984 prisoners died in prison, and 308 others lost their mental abilities. Meanwhile, 5,577 men and 450 women were sentenced to death and killed by the regime (Institute for the Studies of Communist Crimes and Consequences in Albania, 2016). The bodies of these victims were never returned to their families. During the period of 1946-1990, 110 internment camps were built in Albania, which were camps of forced labor where living conditions and working conditions were among the most severe. The prisons of Burrel and Spaç were known mainly for their inhumane and extremely harsh conditions for the *enemies of the people*. (Bunkart, http://bunkart.al/2/ekspozita_historike/policia-dhe-sigurimi-ne-kohen-e-diktatures-/burgjet-dhe-kampet-e-punes).

The persecution, investigation, and elimination of the different, heterogeneous and unique is essentially at the core of totalitarian logic. Just as with the biological body of a human, the social body must fight its own diseases, and the "disease" of the totalitarian system, which could endanger its existence, was freedom, i.e., any entity, group, or individual that had independent goals that differ from those of the regime. Therefore, within the totalitarian machinery built in communist Albania, not only the bourgeois, intellectuals, and *good communists* referring to Lefort's (Lefort, 2000) term for communists who believed in the values and principles of Marxist doctrine and attempted to criticize its actual implementation in society) were fought against, but the individual himself, or rather the community of free individuals, became the target of the police and state security.

The idea of the political enemy as a necessary element of the totalitarian regime kept the population mobilized at all times. The external enemy, *the revisionist*, *the bourgeois*, *the imperialist*, and the internal enemy (infiltrators of external enemies) were the justification for the totalitarian state to aggressively direct the state apparatus through total control measures over society. Only indifference, apathy of action and thought were



accepted from the individual. As G. Orwell writes, "in totalitarian systems, thinking is a crime," (Orwell, 2005) as thinking itself is an act of freedom and a challenge to totalitarian oppression. The uniformity of thought and behavior of the Albanian individual became the goal of the totalitarian state and its propaganda tools. Conformism, which is, acting automatically without thinking about the logic behind the action, was achieved through the use of socializing agents of society by emptying them of their essential functions and turning them into instruments for the realization of totalitarian ideology. In these conditions, the individual was alienated from oneself, turned into an amorphous form without content, and as such, only had meaning within the collective. The collective was the place where individual homogeneity was dissolved, so throughout the totalitarian period, we witnessed the strengthening of collective structures and groups so that the individual would not stand alone, would not think. The totalitarian regime empowered artificial collective structures through the monopolization of the indoctrination center and the party. The individual is not left alone with themselves but is heavily worked on within social homogeneity, the aim of the new socialist society, as Lefort also raises the question: "Is this not the first time that the dimension of the other has been stopped or erased?" (Lefort, 2000)

This *psychic fluidity*, (Fridrich & Brzezinski, 1956) a distinct atmosphere of totalitarian dictatorship, is created through the collaboration of two phenomena that are interconnected and are one of those characteristics found only in totalitarian systems and not in other forms of governance: propaganda and terror. Propaganda and terror work hand in hand to extend state power into every part of society. Modern mass communication media, the press, radio, and film all function to transmit the party's message as the sole source of truth and its interpretation. Propaganda is directed by the party with the sole purpose of maintaining power and creating a relationship of manipulating reality between the citizen as the subject of propaganda and the totalitarian power as its enforcer.

In this context, the Albanian totalitarian regime would reach the extreme of propaganda and terror towards its citizens by challenging and suppressing any entity, community, or social segment that had collective influence in Albanian society at the time. In 1972, Albania would become the world's first officially declared atheist country. The claim to be the sole source of truth and its interpretation led the totalitarian regime to strive to be the sole earthly and heavenly authority in totalitarian Albania. Objects of worship were destroyed, churches and mosques were closed and either ceased to function or were demolished, priests and clergy were persecuted, interned, and executed by the dictatorship. A new phase of terror began against anyone who identified themselves with symbols of religious worship. Only symbols and myths associated with the party were allowed, an endeavor to establish the party's power as everlasting, rather than merely earthly and transient.

To dominate the social and private life of the individual was not enough; the Party sought to be the sole source of truth and its interpretation for the individual. Propaganda and terror thus worked towards this goal by gradually replacing every social agent along with their role in society.

Propaganda and terror are closely linked concepts, with propaganda being the means and form through which terror is conveyed. The construction of communist propaganda



came gradually with the attempt to idealize and present the new totalitarian order as utopian/ideal. *"In one hand the shovel, in the other the gun"! Join comrades in the ranks (the party), let's climb the mountain with full bellies, "The masses build socialism, the party makes them conscious," "Let's sow the hills and mountains, let's make them fertile like fields," "We will eat with silver spoons (Albanian Party of Labour), "We'll take the rough with the smooth"* (Tautology with slogans in Albania by the propaganda of the communist regime).

The purpose of the PKSH (Party of Labor of Albania) was the revision of history, its alteration, and interpretation according to the perspective of the communist nomenclature. After replacing and fighting against the main religious beliefs in the country, *religion is the opium of the people*, now there was a demand to replace the concept of history itself. In this way, during the totalitarian dictatorship, the individual had no past or future but only a constant state: the presence of the party within them. Through propaganda and terror, through the control of social agents by the party and the fight against these *islands of separateness* (Friedrich & Brzezinski, 1956), the Albanian society was transformed into a *tabula rasa*, devoid of previous content and ready to be rewritten by the totalitarian regime. In his memoir book, the eminent Franciscan priest, At Zef Pllumi, writes, "Military drills are the main dish of all dictatorships. The army is a blind, paid, and thoughtless organism that survives only through obedience: Get ready! Forward! Backward! Order! This is the iron boot that mercilessly crushes every right and every human dignity; it is the heart and mind of every tyranny" (Pllumi, 2020). In this constant state of power exercise by the totalitarian system, social agents were at the center, their role and function in society.

The most important social agents in the significant process of socialization and promotion of social, cultural, economic, and political values, beliefs, orientations in society are: the family, peer groups, educational institutions (kindergartens-schools), religious institutions, and mass media.

The islands of separateness, as referred to by Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski (1956), the spaces of freedom where the individual managed to preserve his human essence, through propaganda and state terror, became the target of the totalitarian regime. The communist regime of Albania sought to break the intimate cohesion of the family, weaken and divide this "oasis of freedom," so that the individual would assimilate within political and collective structures. Every social institution had to be weakened in order to strengthen the party. Thus, the promotion of socialist morality, the proclamation of socialist values began within families, and from early childhood, from a very young age, individuals became subjects of communist indoctrination. There were families persecuted by the system, with a "stain in their biographies," hiding the truth from their children who grew up with the illusion of a just, equal, and free society: "Stalin, elevated, proud and unbeatable, who loved children as he loved freedom, our great Stalin, comrade with Uncle Enver." (Ypi, 2022).

On the other hand, educational institutions were another instrument of totalitarian power to shape loyal young people towards Albanian communism and its values. From 1945 to 1990, several reforms were implemented in educational institutions in the country; profound changes were made in the educational system depending on Albania's political alliances. In the 1960s, 1963, 1967, and 1970, an even greater phase of ideological



indoctrination of schools began by increasing the presence of politically oriented subjects such as *History of the Party*, *Marxism*, and so on. Meanwhile, history and literature subjects became subjects of this ideology. The trinity on which the curriculum was based was: teaching, productive work, physical and military education, with the aim of creating entire generations of young people under the model of the socialist "new man." (Bunkart1, https://bunkart.al/1/ekspozita_muzeale/arsimimi-ne-shqiperi-1945-1990)

On the other hand, religious institutions were at the brink of survival as a result of the war against cult objects and religious beliefs in Albania, especially after the 1970s. Mass media, radio, and television, as well as other forms of official propaganda, were under state control, and the dissemination of news and the right to information were only done through the party's version of the truth. This reality would continue until the natural collapse of the communist system, following the economic surrender of the system and the inability to keep the country under control. The most evident consequence of almost 50 years in the totalitarian dictatorship was *the denaturalization of human relationships* that members of society had with each other and the substitution of natural social networks with artificial social networks, which were an extension of the party's power and totalitarian doctrine. Every relationship was politicized, the relationship between the priest and the believer, between the teacher and the students, between the director and the ordinary worker, between the head of the family and family members, and even between the husband and wife in intimate marital relationships. The emptiness of natural social networks and their alienation through the political dualism of the time changed the relationships between the *self* and the *other*, where the *other* became the subject of suspicion and exclusion. The loss of the ability to trust another individual has perhaps been the greatest cost that Albanian totalitarianism has brought to Albanian society, an ability that is still lacking 32 years after the fall of the system.

Voluntary work under communism was not voluntary but rather work forced by labor organizations. Factories and enterprises operated on the same principle as educational institutions: teaching (ideological), productive work, physical and military education. The totalitarian state viewed individuals as subjects of exploitation for the advancement and elevation of the communist system and, on the other hand, as subjects of transformation to turn them into the model of the socialist "new man." The concept of functioning in the productive sector was *productivity and efficiency*, the required yield to sustain the extensive state apparatus. The same approach was also applied to the construction of public works, which were built by prisoners of the system in forced labor camps and by young workers who were still in school.

Public infrastructure, the largest public works, was built through the forced labor of prisoners and internees in concentration camps. Taking the Soviet gulag model, from 1946 to 1990, labor camps were opened for rock quarrying, canal excavation, railway construction, or road building (Meta & Frashëri, 2018). After the fall of the communist dictatorship in Albania and the change of the political regime, new challenges emerged from unresolved problems of the past in the country's democratic journey.

Today, more than 30 years have passed since the fall of the communist system. Where does Albania stand in terms of the necessity of the system for political participation and citizen activism as essential elements of liberal democracy? And above all, has Albania



managed to build a *new political community* that would be in line with democracy as a political and social system?

Post-Communist Albania: Transition from Totalitarian Community to Democratic Society

We cannot begin discussing the vitality of a society, its ability to mobilize and politically activate its members, without addressing the public sphere and the concept of *community* and its significance. For several decades, scholars and intellectuals have been concerned about the erosion of the concept of community and the fear of its dissolution. The rapid development of technology, the empowerment of virtual social networks, and the emergence of an economic system that has alienated individuals from their local communities have led to the anonymization of the individual within society. Intense individualism, atomization of the individual, and a constant sense of loneliness have resulted in the fading of natural social relationships that have played an important role in human society for a long period of time (Taylor, 2008). Consequently, states that emerged from strong totalitarian systems and embarked on the path towards democratization are most concerned about whether the dissolution of the totalitarian political community will lead to a new organization of the democratic political community or not, as well as the timeframe in which it can be achieved.

The concept of community may be one of the ideologically debatable concepts. According to the Oxford Political Dictionary, community is defined as "a group of people socially connected by a given location," (Mc Lean & McMillan, 2009) while further interpretations, depending on ideological orientation, are provided by conservative, socialist, and liberal doctrines. The perception and sense of belonging to a political community is an important condition for the sustainable development of societies and states today. Isolation, individualism, detachment, and the exclusion of individuals from the rest of society fragment this sense of community in which the individual lives, leaving behind only the feeling of a lack of belonging. How can one commit to the future in a society to which they feel they belong? According to Robert Nisbet in his book "The Quest for Community" the weakening of established social contexts as a result of modern political and industrial development has led individuals to create fewer secure interpersonal relationships that have given meaning and stability to human existence (Nisbet, 1996).

Self and *other* are two categories that determine political, moral, and social relations within a particular society. If the *other* is seen as similar to the *self* or as *hostile* and *antagonistic*, this relationship fundamentally shapes the individual's relationship with the political community of their country. For almost 50 years, the Albanian people lived within a totalitarian political community where the authorities aimed to destroy "autonomous social ties within the population and replace them with new connections, all of which derive their meaning and approval from the central structures of the state" (Ibidem). After the fall of the totalitarian system and the radical shift in Albania's political and ideological orientation, an intensive phase of new political and economic orientations began with the assistance of international institutions such as the IMF and allied states. The so-called *shock therapy* was applied, a concept derived from psychoanalysis, which implied a radical change in the nature of the country's political and economic policies, transitioning from the savage communist system to wild capitalist policies (Pusca, 2007).



The change in Albania's political course happened abruptly, not through a gradual opening towards democracy and the free market, but rather a direct plunge into the new world. The situation was surreal for every citizen of the former communist Albania. Just like in "The Truman Show," where the main character Truman realizes that the reality he has been living is a manipulation and he himself is a victim of ignorance, he eventually chooses to leave the cave and seek the truth (the analogy of Plato's cave and the light). Thus, even before the "Albanian communist man" had completely disappeared, work began on building the *Albanian capitalist man*. This kind of radical transition would highlight a society oriented towards *materialism* as a value concept (Kocani, 2013).

The change in the political regime happened without social catharsis, without a phase of societal action in which reflection on the past took place and a public apology was demanded from the political class for what had happened for over 45 years. "Everyone was guilty and no one was guilty," this slogan absolved society as a whole from responsibility for the dictatorship. Meanwhile, the influence of the totalitarian past would be felt throughout the journey towards democratization of the country. The early years of post-communist Albania were filled with positive stimuli, especially notable being the international support. In 1992, Albania was chosen as the *Albania-most favorite nation* by the USA, but in 1997, the collapse of the state occurred as a result of the so-called "pyramid schemes" (UNICEF, 1993).

The event of the pyramid schemes brought back major turmoil, protests, the looting of public property, and almost a civil war. Disappointment from societal deception through pyramid schemes, which were licensed and allowed by the state as legal activities, once again raised the question of whether the Albanian citizen was prepared and willing to be part of a democratic political system, where alongside civil, political, and social freedoms, there are also civic responsibilities that need to be fulfilled. Democracy places the free individual at its core, capable of forming opinions and making decisions in their own and their community's best interest. A reflection of this is also the selection of various political alternatives compared to others. But can we speak of a free citizen (in the political sense of the word), just emerging from a totalitarian regime like Enver Hoxha's? We would say no, as the journey to freedom for the Albanian citizen begins only after the fall of the communist system. As sociologist Artan Fuga also writes, for the first time, the Albanian individual would be alone with themselves after the fall of the communist system (Fuga, 2008). For the first time, they would decide freely for themselves, the education they would pursue, the profession they would choose, marital relationships, dietary preferences, and so on.

The initial reaction to the dimension of freedom is fear; freedom is frightening precisely because it is unknown. Therefore, escaping from freedom led to the demand for other forms of security: money, materialism, cultivating economic logic within a free market. As mentioned above, various studies measuring the value system of post-communist Albanian society have revealed the dominance of a materialistic value profile. In general, human relationships are also conceptualized within this logic of the "economic man." At this point, what is the role of formal democratic institutions in a country? Their role is to shape, educate, and raise awareness among the public, politically emancipating them to create a democratic political community in the country. According to many researchers, in states undergoing democratic transition, the role of elites is crucial during this period of transition from a dictatorial or undemocratic system to a democratic political system,



and this role of elites cannot be replaced (Wesolowski, 2009). However, other scholars argue that awareness and emancipation should be realized by the citizens themselves, but it is understood that this process is slower and may take a long time.

According to Putnam, social networks hold value for individuals, as "the connections between individuals—social relationships and norms of reciprocity and trust—derive from them" (Kierchel, 2000). Above all, according to Putnam (Siisiainen, 2000), the greatest benefit of social networks and their empowerment is the increase in social trust, which in turn helps support and renew political and economic institutions in respective societies. The interaction among members of a community with similar interests and issues that require solutions strengthens the sense of civic cooperation and the true nature of democracy, where citizens understand their importance in influencing the political and social system. Albania still faces deep problems regarding the main dimensions of democracy: procedural and substantive. In terms of procedural democracy, there are still difficulties in meeting international standards for the electoral process, such as holding free and fair elections for all citizens, agreement on the election results, and translating the will of each citizen into votes. Local elections were held in May 2023, and reports from international institutions note that the elections were partially fulfilling the standards, with an emphasis on electoral polarization and the presence of pressure on voters, along with ongoing concerns about vote-buying (OSCE, 2023a).

The OSCE/ODIHR report on the elections held in May 2023 describes them as partially accomplished and with standards and principles that are still unfulfilled in their complexity (OSCE, 2023b). The political competition and competitive nature of the Albanian political system continue to be more important than addressing local issues directly related to the quality of life that Albanian citizens have in their respective municipalities. The lack of focus on the needs and demands of local governance has also been highlighted by OSCE/ODIHR observers (OSCE, 2023c). If we were to chronologically examine the observation reports of local and national elections from 1996 to May 2023, we would repeatedly see the conclusion that the electoral process has been partially free.

Although more than three decades have passed since the beginning of the transition, there has been little progress in terms of substantial strengthening of democracy in Albania. According to the Freedom House Nations in Transit reports (1996-2023), Albania is classified as a hybrid political system, which fulfills some of the basic rights of citizens, but organized crime, corruption, links between mafia, politics, and business are present, compromising the overall economic and democratic development of the country (Freedom House, 2023a). In the 2023 Freedom House report, Albania is ranked as a transitional hybrid regime and democracy in the country is assessed at 3.79/7 points, with almost negligible progress compared to 2022. Meanwhile, according to this organization that measures the level of freedom in all countries worldwide, Albania is ranked as partially free in 2023, with 28/40 evaluated for political rights and 39/60 for civil rights (Freedom House, 2023).

Another problem as a characteristic of the non-consolidation of democratic Albanian society in transition is the absence of a highly important element for democracy, such as the concerned or active citizen. In general, Albanian citizens during the transition period have been absent from every social and political process related to democracy. Apathy and the lack of citizen response to major public and national issues is an important



missing filter of a non-functional democracy. The active/concerned citizen is a *watchdog of democracy*, crucial for the political and social system. As a consequence of the alienation of natural social networks (the creation of social groups) during the totalitarian dictatorship, the development of natural human relationships during the transition was a more artificial process, as a result of the continued dualism of the Albanian individual between who they are and who they claim to be. This aspect of human dualism still manifests itself in public political and social communication by institutions, political representatives, but also by ordinary citizens (Fuga, 2019).

There have been several attempts in recent years for a revival of environmentalist movements, which have had several causes such as the ban on construction in protected tourist areas, against the importation of waste from abroad, protests in defense of the national park of Vjose (the last wild river in Europe). However, these gatherings have not managed to have social support except from the organizers of the protests. It is still not possible to talk about mass protests like those in Greece on the 2nd anniversary of the train crash or in Serbia like the protests against government corruption.

Political dualism and the creation of a dichotomous relationship of social reality is expressed by the endemic culture of political conflict between political party forces in a country where confrontation is the basic feature of political communication in the political system. This constant tension influenced by the high level of political confrontation produces a cyclical cycle of deep political and institutional crises. Albania was the country with the highest number of parliamentary boycotts in the Western Balkans during the years 1991-2023. Repeated parliamentary boycotts reflect the lack of democratic institutional culture and the inability of institutions to resolve political disagreements through democratic procedures. Boycotts have been a continuous instrument in the history of Albanian parliamentarism to maximize political interests through radical instruments such as hunger strikes, abandoning parliament and going out on the streets (the case of the SP with the hunger strike and placing their umbrellas in the square where the opposition was located) or the case of the cadres being released as an action of the PD handing over the mandates (the case of 2019 by the PD). Such precedents of which the power is used many times when the political actors do not agree with the election result or the electoral rules or for other disagreements of a political nature created a situation of political mistrust between political parties by creating weak institutions and strong political ties.

This has often resulted to be harmful for the country's progress towards the integration of Albania into the European Union, as cases of parliamentary boycotts occurred at key moments in the process of visa liberalization, NATO membership, voting for candidate status, etc. As a result, the country has remained stagnant in some cases as a result of the inability of the political elites to find the institutional way of communication, where political competitiveness agrees with the compromise of the country's interests.

The non-institutional character of East- countries like Albania, which have emerged from long and harsh dictatorships, comes as an influence of the totalitarian period, where the reaction to concepts such as *politics, state, law* is associated with negative emotional load and is a non-rational organic rejection of the totalitarian period. As a result, east post-communist societies tried to build democratic society, civil society, democratic citizen, but without political content inside. (Tomash, Feher, Agnes-Heler pg. 45).



Moreover, the attempt was not successful since politics is a social activity that creates relationships and interaction between members of society. The identification of the concept of politics with negative emotional sentiments is related to the totalitarian experiment where the individual was oppressed by the oppressive state machinery through terror, propaganda and indoctrination. In more than 30 years, there has been little or no change in this perception, where a relationship of mistrust still prevails between the Albanian citizen and the politics. There has been a lack of promotion of democratic political culture in society, which would build a healthy relationship between the citizen and the police. The vitality of a democracy is seen in the nature of citizen engagement and particularly in the response of young people to politically incorrect actions, public interest issues, rising prices, economic well-being, etc. Albanian youth see themselves as detached from politics, they do not seek to influence the political system to improve certain needs or put forward demands. This is also evident in a study conducted by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), where the findings (Westminster Foundation for Democracy & Qendresa Qytetare, 2022) show that Albanian youth are disconnected from politics, with 80% not being involved in political parties or civil society activities. Only 10.8% are members and 9.2% are activists of political parties.

Furthermore, the majority of young people lack trust in central and local institutions, with about 64% of respondents believing that the central and local government does not aim to serve the needs of society (Ibid, 9). This perception alienates citizens and young people from their own country's institutions. The lack of a sense of belonging to the public sphere has consequences for the country and democracy, resulting in approximately 71% of young people seeing emigration as a short-term or long-term solution to achieve their goals (Ibid.).

The countries of the Western Balkans (a concept used to indicate the countries left outside the EU) have a common history regarding the undemocratic systems of the past and after the 90s the effort for democratization. The Berlin Process has brought about an approximation of the legislation of these countries with that of the EU, but substantial progress has not yet been seen, especially in civic education and volunteering as a form of civic engagement. According to the European Fund for the Balkans and European Policy Institute (May 2019) the involvement of young people in youth organizations is low and one of the reasons is the lack of trust in these organizations. The low participation of young people in various forms of social engagement is a well-known phenomenon in all former communist countries, which is partly related to the lack of a legal framework for volunteering. Likewise, volunteerism is closely linked to the civic education of young people, where the lack of knowledge about the importance of social engagement comes as a consequence of the lack of cultivation of the concept of active citizenship as a concept that would strengthen democracy. Membership in civil society is conceived as something useless since it is an unpaid (free) commitment.

Final reflection: Empowering volunteerism as an opportunity to restore natural social networks for the sake of democracy

Citizen involvement in decision-making processes and public affairs has been the most discussed topic in the past decade, especially with a decline in social support for



democracy, which can be seen in the low levels of citizen participation in electoral processes and, as a result, the loss of government legitimacy. This well-known issue among political science scholars has affected a large portion of states and has been further influenced by the role of virtual social networks (social platforms) which have started to replace a part of genuine and essential communication based on empathy, emotions, and human contact (highly important elements) in maintaining relationships within a community or society. Many European states are dissatisfied with the state of democracy in their countries (Kent, 2019). There is a close relationship between a state's economic performance and the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction the country has towards the democratic system (Ibid). The impacts of the war in Ukraine, in terms of inflation and the cost of living (Council of European Union, 2022), have led citizens to have more negative perceptions of the democratic system in a significant number of European countries and beyond.

The role of the citizen in the polis and their influence on the country's political system is the essence of much of the world's philosophical thought, from Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Locke, Tocqueville, Kant, to contemporary scholars (Schmidt, 2012). Democracy scholars call for finding motivating stimuli for citizens to engage more actively in the public sphere of their country. One good way is to encourage and support forms of social volunteering that strengthen social networks, foster a sense of community, and increase citizens trust in their fellow members of society and their country's institutions. Through volunteering, citizens would contribute to the public interest and feel a new sense of responsibility and participation when this interest is compromised by the elites of political power. In the case of Albania, a country that has inherited a complete breakdown of social networks and a high level of distrust among people from the totalitarian period, volunteering is an opportunity for re-socialization and the building of trust in the existence of shared values for all. Without creating this environment of belonging in a social and political community where common social values and aspirations are shared, political consciousness of the role of the *demos* in democracy cannot be developed. The successful transition of Albania from a totalitarian political system to a democratic one cannot be achieved if this transition does not also imply a transition of the political community from a totalitarianized community where interests were overridden by state power to a community of free individuals where these interests are shaped by the sense of public interest of all individuals and open discussion about this interest.

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O USO DA ÁRVORE DE SUCESSOS COMO MÉTODO PROSPETIVO EM GEOPOLÍTICA. O CASO DOS AÇORES NO TRANSPORTE DE GNL

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Resumo

A determinação do que se designa por Poder Geopolítico Potencial (PGP) de uma região geográfica, através do Método da Árvore de Sucessos, constitui o tema deste trabalho. Demonstra-se que, mediante a análise de um conjunto de eventos naturais, tecnológicos, políticos e económicos, bem como do estabelecimento de relações lógicas entre estes, por meio de operadores booleanos, é possível determinar qualitativa e quantitativamente o poder relativo de uma região num dado cenário. Neste estudo, realiza-se um estudo de caso que, através da aplicação do método, evidencia a sua exequibilidade.

Palavras-chave

Açores, Árvore de Sucessos, Geopolítica, Poder Geopolítico Potencial (PGP).

Abstract

The determination of what is referred to as Potential Geopolitical Power (PGP) of a geographical region, through the Success Tree Method, constitutes the theme of this study. It is demonstrated that, by analysing a set of natural, technological, political, and economic events, as well as establishing logical relationships between them using Boolean operators, it is possible to determine both qualitatively and quantitatively the relative power of a region in a given scenario. This study includes a case study that, through the application of the method, demonstrates its feasibility.

Keywords

Azores, Success Tree, Geopolitics, Potential Geopolitical Power (PGP).

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O USO DA ÁRVORE DE SUCESSOS COMO MÉTODO PROSPETIVO EM GEOPOLÍTICA. O CASO DOS AÇORES NO TRANSPORTE DE GNL

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1. Introdução

O uso de modelos matemáticos para a descrição e análise de fenómenos nas ciências sociais tem-se estendido a muitas das suas disciplinas, seja através da criação de modelos próprios, seja pela adaptação de modelos provenientes de outros campos de estudo. Por serem abstrações, os modelos simplificam, de alguma forma, a complexidade, capturando a essência da situação analisada, permitindo construir estruturas lógicas expansíveis e integráveis em outras mais abrangentes, acompanhando todo o processo desde as premissas até às conclusões.

A Geopolítica inserida nas Relações Internacionais, uma área autonomizada da Ciência Política, estuda sistemas e situações bastante complexas. A geopolítica, hoje um termo abrangente e dinâmico, valoriza sobretudo a influência dos espaços geográficos no poder, no comportamento político das sociedades e na ordem mundial. O objetivo de modelar estes acontecimentos pode, aparentemente, configurar um contrassenso, no entanto, o uso de modelos matemáticos formais de análise oferece várias vantagens, nomeadamente, o rigor e a precisão na formalização da argumentação utilizada, justificando os pressupostos escolhidos como os mais plausíveis e aceites. Assim, pretende-se contribuir para este campo de análise, adaptando o método da Árvore de Sucessos à análise geopolítica, por forma a determinar o contributo de vários fatores e acontecimentos selecionados para resultados específicos.

Este trabalho, com uma abordagem positivista, baseia-se na hipótese de que é possível integrar o Método da Árvore de Sucessos na análise geopolítica, sendo possível através desse determinar quantitativamente o poder geopolítico de uma região geográfica. Para isso define-se uma variável dependente que se designou por Poder Geopolítico Potencial (PGP), a possibilidade estratégica de gerar e obter resultados em determinado contexto geopolítico.

A investigação está dividida em duas partes, a primeira parte efetua uma revisão bibliográfica, que não é completamente exaustiva, da literatura especializada publicada sobre os contributos pertinentes à temática. Apresenta e descreve o Método da Árvore de Sucessos, e de como pode ser utilizado em Geopolítica. A segunda parte apresenta um estudo de caso, onde aplicando o método se determina o PGP, num cenário específico



que é o transporte marítimo de gás natural liquefeito, para o abastecimento da Europa. Na conclusão verifica-se e justifica-se, a validade do uso do método.

2. Geopolítica e Poder na Moldagem dos Futuros

Geopolítica, um termo criado por Kjellen no fim do séc. XIX, que se interligou com quatro outras dimensões, para explicar de uma forma organicista o funcionamento do Estado (Almeida, 1990, p. 113) os Estados modernos europeus criados após Vestfália, tornou-se na atualidade uma palavra amplamente usada, prestando-se a distintas interpretações (Tomé, 2010, p. 5), englobando a influência da geografia no comportamento político das sociedades (Freire Nogueira *apud* Tomé, 2010, p. 5), e abordando as rivalidades e disputas de poder sobre um determinado espaço, implicando, simultaneamente, um elemento geográfico e um elemento político (Jorge & Fernandes, 2023, p. 16), onde as tecnologias alteram essas geografias (Sempa, 2002, pp. 4-6). Mas pretendendo ir mais além nos fatores e causas que explicam esses comportamentos, quase se identificando com a noção de relações internacionais (Moreira, 2023, p. 59). Uma visão do mundo assente no poder, uma ciência sobre poder e para o poder (Dugin *apud* Höhn, 2011, p. 11). Por a geopolítica apresentar visões objetivas e compreensivas das alterações que ocorrem nas relações internacionais, explicando-as de uma forma holística e relacional com as dinâmicas regionais, esclarecendo e prevendo os comportamentos dos vários atores envolvidos, torna-a popular entre os decisores políticos e os analistas (Tuathail, Dalby, & Routledge, 1998, p. 4). A nova geopolítica que emerge no pós-Guerra Fria, apresenta várias visões competitivas entre si nas explicações da ordem mundial. Estas visões podem ser dominadas pelas relações económicas globais que alteram a soberania e reposicionam os Estados, ou pelos problemas transnacionais que afastam as lutas territoriais entre blocos, ou pela necessidade de se valorizarem as políticas ambientais que combatam o aquecimento global, a degradação ambiental e a escassez de recursos naturais (Tuathail, Dalby, & Routledge, 1998, p. 2), coexistindo com a geopolítica imperialista clássica, económica, neomarxista, pós-positivistas (Jorge & Fernandes, 2023, p. 19). O o poder de um ator no sistema internacional, é a capacidade que este tem em assegurar a realização dos seus objetivos políticos num enquadramento específico Moreira (2023).

É a tecnologia que torna a geopolítica global. Com a navegação a vapor foi possível controlar as marinhas para além do sabor dos ventos (Noorali, Flint, & Ahmadi, 2022). Com a aviação passa a ser possível a movimentação numa terceira dimensão, saindo a geopolítica das limitações do tabuleiro de xadrez. A movimentação no espaço exterior da Terra soma a quarta parcela geopolítica, e o domínio do espectro eletromagnético acrescenta-lhe uma quinta dimensão.

O Poder, obtido através de um conjunto variado de instrumentos, é o elemento sempre presente nas relações internacionais, usado pelos atores para concretizarem os seus objetivos políticos. É exercido para dominar e deter recursos físicos, para exercer controlo sobre atores do sistema internacional e influenciar acontecimentos intervindo nos seus resultados (Hart, 1976, pp. 289-298). Depende de um número grande de variáveis, não é um valor absoluto e cada vez é mais dependente da rede de relações internacionais (Kim, 2010, pp. 405-411). O seu exercício pode ir da persuasão infligindo ou ameaçando



consequências adequadamente adversas. Por alterações de convicção ou ideologia levando à submissão à vontade alheia, ou oferecendo-se uma recompensa positiva (Galbraith, 1983, pp. 20-22). O poder é para a política, o equivalente à energia na física ou ao dinheiro na economia (Höhn, 2011, p. 6).

A Estratégia é a preparação da ação para atingir objetivos. A palavra estratégia está na sua génese ligado à guerra e às atividades militares. Hoje, o conceito do termo continua a expandir-se, incorporando-se, entre outros, nos campos económico e político (Heuser, 2010). Os Estados definem a designada grande estratégia, que é o conjunto de meios militares, económicos e políticos com que este tenta alcançar a sua segurança (Posen, 1986, p. 7). A construção de uma estratégia está sujeita às ambições do Estado e à lógica dos fins políticos, que subordina os princípios e as regras da sua criação, e onde variáveis como a geografia, população, forças armadas, economia, tecnologia e as infraestruturas, entre outras, mas também atores externos como outros Estados, aliados ou beligerantes, têm principal preponderância nas decisões da construção da estratégia (Heuser, 2010, p. 491). É um processo complexo e dinâmico, onde pela modificação ao longo do tempo das várias variáveis que contribuem para a sua feitura, obriga a um perpétuo reexaminar e questionar (Hattendorf & Phil., 2004, p. 2). É neste contexto, que a estratégia hoje é uma componente da análise das relações internacionais (Fernandes, 2009), indo muito mais além da sua origem de condução racional da guerra e coação militar.

A Prospetiva ocupa-se da questão “o que pode acontecer?” (Godet & Durance, 2011, p. 17), é uma ferramenta de auxílio à construção do futuro (Saragoça, Silva, & Fialho, 2017, p. 19), contribuindo para induzir um destino desejável dentro das incertezas do futuro, reduzindo-as pela escolha de percursos orientados por análises lógicas, onde a reflexão precede a ação, numa visão holística de sistemas não deterministas e instáveis (Perestrelo, 2017), tornando-se assim estratégica (Godet & Durance, 2011, p. 17). Vai mais além dos modelos inalteráveis da previsão, usando os cenários como instrumento de simulação (Saragoça, Silva, & Fialho, 2017, p. 26).

Não existindo um conceito fechado, neste trabalho a geopolítica é interpretada como um instrumento do poder externo de um Estado, permitindo, preferencialmente, o controlo e, no mínimo, a influência sobre as ações de outros Estados ou sobre determinados acontecimentos, em função dos seus próprios interesses (Griffiths & O’Callaghan, 2002, pp. 253-255), o Poder Funcional (Adriano Moreira apud Andrade, 2015, p. 100) que constitui uma forma de utilizar a geopolítica para gerar poder e, assim, possibilitar a projeção de estratégias para a sua maximização, o potencial de poder geopolítico corresponde à capacidade latente de exercer esse poder. A modelação impede o recurso a análises baseadas em argumentos sem rigor formal e assentes em intuições, disciplinando o pensamento intuitivo e acrescentando precisão às análises, ao eliminar argumentos desprovidos de lógica (Morrow, 1994, pp. 6-7), permitindo confrontar as conclusões obtidas com os acontecimentos reais.

3. O Método da Árvore de Sucessos numa Abordagem Lógica e Possibilista

O método aqui proposto, uso de um tipo específico de árvores lógicas utilizadas em análises de decisão, vai buscar as suas origens fora das ciências sociais, nas técnicas



desenvolvidas nos anos 1960, e utilizadas para a redução da ocorrência de acontecimentos indesejados em sistemas tecnológicos, analisando os seus comportamentos de uma forma gráfica. É um modelo que descreve cenários de acontecimentos e/ou decisões, numa estrutura lógica que se ramifica a partir do acontecimento principal em análise. As Árvores de Sucessos e as Árvores de Falhas são ferramentas importantes para analisar eventos incertos, definir cenários, avaliar riscos, calcular distribuições conjuntas de probabilidade e avaliar opções de decisão (Dillon-Merrill, Parnell, & Buckshaw, 2008). O seu uso tem sido gradualmente adotado nas ciências sociais (Yazdi, Kabir, & Walker, 2019, p. 91).

Algumas definições

Acontecimento ou Evento Básico (X) ou varável independente, é um dos conceitos fundamentais na construção deste modelo. Cada evento básico descreve um acontecimento que contribui para o assunto em análise e que não pode ser decomposto em outros acontecimentos de ordem mais baixa. Acontecimentos que podem ser decompostos em outros acontecimentos, são designados por Acontecimentos ou Eventos Intermédios (I). Acontecimento ou Evento de Topo (T), é o assunto em análise, a variável dependente, que se pretende qualificar ou quantificar, obtido da combinação lógica de eventos básicos e eventos intermédios.

A Árvore de Sucessos é a segmentação do evento de topo, através de operadores lógicos, num modelo matemático do sistema em análise, proporcionando uma visão global do que está em análise, a relação linear entre os seus componentes e a potencialidade contributiva de cada elemento seu constituinte. Para um determinado assunto em análise, podem-se considerar diferentes cenários e construir várias árvores, variar experimentalmente a quantificação dos eventos básicos, o que permite a este um método ser também prospetivo.

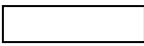
O quadro 1 resume os principais símbolos usados no desenho da Árvore de Sucessos.

Para avaliar a possibilidade da ocorrência do acontecimento de topo, estabelece-se um conjunto de equações lógicas, a partir da estrutura hierárquica da Árvore de Sucessos, que permite definir quantitativamente ou qualitativamente esse acontecimento, e em que o acontecimento de cada porta lógica intermédia, vai sendo substituído por acontecimentos de hierarquia mais baixa, até ser possível definir o acontecimento de topo em função apenas de acontecimentos básicos, e das relações lógicas entre estes.

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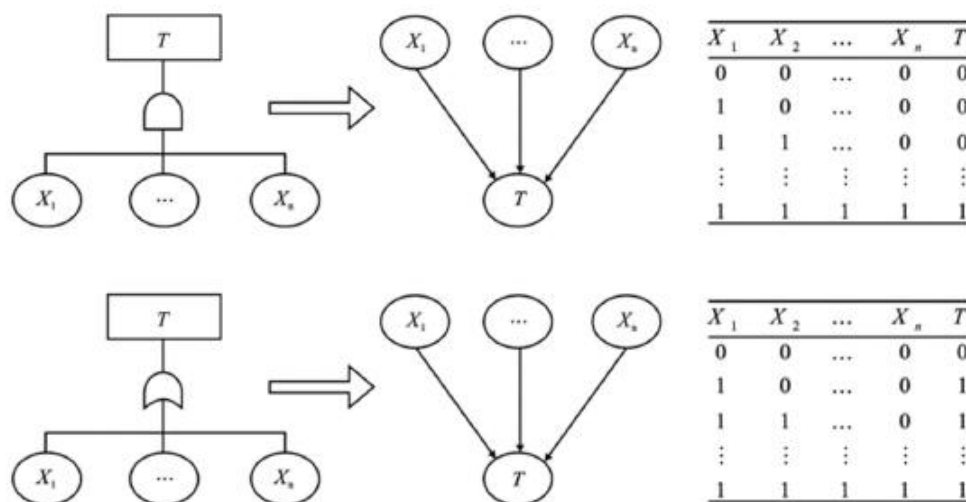
Quadro 1. Principais símbolos utilizados numa Árvore de Sucessos

Símbolo lógico	Função
	Representa o Acontecimento de Topo (T). Acontecimento para o qual a árvore conduz a análise. Pode em outros lugares da estrutura representar acontecimentos intermédios.
	Evento Básico (X). Acontecimento que não pode ser subdividido em outros acontecimentos. É a resolução máxima que se pode atingir na análise de um sistema.
	Operador OU (OR). Indica que existe um acontecimento à sua saída, quando alguns dos acontecimentos à sua entrada ocorre.
	Operador E (AND). Indica que existe um acontecimento à sua saída, quando todos os acontecimentos à sua entrada ocorrem simultaneamente.

Fonte: Autor

A figura 1 apresenta a forma como os acontecimentos se relacionam qualitativamente através dos dois operadores booleanos usados; porta OU e porta E.

Figura 1. Aritmética dos operadores booleanos do Quadro 1



Fonte: (Chang, He, Fan, Guan, & He, 2023)

A análise quantitativa é feita, quando se atribuem aos acontecimentos básicos, valores de probabilidade da sua ocorrência, permitindo obter-se assim a probabilidade de ocorrência do acontecimento de topo.

As fórmulas para o cálculo das probabilidades em cada porta lógica, numa análise da base para o topo, são as seguintes:



$$\begin{aligned}\mathbb{P}[X_{\text{AND}}(X_1, \dots, X_n) = 1] &= \mathbb{P}[X_1 = 1 \wedge \dots \wedge X_n = 1] \\ &= \mathbb{P}[X_1 = 1] \cdot \dots \cdot \mathbb{P}[X_n = 1].\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}\mathbb{P}[X_{\text{OR}}(X_1, \dots, X_n) = 1] &= 1 - \mathbb{P}[X_{\text{OR}}(X_1, \dots, X_n) = 0] \\ &= 1 - \mathbb{P}[X_1 = 0 \wedge \dots \wedge X_n = 0] \\ &= 1 - (1 - \mathbb{P}[X_1 = 1]) \cdot \dots \cdot (1 - \mathbb{P}[X_n = 1]).\end{aligned}$$

ou

$$P_{(\text{AND gate})} = \prod P_{(\text{input } i)}$$

$$P_{(\text{OR gate})} = 1 - \prod (1 - P_{(\text{input } i)})$$

Fonte: (Ruijters & Stoelinga, 2015, p. 38)

Para a identificação dos acontecimentos básicos, a sua valorização quantitativa e associação lógica na construção da árvore, recorrem-se a várias fontes de informação e de análise como a análise SWOT (Leal, 2011, p. 73), dados empíricos recolhidos de diferentes fontes fiáveis, publicações académicas (Chang, He, Fan, Guan, & He, 2023), e que no caso deste trabalho se obtiveram a partir da Internet de fontes reputadas. A relação entre as probabilidades de falha e de sucesso de um acontecimento básico, é que a soma das duas é igual à unidade.

De modo a facilitar o tratamento posterior, os acontecimentos podem ser agrupados nas seguintes quatro formas: eventos naturais; eventos tecnológicos; eventos políticos e eventos económicos.

4. A Geopolítica dos Açores na Segurança das Rotas Marítimas. Exemplo de Caso

As ilhas oceânicas no Atlântico Norte (Hansom, 2010) são um bem escasso, representando um ativo para a consolidação de várias estratégias de Estados e de organizações. O Arquipélago dos Açores é um desse conjunto de ilhas. Situa-se na crista média do Atlântico Norte, sensivelmente a 1.700 km do ponto mais próximo da massa continental europeia, e a 2.500 km do continente americano. As suas nove ilhas, parte integrante da República Portuguesa, são constitucionalmente uma Região Autónoma. Perfazem uma área total de 2.322km², estendem-se por 600 km ao longo do paralelo 38. A subárea dos Açores da Zona Económica Exclusiva (ZEE) portuguesa ocupa uma área de 957.292km², representando 55% dessa ZEE e 16,3% da ZEE da União Europeia (Porteiro & Carreira, 2015, p. 82). A Região de Busca e Salvamento Marítimo, SRR Santa Maria (Açores) atribuída ao Estado português, compreende uma área geográfica de responsabilidade de 5.181.934 km² (Direção-Geral de Recursos Naturais, 2018).



Os Açores, desde o seu povoamento permanente no séc. XV, que representaram um ponto de apoio às viagens marítimas entre a Europa e os outros continentes. Nos séculos XVI e XVII a Armada das Ilhas em articulação com o Provedor das Armadas da Índia, tiveram a função de nos Açores ajudar e defender as naus portuguesas no seu trânsito até Portugal continental e sempre que tivessem de recorrer à escala no arquipélago, para além de recolherem informações sobre a ameaça de piratas e corsários (Godinho, 2002), muitos dos quais europeus. Por sua vez os próprios corsários e piratas, também usavam estas ilhas para abastecimento de viveres e água, quer por saque quer por contrabando (Leite, 2016) . A importância que os Açores assumiram no controlo do Atlântico Norte intensifica-se no séc. XIX, com a necessidade de abastecimento de carvão aos barcos movidos a vapor que o atravessavam em determinadas rotas. Os cabos submarino telegráficos, as bases militares navais e aéreas, os aeroportos civis e a instalação de infraestruturas de investigação científica, continuam a potenciar a importância geoestratégica dos Açores (Andrade, 2015) (Félix, 2022) (Telo, 1993), como é o caso da Base Aérea das Lajes e a POLNATO em Ponta Delgada.

Caracterização

A dinâmica dos recursos energéticos é atualmente muito diversificada e fluída. A gestão desse espaço multidimensional exige um planeamento estratégico a prazo, obrigando os atores do sistema internacional a exercer em permanência o seu controlo em coordenação ou disputa com as iniciativas realizadas por parceiros, concorrentes e adversários.

O gás natural (GN), essencial para a Europa na sua atual transição energética para uma economia de baixo carbono, tal como outras energias e outros recursos vitais, são um vetor estratégico para os Estados. O gás natural liquefeito (GNL) veio trazer à segurança do espaço energético europeu enormes desafios, por ser uma complementaridade e alternativa ao abastecimento por gasoduto, permitindo o seu transporte marítimo eficiente a partir de origens geograficamente muito distantes, como por exemplo as offshores dos EUA, Canadá, Camarões, Guiné-Equatorial, Moçambique. Esta situação permite evitar ou contornar zonas de disputas e de conflitos, e gerar maior liberdade comercial e de opções negociais. Torna-se por isso necessário assegurar a liberdade de navegação e a segurança de transporte em zonas estratégicas de passagem (Sousa, 2019), a esses carregamentos, reduzindo-se o risco geopolítico (Vivero & Mateos, 2017). numa época de transições na estrutura internacional, de alterações climáticas e do aparecimento de novos atores e novos desafios

Os Açores situam-se nas rotas marítimas de abastecimento à Europa (Figura 2), sendo por isso potenciais contribuidores estratégicos para a segurança das mesmas, em várias vertentes.

É neste cenário que se desenvolverá a análise qualitativa e a determinação quantitativa da variável dependente Poder Geopolítico Potencial dos Açores.



Figura 2. Mapa com a indicação das principais rotas marítimas para o transporte de GNL

LNG flows by contract type, monthly deliveries

— Short term and spot — Contracted



Source: McKinsey's Energy Insights LNGFlow; Vesseltracker[®], powered by Genscape

Fonte: (Boccara, Dediu, & Veillard, 2020)

Construção da Árvore de Sucessos e Determinação do PGP

Os riscos e a segurança associada ao transporte de GNL por via marítima, dependente de um conjunto diversificado de variáveis independentes. O Quadro 2 indica as mais importantes.

As probabilidades de falha das variáveis independentes são apresentadas no seguinte quadro.

A partir do Quadro 2, vão ser utilizados na construção da árvore de eventos apenas os Eventos Básicos: X1, X3, X4, X5, X8, X9, X11, X13, X14, X15, X17, X18, X19, X20, X21 e X22, pois entende-se que os outros acontecimentos estão relacionados com a navegação em zonas costeiras continentais, canais interiores e portos de carga e descarga, portanto não aplicáveis ao cenário em estudo.

Na elaboração do Quadro 4, que serve de base para a construção da árvore de sucessos, definem-se os eventos intermédios e o evento de topo que se relacionarão, por intermédio dos operadores booleanos, entre si e com os eventos básicos selecionados, com base em perceções empíricas e, portanto, passíveis de serem alteradas. Considera-se que neste caso particular, o evento de topo e intermédios só ocorrem se se verificarem em simultâneo todos os eventos que os compõem.

A relação lógica entre os eventos básicos e intermédios está representada esquematicamente na seguinte árvore de sucessos.



Quadro 2. Decomposição em eventos intermédios e básicos, relacionados com os riscos associados ao transporte de GNL por via marítima

Evento Principal	Eventos Intermédios			Eventos Básicos
	(1º nível)	(2º nível)	(3º nível)	
Segurança no Transporte Marítimo de GNL (T)	Seguranças Própria do Transporte e manuseamento de GNL (I1)			Segurança contra Incêndio e Explosão de GNL (X1)
				Segurança no Carregamento e Descarga de GNL (X2)
	Segurança dos Navios e Equipamentos (I2)			Desempenho de Segurança de Navios de GNL (X3)
				Manuseio Difícil de Navios de GNL (X4)
	Segurança das Rotas Marítimas (I3)	Segurança Inerente da Própria Rota (I4)		Distância do Percurso (X5)
				Canal Profundo (X6)
				Alta Velocidade de Corrente Oceânica (X7)
				Fluxo de Tráfego Pesado no percurso (X8)
				Ondas Altas (X9)
				Neblina Pesada (X10)
				Tempestades (X11)
				Brisa Marinha Forte (X12)
				Alta Frequência de Ventos Fortes (X13)
				Menos Portos de Descarga de GNL (X14)
				Período Navegável Incerto (X15)
				Calado dos Navios de GNL nos Portos (X16)
				Comportamento Inseguro do Pessoal em Navios de GNL (X17)
				Má Organização (X18)
				Disputas de Soberania Marítima (X19)
				Conflitos Militares (X20)
				Pirataria e Ataques Terroristas (X21)
				Impacto de Epidemias (X22)

Fonte: Adaptado pelo Autor de (Chang, He, Fan, Guan, & He, 2023)

**Quadro 3.** Probabilidade de falha dos Eventos Básicos X1 a X22

Basic Event	Prior Probability	Basic Event	Prior Probability	Basic Event	Prior Probability
X ₁	3.13×10^{-3}	X ₉	7.51×10^{-3}	X ₁₇	4.63×10^{-4}
X ₂	1.40×10^{-3}	X ₁₀	1.86×10^{-2}	X ₁₈	7.78×10^{-4}
X ₃	1.33×10^{-3}	X ₁₁	2.49×10^{-3}	X ₁₉	9.66×10^{-4}
X ₄	7.38×10^{-4}	X ₁₂	2.47×10^{-3}	X ₂₀	3.25×10^{-3}
X ₅	5.53×10^{-4}	X ₁₃	1.40×10^{-2}	X ₂₁	1.71×10^{-2}
X ₆	8.44×10^{-4}	X ₁₄	1.42×10^{-2}	X ₂₂	2.37×10^{-2}
X ₇	5.78×10^{-3}	X ₁₅	1.28×10^{-3}		
X ₈	6.05×10^{-3}	X ₁₆	1.28×10^{-3}		

Fonte: (Chang, He, Fan, Guan, & He, 2023, p. 14)

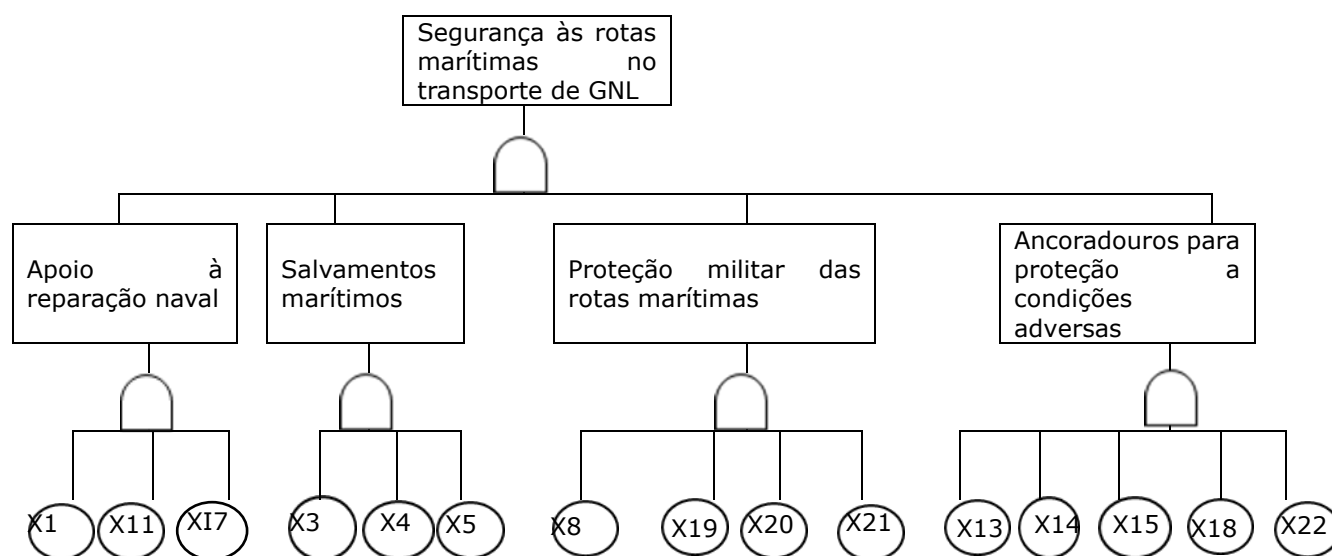
Quadro 4. Decomposição em eventos intermédios e básicos, relacionados com Poder Geopolítico dos Açores, num cenário associado ao transporte de GNL por via marítima

Evento de Topo	Eventos Intermédios (1º nível)	Eventos Básicos
Segurança às rotas marítimas no transporte de GNL (T)	Segurança às rotas marítimas no Transporte de GNL (IA)	Incêndio e Explosão de GNL (X1)
		Tempestades (X11)
		Comportamento Inseguro do Pessoal em Navios de GNL (X17)
	Apoio à reparação naval (IA1)	Desempenho de Segurança de Navios de GNL (X3)
		Manuseio Difícil de Navios de GNL (X4)
		Distância do Percurso (X5)
	Salvamentos marítimos (IA2)	Fluxo de Tráfego Pesado no percurso (X8)
		Disputas de Soberania Marítima (X19)
		Conflitos Militares (X20)
	Proteção militar das rotas marítimas (IA3)	Pirataria e Ataques Terroristas (X21)
		Alta Frequência de Ventos Fortes (X13)
		Menos Portos de Descarga de GNL (X14)
	Ancoradouros para proteção a condições adversas (IA4)	Período Navegável Incerto (X15)
		Má Organização (X18)
		Impacto de Epidemias (X22)

Fonte: Autor



Figura 3. Árvore de sucessos para a determinação do Poder Geopolítico Potencial dos Açores, num cenário associado ao transporte de GNL por via marítima



Fonte: Autor

O valor quantitativo a probabilidade dos acontecimentos intermédios e do acontecimento de topo apresentadas no Quadro 5. Sendo apresentados os valores sem a quantificação das alterações de probabilidades dos eventos básicos pelos Açores.

Considerou-se aqui que a área geográfica de influência dos Açores é aquela definida pela subárea SRR Santa Maria, dentro das zonas marítimas sob soberania e ou jurisdição portuguesa¹.

Nem todas as probabilidades de ocorrência dos eventos básicos podem ser melhoradas através das facilidades proporcionadas pelos Açores. Entendeu-se que acontecimentos como, por exemplo, Comportamento Inseguro do Pessoal em Navios de GNL (X17), estão no caso dos incontrolláveis, mas na situação de Ondas Altas (X9), o abrigo proporcionado pelos portos em rota durante tempestades reduz a probabilidade de falhas. Os eventos X1, X4, X9, X11, X15, X19, X20 e X21 são passíveis de serem melhoradas, para efeitos de cálculos demonstrativos, atribuiu-se um valor de 30% a esta melhoria.

Ao valor da diferença entre a probabilidade de sucesso do acontecimento de topo; Segurança às rotas marítimas no transporte de GNL, com e sem a ação geopolítica da região, designa-se por Poder Geopolítico Potencial (PGP). Neste caso será o PGP dos Açores para o cenário em estudo.

¹ Decreto-Lei n.º 15/94, de 22 de janeiro, alterado pelo Decreto-Lei n.º 399/99, de 14 de outubro.



Quadro 5. Probabilidade Calculada dos Acontecimentos Intermédios e do Acontecimento de Topo

Acontecimentos Intermédios e de Acontecimento de Topo	Valor calculado sem a influência geopolítica da região	Valor calculado com a influência geopolítica da região
Segurança às rotas marítimas no Transporte de GNL (T)	0,901	0,916
Apoio à reparação naval (IA1)	0,976	0,982
Salvamentos marítimos e de bens (IA2)	0,997	0,998
Proteção militar das Rotas Marítimas (IA3)	0,979	0,984
Ancoradouros para proteção a condições adversas (IA4)	0,946	0,950

Discussão e Conclusões

O principal objetivo deste trabalho é utilizar o modelo da Árvore de Sucessos como ferramenta de análise na geopolítica, usando os seus resultados para determinar estratégias que possam maximizar o poder num determinado cenário. Sendo o poder de um ator na política o valor da diferença entre a probabilidade de ocorrer um evento por ação desse ator e a probabilidade de o mesmo ocorrer não existindo essa ação (Roberte Dahl *apud* Silva, 2024, p. 17), o potencial de poder é o conjunto de instrumentos que o ator pode utilizar estrategicamente para o obter, e que com esta ferramenta permite identificar e quantificar a importância relativa dos instrumentos representados pelos eventos básicos.

No caso analisado, a segurança oferecida pelos portos e ancoradouros marítimos para abrigo de embarcações em condições de mau tempo, assim como infraestruturas de salvamento marítimo de pessoas e bens, e o patrulhamento das rotas sobretudo com o aparecimento de novas marinhas de alto mar, potencia a segurança da navegação, numa área geográfica onde não é possível repetir essas infraestruturas. A determinação do PGP, medida da possibilidade de gerar e alcançar resultados, demonstra a utilidade da aplicação do método. A caracterização quantitativa desse potencial e a identificação das variáveis que contribuem para a maximização desse valor, assim como o seu controlo, permite que sobre o modelo que é dinâmico, se efetuem alterações, calibrando os valores dos eventos básicos, alterando as relações lógicas entre acontecimentos, criando novos eventos numa reconfiguração de cenários, funcionando assim também como modelo prospetivo. No cenário analisado verifica-se que os Açores oferecem vantagens estratégicas, indicadas no Quadro 5. Essas vantagens proporcionam, no caso específico analisado, um PGP igual a 0,015, o que significa uma melhoria de 2% na segurança da rota. A alteração do potencial geopolítico é grandemente influenciada pela soberania, no limite a permissão ou não do uso das áreas soberanas e das infraestruturas locais de apoio. Para a análise quantitativa usaram-se valores disponíveis em literatura da especialidade, no entanto, e como propostas de melhoria, há a necessidade de calibrar valores utilizados, com a colaboração de peritos, de forma que a quantificação seja feita o mais fiável possível para a região em causa, assim como analisar a importância de decompor alguns dos eventos que se consideraram básicos, de forma a incorporar nestes também as especificidades locais.



A validação dos resultados obtidos para o caso estudado pode ser efetuada usando dois critérios, o critério do número de paragens de navios de transporte de LNG nos portos açorianos e a análise das contrapartidas políticas obtidas diretamente relacionadas com PGP específico. Do primeiro critério e utilizando os dados públicos disponibilizados pela Portos dos Açores,² verifica-se que os anos de 2021 a 2024 é frequente a paragem de navios tanques de LNG para abrigo, transferência de tripulantes e ações de reparação, o que confirma a importância do arquipélago para o transporte seguro de LNG no Atlântico. Relativamente ao segundo critério proposto o mesmo exige uma pesquisa mais extensa que se encontra fora do âmbito deste trabalho.

A combinação do Método da Árvore de Sucessos na análise e quantificação do poder geopolítico permite obter uma imagem abrangente do impacto da contribuição relativa de cada uma das diversas variáveis e as suas interações, num determinado cenário, possibilitando a conceção de estratégias prospetivas e não apenas reativas, de maximização do PGP. Uma região geográfica com as características dos Açores proporciona vantagens estratégicas, nos cenários dinâmicos das relações internacionais, havendo, pois, cabimento para a introdução de novas ferramentas na ajuda dessas análises.

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² Empresa pública que efetua a administração dos portos comerciais da Região Autónoma dos Açores.



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THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY OF CO-OPERATION IN THE TRIPLE AMAZON FRONTIER. THE CASE OF THE TIKUNA PEOPLE IN BRAZIL, COLOMBIA AND PERU

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Abstract

The article summarises an ongoing study of indigenous tribes in Amazonia and how they overcome challenges that include environmental preservation and community sustainability. The problem formulated aims to understand the socio-environmental and cultural impacts emerging from the Tikunas' so-called "economy of cooperation" and global economic flows on the Brazil-Colombia-Peru border. It looks at how this relationship generates conflicts and adaptations, but also reconfigures territories in the midst of forest preservation. The aim is to analyse the interception between the 'economy of cooperation' and economic exploitation that takes place on the triple frontier of the Amazonia (Brazil-Colombia-Peru). This reconfigures socio-environmental and cultural dynamics, determining the mechanisms of adaptation, resistance and conflict in the face of international pressures that affect territorial governance. The research, which is exploratory in nature, follows a multidisciplinary approach that combines perspectives from international relations, ecology and economics, valuing an indigenous epistemology. A bibliographical research and field study were carried out using the qualitative method. In order to analyse the interaction between environmental preservation, Tikuna lifestyles and local economic needs, techniques such as surveys and field studies were carried out. The initial results favour an understanding of the conflicts between economic expansion and management of the Amazon rainforest within the complexities inherent in the



sustainable management of preservation lands, respecting indigenous cultures and regional economic challenges.

Keywords

Tikuna peoples, Amazonia, economy of cooperation, environmental preservation, Triple Frontier.

Resumo

O artigo resume um estudo em curso sobre tribos indígenas da Amazônia e a forma como estas superam os desafios, desde a preservação ambiental até a sustentabilidade das comunidades. O problema formulado tem o intuito de compreender os impactos socioambientais e culturais emergentes da denominada "economia de cooperação" dos Tikunas e os fluxos econômicos globais na fronteira Brasil-Colômbia-Peru. É abordado como essa relação gera conflitos e adaptações, mas também reconfigura territórios em meio à preservação da floresta. O objetivo é analisar a intercepção entre a "economia de cooperação" e a exploração econômica que ocorre na tríplice fronteira da Amazônia (Brasil-Colômbia-Peru), reconfigurando dinâmicas socioambientais e culturais, determinando os mecanismos de adaptação, resistência e conflitos diante das pressões internacionais que afetam a governança territorial. A pesquisa, de caráter exploratório, segue uma abordagem multidisciplinar que associa perspectivas das relações internacionais, ecologia e economia, valorizando uma epistemologia indígena. Foi seguida uma investigação bibliográfica e estudo de campo através do método qualitativo de análise. Para prossecução dos fins de análise da interação entre a preservação ambiental, os hábitos de vida Tikunas e as necessidades econômicas locais, foram utilizadas técnicas como o inquérito e o estudo de campo. Os primeiros resultados favorecem a compreensão dos conflitos entre expansão econômica e manejo da floresta amazônica no meio de complexidades inerentes à gestão sustentável de terras de preservação, respeitando culturas indígenas e desafios econômicos regionais.

Palavras-chave

Povos Tikuna, Amazônia, economia de cooperação, preservação ambiental, Tríplice fronteira.

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THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY OF CO-OPERATION IN THE TRIPLE AMAZON FRONTIER. THE CASE OF THE TIKUNA PEOPLE IN BRAZIL, COLOMBIA AND PERU

JACKSON BENTES

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[Cooperation] *I helped my brother climb a mountain, and in
the end i realised i'd reached the top too*¹

Author unknown

Introduction

The preservation of the Amazon is a global challenge that requires articulation and co-operation between local communities and the international community.

Costa (1992 *apud* Oliveira and Mondardo, 2014) points to a common issue experienced on the triple border, also known as the amazonian trapezium, which connects Brazil, Colombia and Peru. Regardless of their nationality, local communities tend to keep alive the ties and identity elements that they had as places of origin.

The preservation and protection of the Amazon's biodiversity requires co-ordinated action between the different actors, namely the Tikunas, the government and the institutions involved. In this way, consultation makes it possible to design a strategic framework for the development of integrated public policies, promoting a balance between economic growth, social inclusion and sustainability. This understanding comes to light in a year in which Brazil is hosting the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP30².

Adding this strategic axis to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the 2030 Agenda³ of the United Nations (UN), four direct environmental SDGs were defined and at least three SDGs related to environmental issues⁴.

¹ Translation by the authors.

² Brazil is preparing to host the 30th UN Climate Change Conference (COP30), to be held in Belém (PA) in November 2025. Available at: <https://cop30nopara.com.br/> [accessed on 31st March 2025].

³ The 2030 Agenda (2015-2030) was agreed and established at the 2015 New York Summit when the results of the implementation of the predecessor Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015) were reviewed.

⁴ The environmental SDGs are SDG6 on drinking water and sanitation, SDG13 on climate action, SDG14 on marine life and SDG15 on terrestrial life. At the same time, SDG7 on renewable and affordable energy, SDG11



As Lima (2020, n.p.) points out, the vast biodiversity of the Amazon region makes its conservation a priority for the world's ecological balance. The Amazon's natural resources are threatened by every human act of environmental degradation. On the other hand, they weaken the livelihoods of the people who live in and from the forest, making sustainable economic practices and indigenous peoples' ways of life impossible, preventing them from playing a crucial role in sustainability and living in harmony with the forest.

This article presents preliminary results from a research project that aims to understand the dynamics created by the Tikunas' experiences in the environment. The role of the Tikuna people in conserving biodiversity is the premise of the research, bearing in mind the pressures from economic groups interested in exploring the wealth of the Amazonian subspaces with the globalised world in a movement of "territorial fluidity" (Arroyo, 2001)⁵. According to Arroyo (2001), modernising actions bring with them natural transitional crises and their consequent spatial repercussions on the triple frontier. This is a region in which there is "free access" for peoples of the region, especially indigenous peoples, to information and capital, where relations of "free trade" and co-operation are established.

Albert and Kopenawa (2010) discussed the impact of environmental and economic policies on indigenous peoples in the Amazon, who do not enjoy proper care, which jeopardises their development, but also that of the biome which is home to unparalleled biodiversity. The forest plays a crucial role in global climate regulation, generating socio-environmental balances.

The research problem seeks to understand how the socio-environmental and cultural impacts resulting from the relationship between the Tikuna peoples' economy of co-operation, anchored in subsistence methods and global economic flows on the triple Amazonian frontier (Brazil-Colombia-Peru) are articulated. This relationship has led to conflicts, adaptations and territorial reconfigurations in a context of preserving the Amazon.

The aim of the article is to analyse how the intersection between the Tikuna community's economy of co-operation and economic discovery on the Amazon's triple frontier reconfigures socio-environmental and cultural dynamics, investigating the mechanisms of adaptation, resistance and conflict against the international pressures that infuse territorial governance.

Specific objectives include:

- a) find out the effect of economic activities such as agribusiness, mining and deforestation on indigenous communities and the environment;
- b) study the practices of sustainable use and conservation of natural resources carried out by the Tikunas; and

on sustainable cities and communities, and SDG12 on sustainable production and consumption all relate to environmental issues.

⁵ In Arroyo (2001), this is understood as the quality of national territories that allows the flows that structure them to accelerate, the set of objects designed to guarantee movement, as is the case in the triple border between Brazil, Colombia and Peru.



c) know the regional policies and international actions, such as the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, for the conservation of the Amazon and the sustainable development of Tikuna communities.

Methodologically, the exploratory research allowed for the collection of data gathered in the indigenous village and a multidisciplinary conceptualisation of the research problem, incorporating ideas from the fields of International Relations, Anthropology, Ecology and Economics. An indigenous epistemology was valued followed by a literature review with critical analysis and fieldwork.

Based on Elman (2005), the use of "explanatory typologies" was adopted as a methodological tool for qualitative research in international politics. Figueiredo Filho's (2019) suggestion is to choose the appropriate models for the critical interpretation of the results. In "The Interpretation of Cultures" (Geertz, 1978), the concept of "*thick* description" is presented as cultural interpretation aimed at analysing the interpretation of symbols and meanings embedded in social practice.

The techniques used include:

- a) semi-structured interviews with members of the Tikuna community and other actors who work with indigenous people as representatives of environmental and religious organisations;
- b) a documentary analysis of public policies and international agreements related to the preservation of the Amazon;
- c) carrying out fieldwork that included *on-site* observation of environmental and social conditions in the frontier areas, namely visits to Tikuna territory and deforested areas.

The article begins with a presentation of the methodology, objectives and approach to the problem that reflects everyday intersections on the Brazil-Colombia-Peru frontier. Finally, the Magüta people (Tikunas) are introduced from the "tradition of creation", the elements of culture and identity, including language and their relationship with the land. This is conceived as the sacred house for this Amerindian people who inhabit the lands of the Amazon region without demarcation boundaries⁶.

The 2030 Agenda is presented as an international reference model for the goals and targets. The SDGs can be understood as a proposal for sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions, placing the Tikuna people as collaborators for the protection of terrestrial ecosystems. In this context, SDG 15, which is dedicated to the protection of terrestrial ecosystems (United Nations, 2015), is relevant to the analysis. Finally, the application of local public policies and global initiatives such as the 2030 Agenda is explained.

⁶ "In terms of its specific properties, the Tikuna language has points in common with some other indigenous languages spoken in Brazil, while at the same time offering challenging characteristics, both in terms of phonology and syntax" (Soares, 2008, n.p.). [...] Tikuna is important for knowledge of natural languages and for understanding the history of indigenous peoples and languages spoken in Brazil



An *on-site* research was used to learn more about this group's lifestyle, practices and sustainable use of available natural resources. The Tikunas' economy of co-operation is essential to guarantee the sustainability of the forest, as it is based on the sustainable use of natural resources.

The research involving the environment and indigenous peoples aims to analyse the intersection between the economy of co-operation⁷ and economic exploitation on the Amazonian triple frontier. Knowledge of this reality is achieved by learning to *walk the Amazon trails* with an eye on nature, broadening our understanding of the Tikunas' way of life.

1. Anthropogenic factors in the overuse of nature

The socio-environmental relationship is ancestral, given that nature, in terms of spaces and resources, whether living or inert, fauna or flora, sustains human life. It is in nature that communities find sources of subsistence and maintenance, using it for productive transformation and economic profitability. This relationship doesn't seem to be a problem, as it has accompanied human life throughout the ages.

The concern arises whenever the interaction between human populations, in the multiple forms of intervention - individual, community, corporate and business or state, national, regional or international - result in environmentally intrusive models of action. These tend to generate imbalances that threaten sustainability⁸, particularly in the long term.

Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoemer explore the concept of "The Age of Humans" in relation to the Anthropocene approach, translated into the concept that

The world has entered a new geological era, the Anthropocene, which means the era of human domination. It represents a new period in the history of the planet, in which human beings have become the driving force behind environmental degradation and the vector of actions that are catalysing a probable ecological catastrophe (Crutzen and Stoemer, 2000, n.p.).

This is the period that began with the Industrial Revolution (Maldonado, 2017; Crutzen, 2002) and which, over time, has been boosted by economic expansion, which also allows us to associate the more recent concept of the Capitalocene, largely analysed by Andreas Malm (2020; Arons, 2020). In these approaches, the world of capital, understood as a result of business and corporate action, overlaps with the interests of nature, often using it without planning, degrading it and contributing to the depletion of parts or the whole, possibly in an irreversible sense.

Vulnerable ecosystems, either identified as endemic or associated with natural environments that are intensely sought after by extractive, processing and export activities, are the most affected by unplanned human intervention. These are the cases

⁷ The term "economy of co-operation" refers to the activities practised jointly by the Tikunas for the benefit of the group, such as subsistence farming, hunting, fishing and handicrafts.

⁸ Sustainability is understood here in line with the principles presented and defended in the Brundtland Report (Brundtland [1987], 1991), namely systemic interdimensionality and intergenerational solidarity.



of river basins endowed with profitable minerals such as gold, which is mined, or dense and tropical forests that are of extreme interest to the timber sector due to the existence of hardwoods and centenary, large trees that guarantee high profitability margins.

Although it involves planning use, the realisation that there are global limits is increasingly a reality within the scientific community. Will Steffen *et al* (2015) developed this approach, warning of the inherent risks. This concept offers a framework for defining the border zones between global balance and socio-environmental risk based on the identification and characterisation of nine indicators⁹.

Currently, and with reference to the year 2023, of the nine global limits identified, six have been exceeded and are in a situation of risk. In general, it can be considered that four of these global limits are directly related to socio-environmental impacts. The implications for communities living in dependence on the natural environment are impactful, and reversing them is neither easy nor immediate. Climate change, modification in the use of land, models of freshwater use, including quantity, and the integrity of the biosphere in the genetic and functional sense are the dimensions that have direct implications for the lives of local communities. These four dimensions directly affect community life models, particularly if they are considered vulnerable communities due to their ancestry and tradition in the relationship they establish with natural spaces and resources. It should be emphasised that indigenous populations appear to be the ones who feel the impacts of global limits most directly, since they are the ones who maintain a close relationship with spaces and resources, depending on them.

2. The guardians of the forest: resistance to the interventions of modernity

The *Magüta* people are also known as the Ticuna or Tikuna¹⁰. The Tikunas are one of the most numerous indigenous groups in the Amazon¹¹, an Amerindian people who inhabit the border region between the Amazon Trapezium: Brazil (57,571), Colombia (8,000) and Peru (6,982), totalling more than 72,553 natives¹².

⁹ The nine global limits considered are climate change, with emphasis on the continuous rise in air and sea temperatures, extreme weather events and their frequency; the incorporation of new entities, including genetically modified organisms and microplastics; the destruction of atmospheric ozone with the worsening of the hole in the ozone layer; the loading of atmospheric aerosols, namely the contamination of the atmosphere by aerosols produced by humans or microparticles resulting from the burning of fossil fuels and forest fires; the acidification of the oceans, in particular the worsening of coral bleaching with the possibility of extinction in some regions of the world; biochemical flows, including the phosphorus and nitrogen cycles with excessive use of chemical fertilisers in the soil; the use of fresh water, defined as a vital resource, under pressure from intensive agriculture, grazing and livestock farming; the integrity of the biosphere, from a genetic and functional point of view; and the change in land use, reflected in the transformation of forests, grazing land and marshes that are used for intensive agriculture and livestock after deforestation. Available online at: <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.1259855> [accessed on 31 March 2025].

¹⁰ Cf. National Museum/UFRJ (1985, p. 67-68). It is worth highlighting the origin of the *Magüta* people's creation, told by the elders that Ngutapa, the God of creation, existed before everyone else, having no father or mother.

¹¹ Tikuna studies. Other denominations of the Ticuna language people. "The highest concentration of the Tikuna population is in the group of people aged between 5 and 29, which represents approximately 58 per cent of the total. If we add to this the figure for people under 5 years old, the percentage rises to 70.5 per cent, data which shows that this locality is mostly made up of young people and children" (Nosso Povo, n.d., p. 02).

¹² Cf. <https://pib.socioambiental.org/pt/Povo:Ticuna> [consulted on 31 March 2025] they make up the largest indigenous group in the country.



De La Rosa (2000, p. 296) describes the social-historical situation of these peoples, which was imposed on them by whites as "natural" and the result of divine punishment¹³.

Over generations, these groups have played a central role in protecting the Amazon rainforest, building sustainable ways of life based on the use of natural resources. The environment in which the Tikunas live, incorporating sustainable land practices into their traditional way of life, is a model of harmonious coexistence with nature that must be carefully learnt.

In villages or communities, traditional practices of sustainable management of natural resources are no longer common, and plantations have given way to industrialised foods. Posey (1999) emphasises that the cultural and spiritual knowledge of indigenous peoples is essential for preserving biodiversity. Among the Tikunas, the distribution of areas for cultivation, the enhancement of native species and the sustainable management of natural resources are practices that guarantee the subsistence of families and generate an ecological balance.

The big challenge facing the Tikuna communities living on the triple border is how to face up to the severe challenges arising from devastation activities that threaten this harmonious coexistence with "mother nature". This relationship is therefore threatened by pressure from activities such as deforestation¹⁴, mining and the expansion of agribusiness, which jeopardise both the forest and the communities themselves.

On the triple border¹⁵, the Ticuna language stands out as part of the intangible cultural heritage¹⁶ to be protected, given the importance of safeguarding biodiversity and the cultural legacy of the peoples who live in harmony with the forest. In this context, the preservation of indigenous peoples' culture, traditions and customs is fundamental to environmental balance. Unlike the models of intensive exploitation that have generated major environmental impacts in the region, the traditional practices of indigenous peoples are based on respect and understanding of the natural cycles of biodiversity and the interdependence between living beings.

Indigenous peoples are therefore guardians of the frontier and essential players in the preservation of the Amazon. They inhabit vast areas of forest and possess ancestral knowledge that promotes harmonious coexistence with nature. The rotation of cultivation areas, the use of sustainable management techniques and the enhancement of native

¹³ Cf. De La Rosa (2000) on the myth of the fall of the Ticuna - "it tells that the first human beings, the *magüta*, were powerful and immortal but became deadly and lost their powers by breaking away from the traditional laws instituted by the god Yoi. As a result of this loss of their semi-divine condition, but also as another form of punishment, the *mnagüta*, already converted into the *ticuna*, are dominated by the whites".

¹⁴ Deforestation, logging and forest fires associated with increasingly frequent and intense El Niño events could significantly increase carbon emissions from changes in land use (Moutinho, 2006). Available at: <https://ipam.org.br/entenda/como-o-desmatamento-contribui-para-as-mudancas-climaticas/> [accessed on 31 March 2025]

¹⁵ The border situation combined with the intense migratory flow has meant that municipalities have built up their socio-economic relations over the years. This is the case of the municipality of Leticia in Colombia and the city of Tabatinga in Brazil, or the municipality of Puerto Nariño in Colombia and the city of Caballo Cocha in Peru (Hayashi, 2020; Observatório Regional Amazônico, 2000, p. 2) Available at: <https://oraotca.org/pt/povosindigenas/> [accessed on 31 March 2025].

¹⁶ In this respect, it should be noted, as mentioned in footnote 5, that the Ticuna language has aspects in common with other Brazilian indigenous languages.



species are examples of practices that guarantee the preservation of ecosystems, while at the same time providing subsistence for communities¹⁷.

2.1. The Tikuna people: between forest preservation and exploitation

For the Tikunas, the Amazon rainforest is not just a geographical location, but a sacred home and a source of spiritual and material sustenance. In their study, Da Silva *et al* (2020) found that the vegetation of the Amazon is essentially made up of dense tropical rainforest, open rainforest and *campinarana*.

These forest patterns are favourable for protection, hunting and other Tikuna practices, rooted in ancestral knowledge about the land, biodiversity and natural cycles. At the same time, they offer an effective model in favour of sustainability. The practices developed contrast sharply with the predatory economic activities of multinational companies that promote deforestation and gold mining¹⁸, using mercury, as well as other products that have caused damage to the environment.

The current scenario in the Amazon is marked by rapid global changes, witnessed by the growth of economic activities and the exploitation of natural resources. The growth of these extractive or exploitative activities necessitates a critical analysis of the interrelationship between the environment, the economy and indigenous peoples. These socio-economic and environmental dynamics prove that the sustainability of the Amazon will not be achieved without the active involvement of indigenous peoples.

The Tikuna people not only play a crucial role in safeguarding the Amazon's biodiversity, but also emphasise the imperative of adopting and implementing policies that take into account local and global realities. Strengthening their practices and guaranteeing their territorial rights are essential actions for preserving the forest, making them a key player in achieving the established goals and promoting socio-economic-environmental balance.

The role of indigenous peoples goes beyond mere cultural resistance. They are central players in environmental preservation, contributing to ecological balance and climate change mitigation through their activities to preserve the forest ecosystem and consequently conserve species. Understanding this complex of interrelationships between economic development and sustainability requires an integrated and systemic approach that recognises the value of traditional indigenous knowledge, integrating it into public policies and conservation projects.

Cunha (2009) argues that indigenous culture, which is often underestimated in public conservation policies, contains fundamental knowledge for environmental preservation. Indigenous lands, when properly protected, are more effective at conserving biodiversity than conservation areas managed exclusively by the state (Brush, 1993).

Promoting a balance between economic growth and forest preservation in the Amazon region is therefore urgently needed. The practices of a "cooperative economy" in subsistence agriculture, hunting and fishing and handicrafts used by the indigenous

¹⁷ These elements were observed during the field research and confirmed by the interviews carried out.

¹⁸ Mining is a practice that, rather than being local or community-based, has come to the fore through the activities of organised groups.



people for their livelihoods are fragile in an environment manipulated by predatory activities that invade their lands and appropriate natural resources.

2.2 The Tikuna forest, the sacred home

The preservation of the Amazon rainforest is one of the most challenging tasks for Brazilian society, which requires collaboration between society, the government and the Amazonian people, including international institutions that have an interest in the riches of the Amazon.

The deforestation taking place in the region is compounded by rampant mining, climate change, forest fires and illegal activities. Despite the Brazilian government's efforts to implement projects such as the *Amazon: Security and Sovereignty Plan* (AMAS)¹⁹.

The AMAS demonstrates the Brazilian government's commitment to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, making it a normative framework for the development of policies aimed at environmental protection, the reduction of inequalities and the promotion of sustainable economic practices.

In particular, the Tikuna People agree with SDG15, which aims to "ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in accordance with obligations under international agreements" (United Nations, 2015, n.p.)

By setting a target of 2030, Brazil is demonstrating its commitment to conserving *Permanent Preservation Areas* (PPAs), *Legal Reserves* (LRs) and *indigenous lands* as native vegetation. The *Tikunas forest* is the area hardest hit by the lack of effectiveness of government policies and the indigenous peoples are the most affected.

In recent years, Brazil has failed to fulfil its commitment to use preservation systems such as the *National System of Conservation Units* (SNUC), *Permanent Preservation Areas* (APPs), *Legal Reserves* (RLs) and other categories²⁰, to preserve - including - the 30% of indigenous lands in the Amazon, requiring urgent measures to meet the target. The need for national policies and international commitments, such as the Paris Agreement, must increasingly be in line with each other and put into practice.

It is worrying that the indigenous peoples, in this case the Tikunas and the riverside communities, defined as the *Amazonian man*, inhabitants of the border areas between

¹⁹ AMAS is one of the main implementation strategies of the *Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon* (PPCDAm) and was set up with the aim of strengthening the State's presence in the Amazon Region and intensifying the fight against environmental and related crimes. [Consulted on 02.11.2024]. Available at: <https://www.gov.br/planalto/pt-br/acompanhe-o-planalto/noticias/2024/06/plano-amazonia-seguranca-e-soberania-sera-fortalecido-com-injecao-de-r-318-milhoes> [accessed on 31 March 2025].

²⁰ By 2020, at least 30 per cent of the Amazon will be conserved, through systems of conservation units provided for in the National System of Conservation Units (SNUC) Law, and other categories of officially protected areas such as Permanent Preservation Areas (APPs), Legal Reserves (RLs) and indigenous lands with native vegetation, 17% of each of the other terrestrial biomes and 10% of marine and coastal areas, mainly areas of special importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, ensuring and respecting demarcation, regularisation and effective and equitable management, with a view to guaranteeing interconnection, integration and ecological representation in wider terrestrial and marine landscapes. Available at www.ipea.gov.br [accessed on 31 March 2025].



Brazil, Colombia and Peru, (on the fringes of the cities of Tabatinga, Leticia and Santa Rosa Island (see Map 1), have to live daily with the impacts generated by the advance of predatory activities such as deforestation, logging, mining, extensive agriculture and livestock farming, as well as fires caused by criminal groups.

Map 1. Socio-environmental diagnosis of the triple frontier: Tabatinga (Brazil), Leticia (Colombia) and Santa Rosa (Peru).



Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Figura-1-Localizacao-da-triplice-fronteira-entre-Tabatinga-Brasil-Leticia-Colombia_fig31_358686796 [consulted on 31 March 2025]

As Castro (2002, p. 162) points out in *"The Inconstancy of the Savage Soul"*, the thinking of the indigenous people follows a different cognition from Western man, especially in this relationship with nature. For the author, this is an intriguing and innovative way of thinking that is exemplified in the characterisation and recursion of dualism and the internationalising and self-referential formulation of the Amerindian.

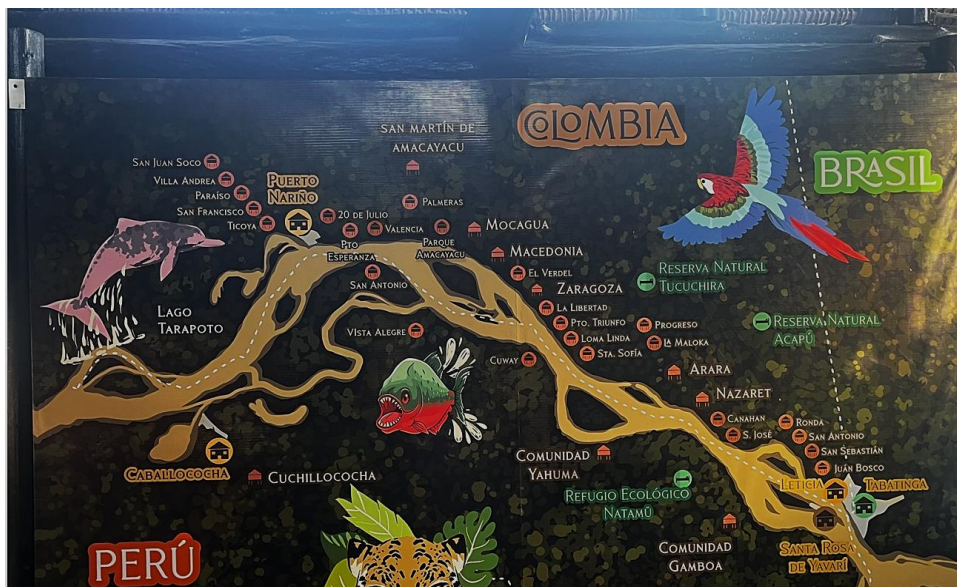
The Tikunas' relationship with nature is an experience that strengthens their culture and from natural resources they obtain everything necessary for the survival and well-being of the indigenous community. This dynamic is part of what Castro (2002) calls the "fight against the intellectual automatisms of our tradition"²¹.

For the Tikunas, the forest is also a source of spiritual knowledge, which means that, for them, there is a symbolic relationship that transcends the material world, forming part of a complex system of consolidation in which nature and the spirits interact directly in the people's daily lives. This respect for nature is a valuable lesson in the era of climate change and deforestation. The Tikunas have a model of sustainable existence that contrasts with the exploitative use of forest resources by foreign companies or groups that are invading the Amazon rainforest.

²¹ Translation by the authors.



Map 2. Illustration of the Amazon region inhabited by the Tikunas on the Triple Frontier: Brazil, Colombia and Peru



Source: Painting by a local craftsman in the city of Puerto Nariño - Colombia, own record.

The Amazon rainforest is more than a geographical area for the Tikunas (see map 2), it is the birthplace of the sacred genus and the material and spiritual support of this group. They have a customary use of resources in combination with the ecosystem, which reveals an extensive knowledge of biodiversity. This respect for nature is an important lesson in times of climate change and environmental destruction, as the Tikunas present a model of sustainable living that contrasts with the predatory use of Amazonian resources by companies or external groups that exploit the forest. They use traditional resource management techniques that are in harmony with the ecosystem, including subsistence farming, hunting and gathering. These practices are sustainable because they do so in such a way as to guarantee the renewal of resources, while ensuring the preservation of the forest.

It is in this space, characterised as a sacred home, that the indigenous build the spiritual and material sustenance of their collectivity or, according to Castro (2002), preserve the imagination as a non-canonical factor of thought and deconstruct pre-formed models, conjecturing others.

3. The Tikunas and the 2030 Agenda

By proposing sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions, the 2030 Agenda places indigenous peoples at the centre of discussions. SDG15, which deals with the protection of terrestrial ecosystems, is a relevant issue for the Tikunas, whose social organisation is intrinsically linked to the integrity of the forest (United Nations, 2015). Descola (2012) argues that indigenous practices should be recognised as models of sustainability, as they are based on the balanced management of natural resources and the preservation of native species. In addition, these challenges



are also linked to other SDGs, such as the fight against poverty (SDG1), food security (SDG2) and the promotion of actions to combat malnutrition in traditional communities.

Many of the SDG targets address the most eminent dangers facing children and adolescents, one of the most relevant being malnutrition, which threatens children's lives and jeopardises their health and physical growth, their education and their future. Chronic malnutrition is still a problem in the most vulnerable groups, such as indigenous people, quilombolas and riverine communities. According to the Ministry of Health, in 2018 the prevalence of chronic malnutrition among indigenous children under five was 28.6 per cent (UNICEF Executive Summary, 2019, p. 6). The figures vary between ethnic groups, reaching 79.3 per cent of Yanomami children (Abrinq Foundation, 2023, p. 28)²².

Brush (1993, p. 151) emphasises that Indians have a solid knowledge of local ecosystems and that this knowledge has been collected over centuries. This wisdom encompasses practices capable of extending the diversity of the landscape and facilitating the reconstruction of biodiversity in degraded ecosystems. The set of practices followed by the Tikunas for the preservation of biodiversity is the result of a historical experience of experiments and trials, currently reflecting a benevolent adaptation of man to the environment.

If ecosystems and biodiversity are to be managed sustainably, it is imperative that the complex knowledge-practice-belief of indigenous peoples is recognised and valued. Encouraging resource management systems based on the community is a strategic way of preserving this knowledge and guaranteeing environmental sustainability.

The fight against global climate change cannot just be reduced to external actions, but must actively incorporate communities living in vulnerable ecosystems. The Tikunas' traditional experience in sustainable land use, biodiversity management and fire control can be added to sustainable development strategies and contribute effectively to mitigating climate effects. This integration is especially fundamental in the Amazon ecosystem, where the forest plays a key regulating role in the global climate balance.

Maintaining sustainable communities in the Amazon, such as those of the Tikuna, is a complex but crucial task for the fulfilment of the SDGs and the commitments made under the 2030 Agenda. This goal requires a concerted and unprecedented effort from all the stakeholders involved, including governments, international organisations and civil society. In particular, SDG13 - Action against global climate change - has important synergies with other SDGs, such as SDG6 - Clean water and sanitation, SDG7 - Affordable and clean energy, SDG9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure, and SDG11 - Sustainable cities and communities. Maintaining a sustainable community is a chimera, but it is necessary and imperative if the SDGs are to be achieved, knowing that this mission requires an unrivalled effort from everyone. In this sense, it is worth remembering that it is not enough to demand effective public policies, but it is necessary

²² Translation by the authors.



to ensure that they are applied on a geographical and foreign relations scale so that they are manageable.

The UN's 2030 Agenda, which aims to achieve sustainable development in its three economic, social and environmental dimensions, contains the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems as one of its main objectives (SDG15 - Terrestrial Life). In addition, other SDGs directly address the challenges facing the indigenous peoples of the Amazon, such as the fight against poverty (SDG1), food security (SDG2), access to quality education (SDG4) and the enactment of peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG16). In this way, indigenous peoples such as the Tikunas not only appear as recipients of global goals, but also as protagonists in implementing sustainable solutions for the Amazon.

The preservation of the Amazon has gone from a local challenge to a global concern, but ultimately needs a process of articulation to allow local communities to move forward in co-operation with the international community. The implementation of integrated policies promotes economic development along the lines of sustainable development, so that these policies are not just written in the 2030 Agenda, but form part of national, regional and international policies for social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

It is therefore worth emphasising that the preservation of indigenous lands is the gateway to the conservation of iniquitous areas of the forest. Research has shown that indigenous lands are more efficient at conserving biodiversity than conservation units under the administration of the Brazilian government.

3.1 How can the Tikuna people help achieve the 2030 agenda?

Over generations, the Tikuna groups have been responsible for preserving the Amazon rainforest, developing lifestyles based on the sustainable use of natural resources.

The Brundtland Report ([1987] 1991) was the hegemonic impetus in opening up the academic discussion of sustainable development, initiating the concept that served as the basis for the SDGs. It is these models, often overlooked by traditional development practices, that can be the basis for sustainable management and conservation at a global level.

According to Sachs (2015) it is important to encourage citizens to use a holistic way of dealing with global problems that today seem unsolvable, such as extreme and persistent poverty. In this sense, it is important to explore the principles of the SDGs and understand how innovative practices can promote sustainable development.

When researching the presence of plurilingualism in the Triple Frontier region, Viana and Margotti (2021, p. 40) noted the high rate of violence against the original communities that helped decimate hundreds of indigenous groups and, as a consequence, the extermination of the languages they spoke. However, the same authors (Idem, p. 43) note that the Ticuna language has been used predominantly. Consequently, the continuity, or persistence in the use of the language, is the cultural development of the alternate generations. A mere example can be found in the case of children and adults laughing and arguing in the native language.



In addition to their rich cultural and linguistic heritage, the Tikunas also live in an environment where conservation of the Amazon rainforest is becoming increasingly important. In this border triangle, the Tikuna language is a piece of intangible cultural heritage. There is no doubt that it needs to be protected, in defence of the need to preserve biodiversity and the heritage of people who live in complete harmony with the forest.

As for knowledge of Spanish, almost the entire indigenous population has the ability to speak it (around 84.5%), and a small percentage (8%) has no knowledge of it, i.e. they only speak Tikuna. These large percentages indicate that the literacy process in Tikuna is not recent. (...) With regard to the ability to read and write in Tikuna, approximately half of the people belonging to this people know how to read in their language, and an additional 34.5% also know how to write it. These high percentages indicate that the process of reading and writing in Tikuna is not new (Nosso Povo, n.d., pp. 2-3)²³.

To this extent, preserving the culture, traditions and customs of indigenous people is crucial to maintaining environmental balance. Posey (1999, p. 4) emphasises that the cultural and spiritual knowledge of indigenous people plays a fundamental role in the conservation of biodiversity. The spatial organisation of cultivation areas, the enhancement of native species and the sustainable management of natural resources are practices that guarantee the subsistence of these communities. Despite the imminently pragmatic nature of these conservation and management techniques, traditional indigenous peoples often understand them as intrinsic elements of a spiritual basis that permeates their relationship with the environment.

All of creation is sacred, and the sacred and the secular are inseparable. Spirituality is the highest form of consciousness, and spiritual consciousness is the highest form of awareness. In this respect, one dimension of traditional knowledge is not local knowledge, but knowledge of the universal as expressed in the local.

In indigenous and local cultures, there are specialists who are peculiarly aware of the organising principles of nature, sometimes described as entities, spirits or natural laws. Thus, knowledge of the environment depends not only on the relationship between humans and nature, but also between the visible world and the invisible spiritual world (Posey, 1999, p. 4)²⁴.

In the Tikuna culture, management and conservation practices have this pragmatic character, which is normally understood as knowledge coming from a spiritual base. Unaware of the patterns of intensive exploitation, which can be defined as anthropogenic factors (Crutzen, 2002) that have caused huge environmental impacts in the region, the traditional practices of the Tikunas of the Triple Frontier and the other indigenous peoples

²³ Translation by the authors.

²⁴ Translation by the authors.



are based on a deep respect and knowledge of natural cycles, biodiversity and the interdependence between living beings.

Indigenous people are thus the protagonists in the defence of the Amazon, working to achieve the goals of the SDGs and in particular SDG15. These actors not only inhabit immense jungles, but also have the old and precious memory that sets in motion a respectful inhabitation of the natural world. An alternation of cultivated land, the adoption of sustainable management practices and the enhancement of local species are just a few cases of an activity that preserves ecosystems while offering livelihoods to communities. These practices, often ignored by conventional development approaches, can be used as models for global management and conservation, in line with the principles outlined by the SDGs and adopted at the 2015 New York Summit.

From this, it becomes clear how inattention to circumstances such as maintaining the culture, traditions and habits of indigenous populations is relatively responsible for environmental degradation, and jeopardises not only the Amazonian ecosystem, but also the very livelihoods of the populations that benefit from the forest, as well as the direct implications for other ecosystems beyond the border.

3.2 Environmental conflicts and pressures on indigenous communities: Challenges for sustainability

The triple border between Brazil, Colombia and Peru is one of the areas most impacted by the illegal exploitation of natural resources associated with deforestation, mining and arson. These practices, in addition to affecting biodiversity, generate challenging consequences for environmental management and impact the survival of indigenous communities, whose economic, social and traditional practices are jeopardised by environmental degradation (Cunha, 2019).

The expansion of these predatory anthropogenic activities exacerbates the loss of biodiversity and ecological imbalance, sharpening social conflicts and the marginalisation of indigenous populations, who are forced to abandon their traditional ways of life in search of viable economic alternatives.

Ramos (1998, p. 276) argues that indigenism in Brazil has been characterised by a sequence of all-encompassing public policies, without reference to the actual needs of the populations. And he emphasises the ambiguity of Brazilian society in relation to indigenous populations, who were both celebrated as symbols of national maturity and fought against as obstacles to development. This dual aspect manifests itself in public policies that appear to be enveloping and often fail to meet the real needs of these communities

In the border areas, such as between the cities of Tabatinga (Brazil), Leticia (Colombia) and Santa Rosa Island (Peru), this issue materialises, with the expansion of agribusiness, deforestation of timber, contamination of water resources, mining and livestock farming putting pressure on local populations.

According to Almeida (2020), Santos (2019) and Little (2021), the challenges facing the Tikuna peoples in implementing the preservation of the Amazon are increasingly



sophisticated, especially in border areas. The loss of biodiversity and environmental degradation not only jeopardise ecosystems, but also the food security, health and culture of indigenous communities, whose ways of life are intrinsically connected to the integrity of the forest. The preservation of traditional indigenous practices helps to guarantee the sustainability of the Amazon and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out in the 2030 Agenda. It is therefore essential to recognise and strengthen the role of indigenous communities in environmental preservation, encouraging public policies that integrate traditional knowledge. With a collaborative approach, it will be possible to overcome the environmental and social challenges that threaten the Amazon and its indigenous peoples.

Final considerations, even if partial

We present two points that were addressed based on the research carried out with the Tikuna communities, bearing in mind the concern to clarify the balance between economic development and the preservation of the Amazon rainforest through practices inherent in a "cooperative economy". Culturally, the ecosystem with its biodiversity is one of the richest in the world, straddling the triple Amazonian frontier between Brazil, Colombia and Peru.

Economic relations are characterised by the presence of an "indigenous economy of cooperation" very similar to what Godbout (1992) called community economies. Co-operation can be understood as a system articulated with cosmovision, territorial management and cultural reproduction. Sustainable government requires a dialogue for "good living", in line with criticism of hegemonic sustainable development (Acosta, 2010) in contrast to global agendas such as the SDGs.

Subject to highlighting the complex interaction between the environment, the economy and indigenous communities, as well as their interdependence, it is necessary to adopt an integrated approach that considers both the tradition of conservation practices and the economic and social pressures imposed by modernisation (UNDP, 2020, p. 188).

The various challenges faced in the territory range from environmental conservation to the sustainability of indigenous communities, while focussing on nature-based solutions that can address the effects of extreme weather conditions on health, among other aspects (UNDP, 2020, p. 188).

In understanding the theory of resource dependency, it can be seen that the incorporation of global flows puts pressure on the autonomy of indigenous communities. In this regard, the encouragement of unsustainable economic activities, such as deforestation, mining and logging, and the pollution of water resources. Consequently, these actions threaten the protection of the integrity of the forest and the survival of the Tikunas. The fight against the preservation of the Tikunas' culture, traditions and customs is a quest not only for social justice, but also for a policy of biodiversity conservation and the promotion of effective sustainable development (UNDP, 2020, p. 188).

The lack of effectiveness of public policies and vulnerability in the implementation of international agreements, such as the 2030 Agenda with the Sustainable Development



Goals, are expressed in the Tikuna communities due to the lack of public policies in general and focussed on environmental conservation.

The government bodies have had political programmes called *Bolsa Verde* on the Brazilian side and *Pagamento por Serviços Ambientais* on the Colombian side, but although these governments show an effort to protect indigenous territories and recognise their fundamental rights, investments are needed to ensure the conservation of the Amazon and the sustainable development of border communities (UNDP, 2020, p. 189).

"Global incentives also matter" in the service of the sustainable natural resource management habits that the Tikunas have adopted and which are the key to the decisive role of preserving the forest and fauna. Subsistence farming, fishing and handicrafts, combined with an intrinsic respect for natural cycles, offer a coexistent model intertwined with the harmony of nature. It is through proper contact with this theme that throughout the article they have been compared with the ill-fated activities of river pollution, illegal logging and mining. These Tikuna practices not only guarantee the communities' livelihoods, but also contribute to conserving biodiversity and controlling the effects of climate change (UNDP, 2020, p. 188).

In principle, the protection of the Amazon triple frontier requires effective international and regional co-operation, the implementation of sound policies and respect for the value of traditional indigenous knowledge. A holistic and inclusive approach is required to preserve the Amazon rainforest and guarantee the well-being of the communities that depend on it, in accordance with the principles of the 2030 Agenda (UNDP, 2020, p. 189) and with a focus on building a sustainable future for both human life and nature.

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MEIO AMBIENTE E ECONOMIA DE COOPERAÇÃO NA TRÍPLICE FRONTEIRA AMAZÔNICA. O CASO DO POVO TIKUNA NO BRASIL, COLÔMBIA E PERU

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Resumo

O artigo resume um estudo em curso sobre tribos indígenas da Amazônia e a forma como estas superam os desafios, desde a preservação ambiental até a sustentabilidade das comunidades. O problema formulado tem o intuito de compreender os impactos socioambientais e culturais emergentes da denominada "economia de cooperação" dos Tikunas e os fluxos económicos globais na fronteira Brasil-Colômbia-Peru. É abordado como essa relação gera conflitos e adaptações, mas também reconfigura territórios em meio à preservação da floresta. O objetivo é analisar a intercepção entre a "economia de cooperação" e a exploração económica que ocorre na tríplice fronteira da Amazônia (Brasil-Colômbia-Peru), reconfigurando dinâmicas socioambientais e culturais, determinando os mecanismos de adaptação, resistência e conflitos diante das pressões internacionais que afetam a governança territorial. A pesquisa, de carácter exploratório, segue uma abordagem multidisciplinar que associa perspectivas das relações internacionais, ecologia e economia, valorizando uma epistemologia indígena. Foi seguida uma investigação bibliográfica e estudo de campo através do método qualitativo de análise. Para prossecução dos fins de análise da interação entre a preservação ambiental, os hábitos de vida Tikunas e as necessidades económicas locais, foram utilizadas técnicas como o inquérito e o estudo de campo. Os primeiros resultados favorecem a compreensão dos conflitos entre expansão económica e manejo da floresta amazónica no



meio de complexidades inerentes à gestão sustentável de terras de preservação, respeitando culturas indígenas e desafios económicos regionais.

Palavras-chave

Emancipação, Libertação, Resistência, Sahara Ocidental, Mulheres.

Abstract

The article summarises an ongoing study of indigenous tribes in Amazonia and how they overcome challenges that include environmental preservation and community sustainability. The problem formulated aims to understand the socio-environmental and cultural impacts emerging from the Tikunas' so-called "economy of cooperation" and global economic flows on the Brazil-Colombia-Peru border. It looks at how this relationship generates conflicts and adaptations, but also reconfigures territories in the midst of forest preservation. The aim is to analyse the interception between the 'economy of cooperation' and economic exploitation that takes place on the triple frontier of the Amazonia (Brazil-Colombia-Peru). This reconfigures socio-environmental and cultural dynamics, determining the mechanisms of adaptation, resistance and conflict in the face of international pressures that affect territorial governance. The research, which is exploratory in nature, follows a multidisciplinary approach that combines perspectives from international relations, ecology and economics, valuing an indigenous epistemology. A bibliographical research and field study were carried out using the qualitative method. In order to analyse the interaction between environmental preservation, Tikuna lifestyles and local economic needs, techniques such as surveys and field studies were carried out. The initial results favour an understanding of the conflicts between economic expansion and management of the Amazon rainforest within the complexities inherent in the sustainable management of preservation lands, respecting indigenous cultures and regional economic challenges.

Keywords

Tikuna peoples, Amazonia, economy of cooperation, environmental preservation, Triple Frontier.

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JACKSON BENTES

BRÍGIDA BRITO

*[Cooperação] Ajudei meu irmão a escalar uma montanha, e no
final percebi que também cheguei ao topo.*

Autor desconhecido

Introdução

A preservação da Amazônia constitui um desafio global que demanda a articulação e a cooperação entre as comunidades locais e a comunidade internacional.

Costa (1992 *apud* Oliveira e Mondardo, 2014) aponta uma questão comum vivida na tríplice fronteira, também denominada de trapézio amazônico, que liga o Brasil, a Colômbia e o Peru. Independente de suas nacionalidades, as comunidades locais tendem a manter vivos os laços e os elementos identitários que possuíam como lugares de cultura de origem.

A preservação e a proteção da biodiversidade da Amazônia requerem ações coordenadas entre os diferentes atores, nomeadamente os Tikunas, o governo e as instituições envolvidas. Desta forma, a concertação possibilita desenhar um arcabouço estratégico para o desenvolvimento de políticas públicas integradas promovendo um equilíbrio entre o crescimento econômico, a inclusão social e a sustentabilidade. Este entendimento ganha relevo em um ano em que o Brasil recebe a Conferência das Nações Unidas sobre as Mudanças Climáticas, a COP30¹.

¹ O Brasil se prepara para sediar a 30ª Conferência da ONU sobre Mudanças Climáticas (COP30), a ser realizada em Belém (PA), em novembro de 2025. Disponível em: <https://cop30nopara.com.br/> [consultado em 31 de março de 2025].



Agregando esse eixo estratégico aos 17 Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (ODS), estabelecidos pela Agenda 2030² da Organização das Nações Unidas (ONU), foram definidos quatro ODS ambientais diretos e pelo menos três ODS relacionados com as temáticas ambientais³.

Como ressalta Lima (2020, n.p.), a vasta biodiversidade da região amazônica torna a sua conservação uma prioridade para o equilíbrio ecológico mundial. Os recursos naturais da Amazônia, são ameaçados a cada ato humano de degradação do ambiente. Por outro lado, fragilizam a vida dos povos que vivem na e da floresta, inviabilizando práticas econômicas sustentáveis e modos de vida dos povos autóctones, impedindo que estes desempenhem um papel crucial na sustentabilidade e vivência harmônica com a floresta.

O presente artigo apresenta resultados provisórios decorrentes de um projeto de investigação que visa compreender as dinâmicas criadas através das vivências dos Tikunas no meio ambiente. O papel do povo Tikuna na conservação da biodiversidade é o pressuposto da pesquisa tendo presentes as pressões dos grupos econômicos interessados em explorar as riquezas dos subespaços amazônicos com o mundo globalizado em um movimento de "fluidez territorial" (Arroyo, 2001)⁴. Conforme Arroyo (2001) as ações modernizantes trazem consigo, a reboque, naturais crises de transição e suas consequentes repercussões espaciais, na tríplice fronteira. Esta é uma região na qual existe o "livre acesso" para os povos da região, em especial indígenas, à informação e ao capital, onde se estabelecem relações de "livre comércio" e, também de cooperação.

Albert e Kopenawa (2010) discutiram sobre o impacto das políticas ambientais e econômicas dos povos indígenas na Amazônia, que não gozam do devido cuidado, o que compromete o seu desenvolvimento, mas também do bioma que abriga uma biodiversidade inigualável. A floresta exerce um papel crucial na regulação climática global, gerando equilíbrios socioambientais.

O problema de pesquisa busca compreender como se articulam os impactos socioambientais e culturais decorrentes da relação entre a economia de cooperação dos povos Tikunas, ancoradas em modos de subsistência, e os fluxos econômicos globais na tríplice fronteira amazônica (Brasil-Colômbia-Peru). Decorrentes desta relação configuram-se conflitos, adaptações e reconfigurações territoriais em um contexto de preservação da Amazônia.

O objetivo do artigo é analisar como a intersecção entre a economia da cooperação da comunidade Tikunas e a descoberta econômica na tríplice fronteira amazônica reconfigura as dinâmicas socioambientais e culturais, averiguando os mecanismos de adaptação, resistência e conflito contra as pressões internacionais que infundem a governança territorial.

² A Agenda 2030 (2015-2030) foi acordada e estabelecida na Cimeira de Nova Iorque de 2015 aquando do balanço sobre os resultados da implemetação dos antecessores Objetivos de Desenvolvimento do Milénio (2000-2015).

³ Os ODS ambientais são o 6º referente à água potável e saneamento, o 13º respeitante à ação climática, o 14º centrado na vida marinha, e o 15º vocacionado para a vida terrestre. Paralelamente, os ODS7 sobre energias renováveis e acessíveis, o ODS11 sobre cidades e comunidades sustentáveis, e o ODS12 sobre produção e consumo sustentáveis relacionam-se com temáticas ambientais.

⁴ In Arroyo (2001), entendido com a qualidade dos territórios nacionais que permite uma aceleração cada vez maior dos fluxos que o estruturam, do conjunto de objetos concebidos para garantir o movimento, como acontece na tríplice fronteira entre Brasil, Colômbia e Peru.



E, como objetivos específicos, é proposto:

- a) estudar o efeito das atividades econômicas, tais como o agronegócio, a mineração e o desmatamento, sobre as comunidades indígenas e o ambiente;
- b) estudar as práticas de uso e conservação sustentável dos recursos naturais desenvolvidas pelos Tikunas; e
- c) estudar as políticas regionais e as ações internacionais, como a Agenda 2030 e os ODS, para a conservação da Amazônia e o desenvolvimento sustentável das comunidades Tikunas.

Metodologicamente, a pesquisa exploratória permitiu a coleta de dados recolhidos na aldeia indígena e uma conceituação multidisciplinar do problema de pesquisa, incorporando ideias dos campos das Relações Internacionais, Antropologia, Ecologia e Economia. Uma epistemologia indígena foi valorizada, seguida de revisão bibliográfica com análise crítica e trabalho de campo.

Sustentado em Elman (2005), foi adotado o emprego de "tipologias explicativas" como ferramenta metodológica de pesquisa qualitativa em política internacional. A sugestão de Figueiredo Filho (2019) é a escolha dos modelos adequados à interpretação crítica dos resultados. Na obra "A interpretação das culturas" (Geertz, 1978) é apresentado o conceito de "descrição densa (*thick description*)", como interpretação cultural voltada para a análise da interpretação dos símbolos e dos significados encaixados na prática social.

Entre as técnicas utilizadas, destacam-se:

- a) a entrevista semiestruturada a membros da comunidade Tikuna e outros atores que desenvolvem trabalho com os indígenas enquanto representantes de organizações ambientais e religiosas;
- b) a análise documental de políticas públicas e acordos internacionais relacionados com a preservação da Amazônia;
- c) o trabalho de campo que incluiu a observação *in loco* das condições ambientais e sociais nas áreas de fronteira, nomeadamente visitas ao território Tikuna e às áreas desmatadas.

O artigo inicia com a apresentação da metodologia, objetivos e abordagem do problema que reflete as intersecções cotidianas na fronteira Brasil-Colômbia-Peru. E, finalmente, o povo Magüta (Tikunas) é introduzido a partir da "tradição da criação", os elementos da cultura e da identidade, entre os quais a língua e sua relação com a terra, já que esta última é concebida como a casa sagrada para este povo ameríndio que habita as terras da região amazônica sem fronteiras demarcatórias⁵.

⁵ "Em termos de suas propriedades específicas, a língua Ticuna apresenta pontos em comum com algumas outras línguas indígenas faladas no Brasil, ao mesmo tempo que oferece características desafiadoras, quer quanto à fonologia, quer quanto à fonologia quer quanto à sintaxe" (Soares, 2008, n.p.). [...] o Ticuna é



Dado ser um modelo de referência internacional em relação aos Objetivos e metas, é apresentada a Agenda 2030. Os ODS podem ser entendidos como uma proposta para o desenvolvimento sustentável em suas dimensões econômica, social e ambiental, colocando os povos Tikunas como colaboradores para a proteção dos ecossistemas terrestres. Em seu contexto, o ODS15 que se dedica à proteção dos ecossistemas terrestres (United Nations, 2015) ganha relevância na análise. Por fim, é exposta a aplicação de políticas públicas locais e das iniciativas globais como a Agenda 2030.

Uma investigação *in loco* foi usada para aprender mais sobre o estilo de vida deste grupo, práticas e uso sustentável dos recursos naturais disponíveis. A economia de cooperação dos Tikunas é primordial para garantir a sustentabilidade da floresta, pois é baseada no uso sustentável dos recursos naturais.

O direcionamento investigativo que envolve o meio ambiente e os povos indígenas, objetiva analisar a intersecção entre a economia de cooperação⁶ e a exploração econômica na tríplice fronteira amazônica. O conhecimento desta realidade se faz por meio de uma aprendizagem sobre *andar nas trilhas amazônicas* com olhar atento à natureza, ampliando o entendimento a respeito do modo de vida dos Tikunas.

1. Fatores antropogênicos no sobreuso da natureza

A relação socioambiental é ancestral atendendo ao facto de que a natureza, na vertente dos espaços e dos recursos, sejam vivos ou inertes, de fauna ou de flora, sustenta a vida humana. É na natureza que as comunidades encontram fontes de subsistência, utilizando-as para a transformação produtiva e para a rentabilização econômica. Esta relação não parece ser um problema, já que tem acompanhado a vida humana ao longo dos tempos.

A preocupação surge sempre que a interação entre as populações humanas, nas múltiplas formas de intervenção – individuais, comunitárias, corporativas e empresariais ou estatais, nacionais, regionais ou internacionais – resultam em modelos de atuação ambientalmente intrusivos. Tendencialmente, estes geram desequilíbrios ameaçando a sustentabilidade⁷, em particular na perspectiva do longo prazo.

Paul Crutzen e Eugene Stoemer exploram o conceito de “The Age of Humans” a propósito da abordagem do Antropoceno, traduzida na conceção de que,

O mundo entrou numa nova era geológica, a do Antropoceno, que significa época da dominação humana. Representa um novo período da história do Planeta, em que o ser humano se tornou a força impulsionadora da degradação ambiental e o vetor de ações que são catalisadoras de uma provável catástrofe ecológica (Crutzen e Stoemer, 2000, n.p.).

importante para o conhecimento das línguas naturais e para a compreensão da história dos povos e das línguas indígenas faladas no Brasil.

⁶ A denominação “economia de cooperação” respeita às atividades praticadas em conjunto pelos Tikunas em prol do grupo, tais como a agricultura de subsistência, a caça, a pesca e o artesanato.

⁷ A sustentabilidade é aqui assumida em consonância com os princípios apresentados e defendidos no Relatório Brundtland (Brundtland [1987], 1991), a saber a interdimensionalidade sistêmica e a solidariedade intergeracional.



Este é o período que foi iniciado com a Revolução Industrial (Maldonado, 2017; Crutzen, 2002) e que, ao longo do tempo, foi potenciado pela expansão econômica, o que também permite associar o conceito mais recente de Capitaloceno, largamente desenvolvido por Andreas Malm (2020; Arons, 2020). Nestas abordagens, o mundo do capital, entendido como decorrente da ação empresarial e corporativa sobrepõe-se aos interesses da natureza, utilizando-a muitas vezes sem planejamento, degradando-a e contribuindo para a esgotabilidade de partes ou do todo, eventualmente com um sentido irreversível.

Os ecossistemas vulneráveis, ora identificados com endemismos, ora associados a meios naturais intensamente procurados pela atividade extrativa, transformadora e exportadora são os mais afetados pela intervenção humana não planeada. Estes são os casos das bacias hidrográficas dotadas de minerais rentistas como por exemplo o ouro objeto do garimpo, ou das florestas densas e tendencialmente tropicais que revestem extremo interesse para o setor madeireiro dada a existência de madeiras nobres e árvores centenárias e de grande porte que garantem elevadas margens de rentabilidade.

Ainda que envolvendo planejamento no uso, a percepção de que existem limites planetários é cada vez mais uma realidade no seio da comunidade científica. Will Steffen *et al* (2015) desenvolveram esta abordagem alertando para os riscos inerentes. Este conceito oferece um enquadramento que permite definir as zonas de fronteira entre o equilíbrio planetário e o risco socioambiental a partir da identificação e caracterização de nove indicadores⁸.

Atualmente, e por referência ao ano de 2023, dos nove limites planetários identificados, seis foram ultrapassados encontrando-se em situação de risco. De uma forma geral, pode considerar-se que, a nível mundial, quatro destes limites planetários estão diretamente relacionados com os impactos socioambientais. As implicações geradas para as comunidades que vivem na dependência do meio natural resultam impactantes, não sendo fácil nem imediata a sua reversão. Desta forma, considera-se que as mudanças climáticas, as alterações no uso do solo, os modelos de utilização da água doce, incluindo a quantidade, e a integridade da biosfera no sentido genético e funcional são as dimensões que produzem implicações diretas na vida das comunidades locais. Estas quatro dimensões afetam diretamente os modelos de vida comunitários, em particular se forem consideradas comunidades vulneráveis pela ancestralidade e tradição na relação que estabelecem com os espaços naturais e com os recursos. De ressaltar que, aparentemente, as populações indígenas são as que sentem os impactos dos limites

⁸ Os nove limites planetários considerados são as mudanças climáticas, com destaque para a contínua subida da temperatura do ar e do mar, os eventos climáticos extremos e a sua frequência; a incorporação de novas entidades, em que se enquadram os organismos geneticamente modificados e os microplásticos; a destruição do ozono atmosférico com o agravamento do buraco na camada de ozono; o carregamento de aerossóis atmosféricos, nomeadamente a contaminação da atmosfera por aerossóis produzidos por humanos ou as micropartículas resultantes da queima de combustíveis fósseis e dos incêndios florestais; a acidificação dos oceanos, destacando-se o agravamento do branqueamento dos corais com possibilidade de extinção em algumas regiões do mundo; os fluxos bioquímicos, incluindo os ciclos do fósforo e do nitrogénio com uso excessivo de fertilizantes químicos no solo; o uso da água doce, definido como recurso vital, sofrendo pressão por parte da agricultura intensiva, pastagens e criação de gado; a integridade da biosfera, do ponto de vista genético e funcional; e a mudança no uso do solo, traduzida pela transformação de florestas, terrenos de pastagem e pântanos que passam a ser utilizados para agricultura intensiva e pecuária após ações de desflorestação. Disponível online em: <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.1259855> [consultado em 31 de março de 2025].



planetários de forma mais direta, já que são as que mantêm uma relação estreita com os espaços e os recursos, deles dependendo.

2. Os guardiões da floresta: resistência às intervenções da modernidade

O povo *Magüta* é também conhecido como Ticuna ou Tikuna⁹. Os Tikunas são um dos grupos indígenas mais numerosos da Amazônia¹⁰, povo ameríndio que habita a região fronteiriça entre o Trapézio Amazônico: Brasil (57.571), Colômbia (8.000) e Peru (6.982), totalizando mais de 72.553 nativos¹¹.

De La Rosa (2000, p. 296) descreve sobre a situação social-histórica destes povos que lhes foi imprimida pelos brancos, como “natural” e fruto de um castigo divino¹².

Ao longo de gerações, esses grupos têm desempenhado um papel central na proteção da floresta amazônica, construindo modos de vida sustentáveis com base no uso dos recursos naturais. O ambiente onde os Tikunas vivem, incorporando práticas sustentáveis de terra em seu modo de vida tradicional, é um modelo de coexistência harmônica com a natureza que deve ser cuidadosamente aprendido.

Nas aldeias ou comunidades, as práticas tradicionais de manejo sustentável dos recursos naturais não são mais comuns, as plantações dão lugar aos alimentos industrializados. Posey (1999) destaca que o conhecimento cultural e espiritual dos povos indígenas é essencial para a preservação da biodiversidade. Entre os Tikunas, a distribuição de áreas de cultivo, a valorização de espécies nativas e o manejo sustentável dos recursos naturais são práticas que garantem a subsistência das famílias gerando um equilíbrio ecológico.

O grande repto que se instaurou às comunidades dos Tikunas residentes na tríplice fronteira consiste em como enfrentar os desafios severos decorrentes de atividades de devastação que ameaçam essa coexistência harmônica com a “mãe natureza”. Essa relação é, pois, ameaçada pela pressão de atividades como o desmatamento¹³, a mineração e a expansão do agronegócio, que colocam em risco tanto a floresta como as próprias comunidades.

⁹ Cf. Museu Nacional/UFRJ (1985, p. 67-68). Merece destaque a origem da criação do povo *Magüta*, contada pelos anciãos, que Ngutapa, o Deus da criação, existia antes de todos, não tendo pai ou mãe.

¹⁰ Estudos Tikuna. Outras denominações do Povo da língua Ticuna. “A maior concentração da população Tikuna ocorre no grupo de pessoas entre 5 e 29 anos, o que representa aproximadamente 58% do total. Se somarmos a este valor o de pessoas com menos de 5 anos, a percentagem sobe para 70,5%, dados que nos permitem constatar que esta localidade é majoritariamente constituída por jovens e crianças” (Nosso Povo, s.d., p. 02).

¹¹ Cf. <https://pib.socioambiental.org/pt/Povo:Ticuna> [consultado em 31 de março de 2025] constituem o maior grupo indígena do país.

¹² Cf. De La Rosa (2000) sobre o mito da queda dos Ticuna – “cuenta que los primeros seres humanos, los *magüta*, eran poderosos e inmortales pero se convierten en mortales y pierden sus poderes al apartarse de las leyes tradicionales, instituídas por el dios Yoi. Como consecuencia de esa pérdida de su condición semidivina pero También como otra forma de castigo los *mnagüta*, ya convertidos en los ticuna, son dominados por los blancos”.

¹³ O desmatamento, a exploração madeireira e os incêndios florestais associados aos eventos de El Niño cada vez mais frequentes e intensos, poderão aumentar significativamente as emissões de carbono oriundas de mudanças no uso do solo (Moutinho, 2006). Disponível em: <https://ipam.org.br/entenda/como-o-desmatamento-contribui-para-as-mudancas-climaticas/> [consultado em 31 de março de 2025]



Na tríplice fronteira¹⁴, a língua tikuna destaca-se como parte do patrimônio cultural imaterial¹⁵ a ser protegido, dada a importância de salvaguardar a biodiversidade e o legado cultural dos povos que vivem em harmonia com a floresta. Nesse contexto, a preservação da cultura, das tradições e dos costumes dos povos indígenas é fundamental para o equilíbrio ambiental. Diferente dos modelos de exploração intensiva que têm gerado grandes impactos ambientais na região, as práticas tradicionais dos povos indígenas baseiam-se no respeito e no entendimento dos ciclos naturais da biodiversidade e da interdependência entre os seres vivos.

Os povos indígenas são, portanto, guardiões da fronteira e atores essenciais para a preservação da Amazônia. Eles habitam vastas áreas de floresta e possuem conhecimentos ancestrais que promovem uma convivência harmônica com a natureza. A rotação de áreas de cultivo, a utilização de técnicas de manejo sustentável e a valorização de espécies nativas são exemplos de práticas que garantem a preservação dos ecossistemas, ao mesmo tempo que oferecem subsistência para as comunidades¹⁶.

2.1. O Povo Tikuna: entre a preservação e a exploração da floresta

A floresta amazônica é, para os Tikunas, não apenas uma localização geográfica, mas um lar sagrado e fonte de sustento espiritual e material. Em seu estudo, Da Silva *et al* (2020) descobriram que a vegetação da Amazônia é essencialmente composta de floresta ombrófila tropical densa e pluvial, floresta ombrófila aberta e campinarana.

Estes padrões florestais são favoráveis à proteção, caça e outras práticas dos Tikunas, enraizadas em um conhecimento ancestral sobre a terra, a biodiversidade e os ciclos naturais. Paralelamente, oferecem um modelo eficaz em prol da sustentabilidade. As práticas desenvolvidas contrastam fortemente com as atividades econômicas predatórias de empresas multinacionais e que promovem o desmatamento e a exploração de ouro¹⁷, com uso de mercúrio, além de outros produtos que têm causado danos ao meio ambiente.

O cenário atual da Amazônia é marcado por rápidas mudanças globais, testemunhadas pelo crescimento das atividades econômicas e pela exploração dos recursos naturais. O crescimento dessas atividades extrativas ou exploratórias necessita de uma análise crítica da inter-relação entre o meio ambiente, a economia e os povos indígenas. Essas dinâmicas socioeconômicas e ambientais provam que a sustentabilidade da Amazônia não será alcançada sem o envolvimento ativo dos povos indígenas.

O povo Tikuna não apenas desempenha um papel crucial na salvaguarda da biodiversidade da Amazônia, mas também enfatiza o imperativo de adotar e implementar

¹⁴ A situação de fronteira conjugada com o fluxo migratório intenso fez com que municípios construíssem as suas relações socioeconômicas ao longo dos anos. Este é o caso do município de Letícia, na Colômbia, e da cidade de Tabatinga, no Brasil, ou o município de Puerto Nariño, na Colômbia, e a cidade de Caballo Cocha, no Peru (Hayashi, 2020; Observatório Regional Amazônico, 2000, p. 2) Disponível em: <https://oraotca.org/pt/povosindigenas/> [consultado em 31 de março de 2025]

¹⁵ A este respeito, é de notar como referido na nota 5 que a língua Tikuna apresenta aspetos comuns com outras línguas indígenas brasileiras.

¹⁶ Estes elementos foram observados no decurso da pesquisa no terreno e confirmados pelas entrevistas realizadas.

¹⁷ O garimpo é uma prática que, mais do que local ou comunitária, tem vindo a ganhar relevo através da atividade de grupos organizados.



políticas que levem em consideração as realidades locais e mundiais. Fortalecer suas práticas e garantir seus direitos territoriais são ações essenciais para a preservação da floresta, tornando-se uma peça-chave para atingir as metas estabelecidas e promover o equilíbrio socioeconômico-ambiental.

O papel dos povos indígenas vai além de uma mera resistência cultural. Eles são agentes centrais na preservação ambiental, contribuindo para o equilíbrio ecológico e para a mitigação das mudanças climáticas através das suas atividades de preservação do ecossistema florestal e consequente conservação de espécies. A compreensão desse complexo de inter-relações entre desenvolvimento econômico e sustentabilidade exige uma abordagem integrada e sistêmica que reconheça o valor do conhecimento tradicional indígena, integrando-o nas políticas públicas e em projetos de preservação.

Cunha (2009) argumenta que a cultura indígena, muitas vezes subestimada nas políticas públicas de conservação, contém saberes fundamentais para a preservação ambiental. As terras indígenas, quando devidamente protegidas, são mais eficazes na conservação da biodiversidade do que as áreas de preservação administradas exclusivamente pelo Estado (Brush, 1993).

Desta forma, promover o equilíbrio entre um crescimento econômico e a preservação da floresta na região amazônica faz-se necessário e urgente. As práticas de uma "economia de cooperação" na agricultura de subsistência, na caça e pesca e no artesanato usadas pelos indígenas para seu sustento mostram-se fragilizadas em um ambiente manipulado por atividades predatórias, que invadem as suas terras e se apropriam dos recursos naturais.

2.2. A floresta dos Tikunas, o lar sagrado

A preservação da floresta na Amazônia é uma tarefa das mais desafiadoras para a sociedade brasileira, que requer a colaboração entre sociedade, governo e o homem amazônico, devendo-se incluir, nesta tarefa, as instituições internacionais que possuem interesse nas riquezas amazônicas.

O desmatamento que ocorre na região soma-se à arrebatadora mineração, às mudanças climáticas, aos incêndios florestais e às atividades ilegais. Não obstante, aos esforços do Governo Brasileiro ao implementar projetos como o *Plano Amazônia: Segurança e Soberania* (AMAS)¹⁸.

O AMAS mostra o compromisso por parte do Governo Brasileiro em contemplar os 17 Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável, corroborando para que se constitua como um arcabouço normativo para o desenvolvimento de políticas voltadas à proteção ambiental, à redução das desigualdades e à promoção de práticas econômicas sustentáveis.

¹⁸ O AMAS é uma das principais estratégias de implementação do *Plano de Ação para Prevenção e Controle do Desmatamento na Amazônia Legal* (PPCDAm) e foi instituído com o objetivo fortalecer presença do Estado na Região Amazônica e intensificar o combate a crimes ambientais e conexos. [Consultado em 02.11.2024]. Disponível em: <https://www.gov.br/planalto/pt-br/acompanhe-o-planalto/noticias/2024/06/plano-amazonia-seguranca-e-soberania-sera-fortalecido-com-injecao-de-r-318-milhoes> [consultado em 31 de março de 2025]



De forma particular, o Povo Tikuna tem concordância com o ODS15, que visa “assegurar a conservação, recuperação e uso sustentável de ecossistemas terrestres e de água doce interiores e seus serviços, em especial florestas, zonas úmidas, montanhas e terras áridas, em conformidade com as obrigações decorrentes dos acordos internacionais” (United Nations, 2015, n.p.).

Ao assumir como meta até 2030, o Brasil mostra compromisso para conservar as *Áreas de Preservação Permanente* (APP), *Reservas Legais* (RLs) e *terras indígenas* como vegetação nativa. A *floresta dos Tikunas* é a área mais atingida pela falta de efetividade das políticas governamentais e os povos indígenas os mais prejudicados.

O que se constata é que, nos últimos anos, o Brasil não vem cumprindo com seu compromisso de usar os sistemas de preservação como *Sistema Nacional de Unidades de Conservação* (SNUC), *Áreas de Preservação Permanente* (APPs), *Reservas Legais* (RLs) e outras categorias¹⁹, para preservar - inclusive - os 30% das terras indígenas da Amazônia, necessitando de medidas urgentes para cumprir a meta. A necessidade de políticas nacionais e dos compromissos internacionais, tais como o Acordo de Paris, devem cada vez mais estar em consonância entre si e serem postos em prática.

É preocupante que os povos indígenas, no caso os Tikunas e as comunidades ribeirinhas, definidas como o *homem amazônico*, habitantes das áreas de fronteira entre o Brasil, Colômbia e o Peru, (à margem das cidades de Tabatinga, Letícia e Ilha de Santa Rosa (cf. Mapa 1), tenham que conviver diariamente com os impactos gerados pelo avanço de atividades predatórias como o desmatamento, a exploração madeireira, mineração, agricultura extensiva e pecuária, além dos incêndios provocados por grupos criminosos.

Com aborda Castro (2002, p. 162) em “*A Inconstância da Alma Selvagem*”, o pensamento do povo indígena segue uma cognição distinta do homem ocidental, principalmente nesta relação com a natureza. Para o autor trata-se de um modo de pensar intrigante e inovador que é exemplificado na caracterização e recursiva do dualismo e da formulação internacionalizante e autorreferencial do ameríndio.

A relação dos Tikunas com a natureza é uma vivência que fortalece a sua cultura e, a partir dos recursos naturais obtêm tudo o que é necessário para a sobrevivência e o bem-estar da comunidade indígena. Esta dinâmica se aloca no que Castro (2002) chama de “luta contra os automatismos intelectuais de nossa tradição”.

Para os Tikunas, a floresta também é fonte de conhecimento espiritual, o que quer dizer que, para eles, há uma relação simbólica que transcende o mundo material, fazendo parte de um complexo sistema de consolidação no qual a natureza e os espíritos interagem diretamente no cotidiano do povo. Esse respeito pela natureza é uma lição valiosa na era das mudanças climáticas e do desmatamento. Os Tikunas têm um modelo

¹⁹ Até 2020, serão conservadas, por meio de sistemas de unidades de conservação previstas na Lei do Sistema Nacional de Unidades de Conservação (SNUC), e outras categorias de áreas oficialmente protegidas como Áreas de Preservação Permanente (APPs), Reservas Legais (RLs) e terras indígenas com vegetação nativa, pelo menos 30% da Amazônia, 17% de cada um dos demais biomas terrestres e 10% de áreas marinhas e costeiras, principalmente áreas de especial importância para biodiversidade e para serviços ecossistêmicos, assegurada e respeitada a demarcação, regularização e a gestão efetiva e equitativa, visando garantir a interligação, integração e a representação ecológica em paisagens terrestres e marinhas mais amplas. Disponível em www.ipea.gov.br [consultado em 31 de março de 2025].



de existência sustentável que contrasta com o uso explorador dos recursos florestais por empresas ou grupos estrangeiros que estão invadindo a floresta amazônica.

Mapa 1. Diagnóstico socioambiental da tríplice fronteira: Tabatinga (Brasil), Letícia (Colômbia) e Santa Rosa (Peru).



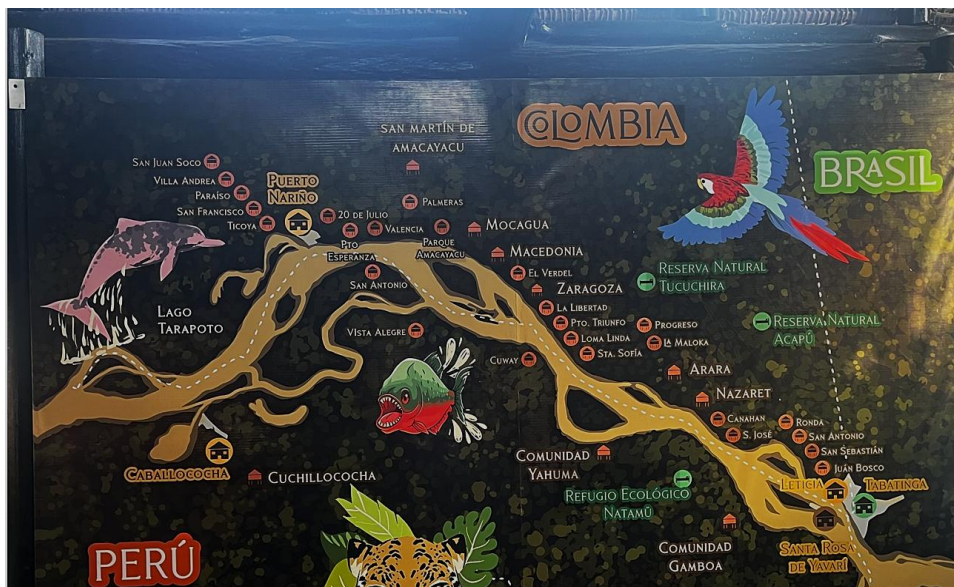
Fonte: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Figura-1-Localizacao-da-triplice-fronteira-entre-Tabatinga-Brasil-Leticia-Colombia_fig31_358686796 [consultado em 31 de março de 2025]

A floresta amazônica é mais do que uma área geográfica para os Tikunas (cf. mapa 2), é a terra natal do gênero sagrado e o suporte material e espiritual deste grupo. Eles têm um uso costumeiro dos recursos em combinação com o ecossistema, o que revela um amplo conhecimento da biodiversidade. Esse respeito em relação à natureza é uma lição importante em tempos de mudanças climáticas e destruição ambiental, pois os Tikunas apresentam um modelo de vida sustentável que contrasta com o uso predatório dos recursos amazônicos por parte de empresas ou grupos externos que exploram a floresta. Eles utilizam técnicas tradicionais de manejo de recursos que estão em harmonia com o ecossistema, incluindo a agricultura de subsistência, a caça e a coleta. Estas práticas são sustentáveis porque o fazem de maneira a garantir a renovação dos recursos, zelando pela preservação da floresta.

É neste espaço, caracterizado como lar sagrado, que o indígena edifica o sustento espiritual e material da sua coletividade ou que, segundo Castro (2002), preserva a imaginação como fator não canônico do pensamento e desconstrói modelos pré-formados, conjecturando outros.



Mapa 2. Ilustração da região amazônica habitada pelos Tikunas na Tríplice Fronteira: Brasil, Colômbia e Peru



Fonte: Pintura feita por um artesão local da cidade de Puerto Nariño – Colômbia, registro próprio.

3. Os Tikunas e a agenda 2030

A Agenda 2030, ao propor o desenvolvimento sustentável em suas dimensões econômica, social e ambiental, coloca os povos indígenas no centro das discussões. O ODS15, que trata da proteção dos ecossistemas terrestres, é uma questão relevante para os Tikunas, cuja organização social, está intrinsecamente ligada à integridade da floresta (Nações Unidas, 2015). Descola (2012) argumenta que as práticas indígenas devem ser reconhecidas como modelos de sustentabilidade, pois se baseiam no manejo equilibrado dos recursos naturais e na preservação das espécies nativas. Além disso, estes desafios também estão ligados a outros ODS, tais como o combate a pobreza (ODS1), a segurança alimentar (ODS2) e o fomento de ações que promovam o combate a má nutrição nas comunidades tradicionais.

Muitos dos objetivos dos ODS abordam os perigos mais iminentes que as crianças e os adolescentes enfrentam, sendo um dos mais relevantes a desnutrição, que ameaça a vida das crianças e prejudica a sua saúde e seu crescimento físico, sua educação e seu futuro. A desnutrição crônica ainda é um problema em grupos mais vulneráveis, como indígenas, quilombolas e ribeirinhos. De acordo com o Ministério da Saúde, em 2018, a prevalência de desnutrição crônica entre crianças indígenas menores de cinco anos era de 28,6% (Resumo Executivo Unicef, 2019, p. 6). Os números variam entre etnias, alcançando 79,3% das crianças ianomâmis (Fundação Abrinq, 2023, p. 28).

Brush (1993, p. 151) enfatiza que os índios têm um sólido conhecimento dos ecossistemas locais e que esse saber foi coletado ao longo de séculos. A sabedoria



engloba práticas capazes de estender a diversidade da paisagem e facilitar a reconstrução da biodiversidade nos ecossistemas degradados. O conjunto de práticas seguidas pelos Tikunas para a preservação da biodiversidade é o resultado de uma experiência histórica de experimentos e de provas, atualmente refletindo uma adaptação benevolente do homem ao ambiente.

Para que os ecossistemas e a biodiversidade sejam gerenciados de forma sustentável, é imperativo que o complexo conhecimento-prática-crença dos povos indígenas seja reconhecido e valorizado. Incentivar sistemas de gerenciamento de recursos baseados na comunidade é uma forma estratégica de preservar tal conhecimento e garantir a sustentabilidade ambiental.

O combate às alterações climáticas globais não pode apenas ser reduzido a ações externas, mas deve incorporar ativamente as comunidades que vivem em ecossistemas vulneráveis. A experiência tradicional dos Tikunas no uso sustentável da terra, gestão da biodiversidade e controle do fogo pode ser adicionada às estratégias de desenvolvimento sustentável e contribuir eficazmente para a mitigação dos efeitos climáticos. Esta integração é especialmente fundamental no ecossistema amazônico, onde a floresta desempenha uma função reguladora-chave no equilíbrio climático global.

Manter comunidades sustentáveis na Amazônia, como as dos Tikuna, é uma tarefa complexa, mas crucial para o cumprimento dos ODS e dos compromissos assumidos no âmbito da Agenda 2030. Esta meta exige um esforço concertado e sem precedentes de todas as partes interessadas envolvidas, incluindo governos, organizações internacionais e sociedade civil. Em particular, o ODS13 – Ação contra a mudança global do clima – tem sinergias importantes com outros ODS, tais como ODS6 – Água potável e saneamento, ODS7 – Energia limpa e acessível, ODS9 – Indústria inovação e infraestrutura, e ODS11 – Cidades e comunidades sustentáveis. Manter uma comunidade sustentável é uma quimera, mas necessária e impreterivelmente urgente para que sejam alcançados os ODS, sabendo que essa missão exige um esforço incomparável de todos. Nesse sentido, é oportuno lembrar que não basta exigir políticas públicas eficazes, é necessário garantir a sua aplicação em escalas geográficas e de Relações Exteriores para que sejam administráveis.

A Agenda 2030 da ONU, cujo objetivo é alcançar o desenvolvimento sustentável nas suas três dimensões econômica, social e ambiental, contém a conservação de ecossistemas terrestres como um dos seus maiores objetivos (ODS15 - Vida Terrestre). Ademais, outros ODS abordam diretamente os desafios com os quais são confrontados os povos indígenas da Amazônia, como o combate à pobreza (ODS1), a segurança alimentar (ODS2), o acesso a educação de qualidade (ODS4) e a promulgação das sociedades pacíficas e inclusivas (ODS16). Dessa forma, os povos indígenas como os Tikunas não aparecem apenas como destinatários dos objetivos mundiais, mas também como protagonistas na aplicação de soluções sustentáveis para a Amazônia.

A preservação da Amazônia passou de um desafio local para uma preocupação global, mas que, finalmente, precisa de um processo de articulação para permitir que as comunidades locais avancem na cooperação com a comunidade internacional. A implantação de políticas integradas promove o desenvolvimento econômico, nos moldes do desenvolvimento sustentável, para que essas políticas não estejam apenas escritas



na Agenda 2030, mas façam parte de políticas nacionais, regionais e internacionais de inclusão social e de sustentabilidade ambiental.

Portanto, é oportuno salientar que a preservação das terras indígenas é a porta de entrada para a conservação das áreas iníquas da floresta. A pesquisa desenvolvida estabelece que as terras indígenas são mais eficientes na conservação da biodiversidade do que as unidades de conservação sob a administração do Governo Brasileiro.

3.1. De que maneira o povo Tikuna pode auxiliar o alcance da agenda 2030?

Ao longo de gerações, os grupos Tikunas foram responsáveis pela preservação da floresta amazônica, desenvolvendo estilos de vida baseados no uso sustentável dos recursos naturais.

O Relatório Brundtland ([1987] 1991) foi o impulso hegemônico na abertura da discussão acadêmica do desenvolvimento sustentável, dando início ao conceito que serviu de base para os ODS. São esses modelos, frequentemente esquecidos pelas práticas tradicionais de desenvolvimento, que podem ser a base para o manejo sustentável e conservação a nível global.

Segundo Sachs (2015) é importante incentivar os cidadãos para usar um modo holístico de lidar com problemas globais que hoje nos parecem insolúveis, tais como a pobreza extrema e persistente. Nesse sentido, é importante explorar os princípios dos ODS e compreender como as práticas inovadoras podem promover o desenvolvimento sustentável.

Ao pesquisar a presença do plurilinguismo na região da tríplice fronteira, Viana e Margotti (2021, p. 40) percebem o alto índice de violência contra as comunidades originárias que ajudou a dizimar centenas de grupos indígenas e, como consequência, o extermínio das línguas que eles falavam. No entanto, os mesmos autores (Idem, p. 43) observam que a língua tikuna vem sendo utilizada de modo predominante. Consequentemente a continuidade, ou persistência no uso da língua, é o fomento cultural das gerações alternantes. Um mero exemplo pode ser procurado no caso das crianças e adultos rindo e discutindo na língua nativa.

Além de sua rica herança cultural e linguística, os Tikunas também habitam um ambiente onde a conservação da floresta amazônica torna-se cada vez mais importante. Neste triângulo fronteiriço, a língua tikuna é uma obra de patrimônio cultural imaterial. Não há dúvida de que esta precisa de ser protegida, defendendo-se a necessidade de preservar a biodiversidade e o patrimônio de pessoas que vivem em completa harmonia com a floresta.

En cuanto al conocimiento del castellano, casi la totalidad de este pueblo indígena tiene habilidades para hablarlo (cerca del 84,5%), y un pequeño porcentaje (8%) no tiene ningún conocimiento de él, es decir, solo habla el tikuna. Estas grandes porcentagens indican que o processo de alfabetização em Tikuna não é recente. (...) Con respecto a las habilidades para leer y escribir en tikuna, aproximadamente la mitad de las personas pertenecientes



a este pueblo saben leer en su lengua, y un 34,5% adicional sabe, además, escribirla. Estos amplios porcentajes indican que el proceso de lectoescritura en tikuna no es reciente (Nosso Povo, s.d., pp. 2-3).

Nessa medida, a preservação da cultura, das tradições e dos costumes das pessoas indígenas é determinante para a manutenção do equilíbrio ambiental. Posey (1999, p. 4) destaca que o conhecimento cultural e espiritual das pessoas indígenas desempenha um papel fundamental na conservação da biodiversidade. A ordenação espacial das zonas de cultivo, a valorização de espécies nativas e o manejo sustentável dos recursos naturais constituem práticas que garantem a subsistência dessas comunidades. Apesar do caráter iminentemente pragmático dessas técnicas de conservação e de gestão, os povos indígenas tradicionais frequentemente as compreendem como elementos intrínsecos de uma base espiritual que permeia as suas relações com o meio ambiente.

Toda a criação é sagrada, e o sagrado e o secular são inseparáveis. A espiritualidade é a forma mais elevada de consciência, e a consciência espiritual é a forma mais elevada de conscientização. A esse respeito, uma dimensão do conhecimento tradicional não é conhecimento local, mas conhecimento do universal como expresso no local.

Nas culturas indígenas e locais, existem especialistas que são peculiarmente conscientes dos princípios organizadores da natureza, às vezes descritos como entidades, espíritos ou leis naturais. Assim, o conhecimento do meio ambiente depende não apenas da relação entre humanos e natureza, mas também entre o mundo visível e o mundo espiritual invisível (Posey, 1999, p. 4).

Na cultura dos Tikunas as práticas de gestão e de conservação têm este caráter pragmático e que normalmente se entende como um conhecimento vindo da base espiritual. Alheios aos padrões de exploração intensiva, e que podem ser definidos como fatores antropogênicos (Crutzen, 2002) tendo provocado impactos ambientais gigantescos na região, as práticas tradicionais dos Tikunas da tríplice fronteira e dos demais povos indígenas se baseiam num profundo respeito e num conhecimento dos ciclos naturais, da biodiversidade e da interdependência entre os seres vivos.

Os indígenas são assim os protagonistas da defesa da Amazônia, trabalhando para alcançar as metas dos ODS e em particular do ODS15. Esses atores não apenas habitam imensas selvas, mas também têm a velha e preciosa memória que põe em funcionamento uma habitação respeitosa no mundo natural. Uma alternância de terra cultivada, uma adoção de práticas de manejo sustentável e a valorização das espécies locais são apenas alguns casos de uma atividade que preserva os ecossistemas enquanto oferece subsistência às comunidades. Essas práticas, muitas vezes ignoradas pelas abordagens convencionais do desenvolvimento, podem ser usadas como modelos de gestão e conservação globais, alinhando-se aos princípios delineados pelos ODS e adotados na Cimeira de Nova Iorque de 2015.

A partir disso, fica claro como o desatento para com circunstâncias como a manutenção da cultura, das tradições e dos hábitos das populações indígenas é relativamente



responsável pela degradação ambiental, e põe em risco não apenas o ecossistema amazônico, mas também a própria subsistência das populações que beneficiam da floresta, bem como as implicações diretas com outros ecossistemas além-fronteira.

3.2. Conflitos ambientais e pressões sobre as comunidades indígenas: Desafios para sustentabilidade

A tríplice fronteira entre o Brasil, a Colômbia e o Peru é uma das áreas mais impactadas pela exploração ilegal de recursos naturais associada a práticas de desmatamento, mineração e queimadas criminosas. Essas práticas, além de afetarem a biodiversidade, geram consequências desafiadoras à gestão ambiental e impactam a sobrevivência das comunidades indígenas, cujas práticas econômicas, sociais e tradicionais são comprometidas com a degradação ambiental (Cunha, 2019).

A expansão dessas atividades predatórias de natureza antropogênica agrava a perda da biodiversidade e o desequilíbrio ecológico, aguçando os conflitos sociais e a marginalização das populações indígenas, obrigadas a abandonar os seus modos de vida tradicionais em busca de alternativas econômicas factíveis.

Ramos (1998, p. 276) sustenta que o indigenismo no Brasil foi caracterizado por uma sequência de políticas públicas envolvidas, sem a referência às necessidades efetivas das populações. E destaca a ambiguidade da sociedade brasileira frente às populações indígenas, festejadas ao mesmo tempo como símbolos da maturidade nacional e combatidas como obstáculos ao desenvolvimento. Essa dupla vertente se manifesta em políticas públicas aparentemente envolvidas e que, frequentemente, não atendem às necessidades efetivas dessas comunidades.

Nas áreas de fronteira, tais como entre as cidades de Tabatinga (Brasil), Letícia (Colômbia) e Ilha de Santa Rosa (Peru), esta questão se materializa, com a expansão do agronegócio, a desflorestação da madeira, a contaminação dos recursos hídricos, a mineração e a pecuária pressionando as populações locais.

Os desafios com os quais os povos Tikunas se confrontam na implantação da preservação da Amazônia, segundo Almeida (2020), Santos (2019) e Little (2021), são cada vez mais sofisticados, em especial nas áreas fronteiriças. A perda da biodiversidade e a degradação ambiental não só colocam em risco os ecossistemas, mas também a segurança alimentar, a saúde e a cultura das comunidades indígenas, cujos modos de vida estão intrinsecamente conectados com a integridade da floresta. A preservação das práticas tradicionais indígenas ajuda a garantir a sustentabilidade da Amazônia e o alcance dos objetivos de desenvolvimento sustentável (ODS) inscritos na Agenda 2030. Por isso, é essencial reconhecer e fortalecer o papel das comunidades indígenas na preservação ambiental, incentivando políticas públicas integradas com os conhecimentos tradicionais. Com uma abordagem colaborativa, será possível superar os desafios ambientais e sociais que ameaçam a Amazônia e seus povos indígenas.



Considerações finais, ainda que parciais

Apresentamos dois pontos que foram abordados a partir da pesquisa realizada junto às comunidades Tikuna, tendo em mente a preocupação de esclarecer o equilíbrio entre o desenvolvimento econômico e a preservação da floresta amazônica através de práticas inerentes a uma "economia de cooperação". Culturalmente, o ecossistema com sua biodiversidade é um dos mais ricos do mundo, atravessando a tríplice fronteira amazônica, entre o Brasil, a Colômbia e o Peru.

As relações econômicas caracterizam-se pela presença de uma "economia indígena de cooperação" muito semelhante ao que Godbout (1992) chamou de economias comunitárias. A cooperação pode ser entendida como um sistema articulado com a cosmovisão, a gestão territorial e a reprodução cultural. Um governo sustentável exige um diálogo para "bem viver", conforme críticas ao desenvolvimento sustentável hegemônico (Acosta, 2010) em contraste com agendas globais como os ODS.

Submetido a destacar a complexa interação entre o meio ambiente, a economia e as comunidades indígenas, além da sua interdependência, é necessário adotar uma abordagem integrada que considere tanto a tradição das práticas de conservação como as pressões econômicas e sociais que são impostas pela modernização (UNDP, 2020, p. 188).

Os diversos desafios enfrentados no território direcionam-se desde a conservação do meio ambiente até a sustentabilidade das comunidades indígenas, sem deixar de focar em soluções baseadas na natureza que possam abarcar os efeitos das condições climáticas extremas na saúde, entre outros aspectos (UNDP, 2020, p. 188).

Na compreensão da teoria da dependência de recursos, é possível verificar que a incorporação de fluxos globais exerce pressão sobre a autonomia das comunidades indígenas. De referir a esse propósito, o incentivo a atividades econômicas insustentáveis, como o desmatamento, a mineração e exploração de madeira, e a poluição dos recursos hídricos. Consequentemente, estas ações ameaçam a proteção da integridade da floresta e a sobrevivência dos Tikunas. A luta contra a preservação da cultura, tradições e hábitos dos Tikunas é uma busca não só de justiça social, mas também de uma política de conservação da biodiversidade e de promoção de um desenvolvimento sustentável efetivo (UNDP, 2020, p. 188).

A falta de eficácia das políticas públicas e a vulnerabilidade na implementação de acordos internacionais, como a Agenda 2030 com os Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável, são expressas nas comunidades Tikuna devido à falta de políticas públicas em geral e focadas na conservação ambiental.

Os órgãos dos governos tiveram programas políticos de nome *Bolsa Verde*, do lado brasileiro, e *Pagamento por Serviços Ambientais*, do lado colombiano, mas embora estes Governos demonstrem um esforço na proteção dos territórios indígenas e o reconhecimento de seus direitos fundamentais são necessários investimentos que assegurem a conservação da Amazônia e o desenvolvimento sustentável das comunidades fronteiriças (UNDP, 2020, p. 189).

Os "incentivos globais também importam" ao serviço dos hábitos sustentáveis de gestão dos recursos naturais que os Tikunas adotaram e que são a chave do determinante papel



da preservação da floresta e da fauna. A agricultura de subsistência, a pesca e o artesanato aliados a um respeito intrínseco pelos ciclos naturais oferecem um modelo coexistente entrelaçado com a harmonia da natureza. É através do contato adequado dessa temática que ao longo do artigo foram comparados com as malfadadas atividades: contaminação dos rios, corte ilegal de madeira e mineração. Estas práticas dos Tikunas não apenas garantem a subsistência das comunidades, mas também contribuem para a conservação da biodiversidade e para o controle dos efeitos das alterações climáticas (UNDP, 2020, p. 188).

Em princípio, a proteção da tríplice fronteira amazônica requer uma cooperação internacional e regional efetiva, a implementação de políticas sólidas e o respeito pelo valor do conhecimento tradicional indígena. É requerida uma abordagem holística e inclusiva, na direção de preservar a floresta amazônica e garantir o bem-estar das comunidades que dela são dependentes, de acordo com os princípios da Agenda 2030 (UNDP, 2020, p. 189) e tendo o foco na construção de um futuro sustentável tanto para a vida humana quanto para a natureza.

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NOTES AND REFLEXIONS

ANALYSING THE REPORTING OF THE MALDIVIAN, INDIAN AND CHINESE MEDIA OF THE INDIA OUT CAMPAIGN

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The island nation of Maldives is embroiled into the great powers game in the Indian Ocean Region. Traditionally, it has enjoyed excellent ties with India, but the relations oscillate depending upon who is in power in Maldives. The newly elected President, Mohamed Muizzu has been known to strengthen the “India Out” campaign. The campaign aims to reassert Maldives sovereignty by ensuring there are no Indian troops on the island nation. This campaign is despite the fact that India has gifted several defence equipment, such as boats and helicopters, that are used for humanitarian and medical aid. China is the biggest beneficiary of the India Out campaign. The China-Maldives relations are rising with increasing trade and tourism. The reportage of an issue in a country’s press gives an overall sense of the importance of the issue, as well as the possible policy alignments. In cross border issues, media coverage also plays an influential role in shaping the discourse. Given this background, this review analyses the media coverage of the India Out campaign and its related aspects between 1 December 2023-31 March 2024. This review is from the media lens of three countries: Maldives, India, and China. The authors have analysed several mainstream newspapers and news portals, such as SunOnline, the Edition, the Indian Express, the Hindustan Times, Global Times, China Daily, South China Morning Post, etc.

Muizzu became the President of Maldives in November 2023. Soon after, his office announced the withdrawal of Indian troops from the island nation while expressing hope for continued relations. Immediately following the announcement, an emergency motion was submitted in the Parliament to make public the agreement made with India for the



withdrawal of troops.¹ In December 2023, the Maldivian Government decided against renewing the longstanding hydrography agreement with India. The newly elected administration considered this one of the “secret bilateral agreements” the earlier administration had entered into.² At the same time, the Maldivian press reported that the Government was in talks with India to enhance defence cooperation between the countries.³ Derogatory remarks by some Maldivian Ministers against the Indian Prime Minister and their impact were heavily reported.⁴ This episode was soon followed by coverage of a European Union report which claimed that the political parties PPM-PNC had attempted to spread disinformation about India in the Maldivian Presidential Elections.⁵ However, the Maldives-India Out issue did not stop here, as social media pages and websites of the Maldivian government agencies were hacked.⁶ Since then, multiple rounds of conversations have happened between Maldives and India over the removal of Indian soldiers and the arrival of technical personnel for the maintenance of equipment provided by India.⁷ In March 2024, news emerged that Indian soldiers forcibly boarded Maldivian fishing vessels when they were operating in Maldives SEZ, giving rise to further tensions.⁸ Most recently, Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar rejected the remark that India was a bully and highlighted that bullies don’t provide aid of USD 4.5

¹ Naizak Mohamed, ‘Emergency Motion Submitted on Discrepancies in the Number of Indian Soldiers’ (*SunOnline International*, 6 December 2023) <https://en.sun.mv/86330> accessed 22 March 2024.

² SunOnline International, ‘Maldives Drops Hydrography Agreement with India’ (*SunOnline International*, 14 December 2023) <https://en.sun.mv/86488> accessed 22 March 2024.

³ SunOnline International, ‘Discussions Held with India on Enhancing Defense Cooperation’ (*SunOnline International*, 25 December 2023) <https://en.sun.mv/86686> accessed 22 March 2024.

⁴ Aishath Shuba Solih, ‘It Wasn’t “India Out” That India Couldn’t Accept, but the Insults towards Modi: Yameen’ (*The Edition*, 8 February 2024) <https://edition.mv/news/31594> accessed 15 April 2024.

⁵ SunOnline International, ‘EU Report: PPM-PNC Attempted to Spread India-Linked Disinformation’ (*SunOnline International*, 10 January 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/86977> accessed 22 March 2024.

⁶ Naizak Mohamed, ‘Home Ministry’s Website Hacked’ (*SunOnline International*, 23 February 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/87769> accessed 22 March 2024; SunOnline International, ‘Auditor General’s Office’s Facebook Hacked’ (*SunOnline International*, 13 January 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/87021> accessed 22 March 2024.

⁷ Mohamed Rehan, ‘Maldives-India Holds Third Meeting on Deporting Soldiers’ (*SunOnline International*, 17 March 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/88257> accessed 22 March 2024; Naizak Mohamed, ‘Civilian Crew Replacing Indian Soldiers Arrives in Maldives’ (*SunOnline International*, 27 February 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/87828> accessed 22 March 2024; SunOnline International, ‘Maldives Asks India to Withdraw Troops by March 15’ (*SunOnline International*, 14 January 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/87049> accessed 22 March 2024; SunOnline International, ‘India: Discussions Also Held on Continued Operation of Indian Aircrafts’ (*SunOnline International*, 15 January 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/87056> accessed 22 March 2024; SunOnline International, ‘India Agrees to Withdraw Troops before May 10th’ (*SunOnline International*, 2 February 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/87382> accessed 22 March 2024; SunOnline International, ‘Additional Discussions on Exit of Indian Troops to Take Place in India Today’ (*SunOnline International*, 2 February 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/87380> accessed 22 March 2024; SunOnline International, ‘India: Troops in Maldives Will Be Replaced by “Technical Personnel”’ (*SunOnline International*, 4 February 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/87502> accessed 22 March 2024; SunOnline International, ‘MNDF Assures Technical Personnel Replacing Indian Soldiers Are Civilians’ (*SunOnline International*, 6 March 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/88036> accessed 22 March 2024; SunOnline International, ‘Indian Soldiers in Addu City for Helicopter Operations Leave’ (*SunOnline International*, 11 March 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/88150> accessed 22 March 2024.

⁸ Mohamed Rehan, ‘India Soldiers Boarded Local Vessels over “Miscommunication”: Minister’ (*SunOnline International*, 25 March 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/88381> accessed 2 April 2024; SunOnline International, ‘Indian Soldiers Reported to Storm Boat for Second Time’ (*SunOnline International*, 3 February 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/87394> accessed 22 March 2024; SunOnline International, ‘Defense Minister Questioned on Indian Soldiers Storming Local Boats in Closed Door Meeting’ (*SunOnline International*, 21 February 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/87726> accessed 22 March 2024.



million.⁹ This apparently was in response to the Maldivian President's remarks after his state visit to China.¹⁰

The bulk of the focus of the Indian press has been on deciphering the belligerent attitude of the new Maldives government. India has always had strong relations with the Maldives on both diplomatic and military fronts. Indian Navy has been the first responder in the Maldives, whether it is the crisis of the 1988 coup d'état, the 2004 tsunami or training the Maldivian military. Harping on the "India Out" populist campaign that propelled Muizzu to power, the present Maldivian government asked the Indian troops to withdraw by the cut-off date of 10 May 2024. In a demonstration of a firm stance, President Muizzu had said that no Indian military personnel, whether in uniform or civilian clothing, would be allowed to reside in the country.¹¹ The fact that the new Vice President Hussain Mohamed Lateef chose to attend the Indian Ocean Forum organised by China and skipped the Colombo Security Conclave comprising India, Sri Lanka, Mauritius and Maldives was noted in the Indian press.¹² Professor Uma Puroshothaman, writing for the Deccan Herald, stated that what the Maldivian government is doing now could be interpreted as an assertion of freedom of action by a small State that feels overwhelmed by the power symmetry in economic, political, cultural and military spheres.¹³ Most Indian news portals have criticised Muizzu for not visiting India, which was traditionally the first overseas trip of any Maldivian President.¹⁴ On the contrary, his first state visit was to China amidst the diplomatic turmoil with India.¹⁵ In China, Muizzu firmly committed to enhancing bilateral ties by implementing a free trade agreement with China and called it Maldives's 'closest development partner'.¹⁶ Almost simultaneous to Muizzu's diplomatic trip to China, the derogatory remarks made by his deputy ministers on Indian Prime Minister Modi marked a new low in India-Maldives relations.¹⁷ A section of the Indian press attributed Chinese interference as the prime reason for this diplomatic turmoil between the two historically cordial neighbouring countries. According to the former Indian diplomat Shyam Saran, the Chinese government's call for support for Maldives' territorial integrity and

⁹ SunOnline International, 'India Increases Aid for Maldives to USD 93.8m' (*SunOnline International*, 8 February 2024) <https://en.sun.mv/87503> accessed 22 March 2024.

¹⁰ Mizna Mohamed, 'Muizzu's to India: We Maybe Small, but You Cannot Bully Us' (*thePress.mv*, 13 January 2024) <https://en.thepress.mv/16405> accessed 15 April 2024.

¹¹ Shubhajit Roy, 'Maldives President Muizzu: No Indian Troops, in Uniform or Civilian Clothes, after May 10' (*The Indian Express*, 5 March 2024) <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/maldives-president-muizzu-indian-troops-civilian-clothing-9196570/> accessed 22 March 2024.

¹² Monica Verma, 'Social Media Turmoil Underscores India's Importance for Maldives; Muizzu's "India Out" Campaign Must Take a Backseat' (*Firstpost*, 9 January 2024) <https://www.firstpost.com/opinion/social-media-turmoil-underscores-indias-importance-for-maldives-muizzus-india-out-campaign-must-take-a-backseat-13591982.html> accessed 14 April 2024.

¹³ Uma Purushothaman, 'The Tragedy of Being a Great Power' (*Deccan Herald*, 17 January 2024) <https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/india-maldives-china-neighbours-mohamed-muizzu-male-2852332> accessed 22 March 2024.

¹⁴ PTI, 'Stop Being Stubborn and Mend Fences with Neighbours: Maldives Prez Told' (*Deccan Chronicle*, 25 March 2024) <https://www.deccanchronicle.com/world/neighbours/stop-being-stubborn-and-mend-fences-with-neighbours-maldives-prez-told-886406> accessed 25 March 2024.

¹⁵ Saurav Mukherjee, 'Maldives President Muizzu Signs 20 Agreements with China, Including Tourism' (*Livemint*, 10 January 2024) <https://www.livemint.com/news/world/indiamaldives-row-president-mohamed-muizzu-meets-chinese-counterpart-xi-jinping-in-beijing-hold-talks-11704889754963.html> accessed 15 April 2024.

¹⁶ Pia Krishnakutty, "'No Doubt China Will Be Our Closest Partner': Maldives President Muizzu Praises BRI amid Row with India' (*The Print*, 9 January 2024) <https://theprint.in/diplomacy/no-doubt-china-will-be-our-closest-partner-maldives-president-muizzu-praises-bri-amid-row-with-india/1916847/> accessed 15 April 2024.

¹⁷ Geeta Mohan, 'India-Maldives Row: Explaining the Story so Far' (*India Today*, 16 January 2024) <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/explained-india-maldives-row-story-so-far-mohamed-muizzu-pm-narendra-modi-2489463-2024-01-16> accessed 13 April 2024.



sovereignty and its opposition to any external interference in its domestic affairs is a subtle targeted attack on India.¹⁸

The rising tensions between India and Maldives over the latter's deepening ties with China has been a subject of extensive commentary in the Chinese media. From accusing India of having a 'colonialist mentality'¹⁹ to criticising its 'domineering mindset'²⁰, the Chinese press has portrayed India as an overbearing hegemon trying to stifle Maldives' sovereignty. Chinese outlets have provided historical context to the 'India Out' campaign, depicting India's military intervention in the Maldives in 1988 and the previous government's 'India First' policy, while highlighting that India continued to pursue a 'condescending and unilaterally egoistic' position in the Indian Ocean region, causing resentment among the Maldivian people. Drawing attention to a similar 'India Out' campaign in Bangladesh with a boycott of Indian goods²¹, the Chinese press reports that India's neighbours express 'strong apathy' towards New Delhi's perceived regional dominance.²² Chinese analysts portrayed the Maldivian President's visit to China as prioritising its interests over India's, not as a pro-China tilt.²³ They defended China's cooperation with the Maldives, citing infrastructure projects, tourism, and climate change mitigation as areas of mutual benefit based on 'mutual respect' and 'non-interference'.²⁴ The Chinese media portrayed Muizzu's aim to reduce Indian influence and exercise greater autonomy for the Maldives as a natural step by leveraging ties with China.²⁵ Claiming China as wanting to coexist, the Chinese press has claimed that it is India's foreign policy that is accused of being highly competitive and confrontational, unnecessarily instigating a 'dragon-elephant dispute'.²⁶ The Chinese press has called India a "Big Bully" for using coercive tactics like boycotts, sanctions, and building a military base near Maldives.²⁷ Rather than seeing Maldives' ties with China as a 'betrayal', the Chinese press has impressed upon India to have an open mindset about regional countries' cooperation with China for their development interests.²⁸ Despite the 'pro-China' stand of the Maldivian President, the Chinese media itself acknowledges that the

¹⁸ Shyam Saran, 'Doing Diplomacy with Patience in Maldives' (*Hindustan Times*, 15 January 2024) <https://www.hindustantimes.com/opinion/doing-diplomacy-with-patience-in-maldives-101705325841591.html> accessed 22 March 2024.

¹⁹ China Daily, 'Maldives Knows Too Well What Being India's Neighbor Is Like' (*China Daily*, 7 March 2024) <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202403/07/WS65e905e6a31082fc043bb146.html> accessed 22 March 2024.

²⁰ GT Reporter, 'China's Scientific Research Activities in Relevant Waters for Peaceful Purposes, Says FM on Xiang Yang Hong 03 Upcoming Port Call' (6 February 2024) <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202402/1306803.shtml> accessed 22 March 2024.

²¹ Shaikh Azizur Rahman, 'Bangladeshis Launch "India Out" Campaign over Alleged Meddling Linked to Hasina' (*South China Morning Post*, 23 February 2024) <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3253018/bangladeshis-launch-india-out-campaign-over-new-delhis-alleged-meddling-keep-hasina-power> accessed 22 March 2024.

²² Lin Minwang, 'Why Neighbors Are Resentful of India's Interfering' (*Global Times*, 1 February 2024) <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202402/1306532.shtml> accessed 22 March 2024.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ Victor Gao, 'Why India Misreads Maldivian Leader's China Visit' (*Global Times*, 9 January 2024) <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202401/1305069.shtml> accessed 22 March 2024.

²⁵ China Daily, 'India's Attitude to Blame for Maldives' Demand: China Daily Editorial' (*China Daily*, 16 January 2024) <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202401/16/WS65a68175a3105f21a507c9a1.html> accessed 22 March 2024.

²⁶ Global Times, 'Is India "scared of" China? Here Is Our Perspective: Global Times Editorial' (*Global Times*, 4 February 2024) <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202402/1306686.shtml> accessed 22 March 2024.

²⁷ China Daily (n 19).

²⁸ Global Times, 'GT Voice: China-Maldives Ties Benefit Region, No Impact on India' (*Global Times*, 10 January 2024) <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202401/1305141.shtml> accessed 22 March 2024.



Maldives still needs India's partnership.²⁹ Therefore, the Chinese media suggests that India participate in regional economic cooperation rather than opposing China's influence out of insecurity.³⁰

Overall, the reporting in the three countries varies. The Maldivian media, which is the smallest amongst the three, has been very factual and has mostly covered different events that have taken place. The Indian media has been packed with many analyses and opinions which have tried to discern the real reasons behind the shift in Maldives stand towards India. The Chinese media called out India but has exercised restraint in the process. Overall, it appears as if the Chinese press neither wants to portray India as an enemy, nor wants to allow India to exercise its dominant status in the Indian Ocean Region, which has prevailed over the years.

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²⁹ Maria Siow, 'Changing Delhi-Malé "Dynamics", Troop Withdrawal Unlikely to Affect Partnership' (*South China Morning Post*, 7 February 2024) <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3251274/maldives-still-needs-indias-partnership-despite-shifting-dynamics-delhi-male-ties-troop-withdrawal> accessed 22 March 2024.

³⁰ Global Times (n 28).

NOTES AND REFLEXIONS

ADDRESSING RUSSIAN AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE: THE IMPERATIVE FOR A SPECIAL TRIBUNAL UNDER INTERNATIONAL AND UKRAINIAN LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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1. Introduction

Historically, the principle of individual criminal responsibility was shaped under international law in the aftermath of the Second World War by the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal. For the municipal systems governed by the member states, the incentive to support the principle of international criminal responsibility was to end the impunity for the most severe crimes of common concern committed on the territories of the member states.

In this context, the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war and the illegal invasion on the pretext of genocide have resulted in a violation of the UN Charter system on the use of force under Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter (Schrijver, 2015). However, different justifications are being cited that are either against or supporting the Russian invasion. On the one hand, the alleged violation by the US and NATO of the Russia-NATO Foundation Act, signed in 1997 that limits the NATO expansion to Germany, is being cited as the reason that has triggered the current invasion by Russia. (Reis and Grzybowski, 2023:1-23) On the other hand, the countries in the West believe that it is a Russian attempt to establish a new sphere of influence in their neighbour (Kuzio, 2018:462-473).

The history of this invasion has its roots between the period of 2014 and 2021, wherein the Donbas region had seen a large number of conflicts resulting from the Russian occupation of Crimea since 2014. At the same time, Russian involvement in instigating an armed conflict between the Ukrainian government and the separatist groups was found (Bassiouni, 2008). The Russian government was accused of supplying weapons and arms in the Donbas region to escalate the tensions between the Ukrainian government and the separatist groups.

Amidst all these developments and the severe violations of human rights of the Ukrainian citizens more than two years after the 2022 invasion, this article argues the need to establish a special tribunal (McDougall, 2003: 203-230) to adjudicate Russia's government's violations of crimes of common concern in nature of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and crimes of aggression and hold the individuals responsible for the same (Furuya, Takemura and Ozaki, 2023).



2. International Organisations' responses to the Russian aggression

After Russia invaded Ukraine in February, the international community imposed a plethora of economic sanctions against the Russian Federation as the UNSC resolution condemning Russia's aggression against Ukraine was vetoed. Consequently, the states then took recourse to the Uniting for Peace Resolution, which was adopted on 2 March 2022 that condemned Russia's attack on Ukraine (UNGA, 2022). It called on all parties to respect international humanitarian and human rights law provisions.

However, since the Uniting for Peace Resolution is a non-binding resolution, 39 member states of the UNGA who are party to the Rome Statute approached the ICC Chief Prosecutor, led the Prosecutor to open an investigation on 2 March 2022 into the Russian-Ukraine war (ICC, 2022). These referrals mandate the Prosecutor to investigate and collect evidence without Pre-Trial Chamber approval. Simultaneously, resolution 49/1 was adopted on 4 March 2022, where the Human Rights Council established an Independent International Commission of Inquiry. This Commission of Inquiry was empowered to build upon the work of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN, 2022).

3. ICJ proceedings in Russia Ukraine crisis

Amidst these actions taken by the international community, Ukraine, on 26 February 2022, filed an application instituting proceedings against the Russian Federation relating to the interpretation, application, and fulfillment of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide before the ICJ. The Court ordered the Russian Federation to suspend the military operations that began on February 24, 2022, in Ukraine (ICJ, 2022).

Recently, the ICJ concluded that it has jurisdiction, based on Article IX of the Genocide Convention, to adjudge and declare that there is no credible evidence that Ukraine is responsible for committing genocide in violation of the Genocide Convention in the Donbas region, and the so-called independence of the Donbas region by the Russian Federation violates Articles I and IV of the Genocide Convention. Further, the ICJ held that the use of force cannot justify the obligation to punish and prevent genocide from a merit perspective. Instead, the responsibility to punish and prevent genocide should be governed by international law. However, the issue of justice remains for the victims whose rights have been and are being violated in the ongoing conflict.

4. Russian aggression and war crimes and the International Criminal Court

Despite the several efforts made to ensure accountability for the crimes being committed by the Russian Federation on Ukrainian territory, the war continues to take place. From an international criminal law perspective, the question that arises is whether the International Criminal Court can play a role in recognising responsibility for the crimes committed during the invasion of Ukraine that have already resulted in the deaths of thousands of civilians, including children (UNSC, 2022).



Amongst the crimes that the International Criminal Court has jurisdiction over, the crime of aggression is the quintessential crime against peace, and it is the basis upon which the International Criminal Court was established under the Rome Statute (Kreß And Barriga, 2016). However, to enforce the jurisdiction of the ICC vis a vis the crimes of aggression, a large number of procedural hurdles exist that will be reflected upon in this article. However, it is clear that Russian bombings hit residential areas far from military targets, public buildings, and hospitals (Polgase, Mezzofiore and Doherty, 2022). Consequently, the prerequisites for initiating a criminal inquiry into war crimes and crimes against humanity are present.

Coming back to the referral to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, the Prosecutor launched an investigation into suspected war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated on Ukrainian soil. However, Russia's denial of the Court's legitimacy raises an essential question of jurisdiction, and the practicality of the Court looking into the issue comes to light, which also puts at stake the credibility of the ICC (Vasiliev, 2022).

It must be clarified that Ukraine and Russia are not State parties to the Rome Statute. As a result, the Office of the Prosecutor ('OTP') has relied on two *ad hoc* statements made by the Ukrainian authorities in 2014 and 2015 under Article 12(3) of the Statute (Szpak, 2023: 1012-1026). The ICC has to keep in mind that the current invasion of Ukraine continues to take place amidst a divided geopolitical background between the group of various countries and coalitions, including the EU, NATO members and their allies backing Ukraine, on the one hand, and Russia backed, in one way or another, by Belarus, Eritrea, Iran, Nicaragua, North Korea, and Syria, on the other hand.

The core issue that the ICC will have to look into is that Ukraine is defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity against a powerful permanent member of the Security Council (Pinzauti and Pizzuti, 2022 : 1061-1083) that bestows it with additional responsibility to take on Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine (Sloss and Dickinson, 2022: 798-809).

A. An inquiry involving a multitude of participants

Given the sensitivity of the issue at hand and the magnitude of violations that have occurred in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War, a thorough investigation is the need of the hour. The quality of the investigation will depend upon the support that the ICC receives in collecting the evidence for which the role of the Prosecutor assumes significance. In addition to the work of the ICC, the Commission of Inquiry established by the United Nations Human Rights Council would always have an essential role in substantiating the findings of the ICC as the obstacles that exist need effective international and national collaboration, especially with the asylum authorities.

B. The Interpretation of the Facts

Since 2014, military actions have been part of a constant conflict between Russia and Ukraine (Mamlyuk, 2015: 479, 490-512). Several instances during the ongoing war, such



as the mass abduction of Ukrainian citizens and the participation of foreign combatants, provide sufficient evidence of crimes against humanity being committed. To investigate the same, the Office of the Prosecutor must establish that the crimes were part of a widespread or systematic onslaught against the civilian population in furtherance of or under a state policy. The Prosecutor needs to overcome the challenge of defining the invasion of the Russian State and whether to categorise this assault as part of a more extensive program aimed at the former Soviet regions or confine the same to Ukraine. The ongoing investigation in the Georgia case and the recent step to issue arrest warrants suggest that the Office of the Prosecutor may choose the first alternative (ICC, 2022).

The next phase is identifying the persons the Prosecutor wants to charge for crimes committed in Ukraine. Under Article 28 of the Rome Statute, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Defence Minister Sergei Shuygou, and Chief of Staff Valeri Gerasimov have been implicated, and an arrest warrant for their arrest has been issued. Nonetheless, an important issue remains: What Role will the Crime Of Aggression play in the response of International Criminal Justice? Recent developments seem to provide a classic example for qualifying this fourth international crime established in the Rome Statute. As this article will illustrate, the prosecution of the crime of aggression is far more complicated than is often believed, especially in the ongoing Ukrainian crisis, as a lack of political motive exists on the part of Russia. There exist several obstacles in prosecuting the crime of aggression. First, such prosecutions are politically sensitive and ensuring a fair trial poses challenges. Further, claims of sovereignty and non-intervention may be put forth.

A referral to article 8 *bis* is required to define this offence and paragraphs 15 *bis* and 15 *ter* for its execution. The offence of Aggression consists of five Components. Three include the person's actions, while two involve the state's actions. An act of aggression must have been planned, prepared, initiated, or committed by an individual who was 'controlling the political and military activities of the state committing the violence' (Schieke, 2001: 409-430), which in this case is evident. Article 8 bis-2 defines it as a state's use of military force against another State's sovereignty, territorial integrity, or political independence or incompatible with the United Nations Charter.

The ICC exercises its authority over the crime of aggression in three ways. Either a State Party, The Prosecutor, Or The United Nations Security Council may refer a situation to the International Criminal Court. However, non-state Parties are barred from the Court's jurisdiction (Babaian, 2018), regardless of whether they are the 'aggressor' or 'victim' as far as the crime of aggression is concerned.

Under the Rome Statute, the crime of aggression does not permit the prosecution of an accused whose nationality is attached to a State that has not ratified the Rome Statute, even if the aggression occurs on the territory of a State Party. Russia is not a party to the Statute. Despite the fact that the situation in Ukraine is unquestionably an act of aggression, it is evident that the prosecutor will have to focus more on the war crimes. Additionally, the traditional concerns regarding the legitimacy and selectivity of such an exceptional jurisdiction (why Russia's aggression in Ukraine and not the United States in Iraq? Why Ukraine's crimes and not those in Syria, Yemen, or Palestine?), other practical and legal considerations continue to cause issues. One may thus question the use of a court that is incapable of conducting any action (investigation or arrest) on Russian Territory or Occupied Ukraine.



5. Hybrid or special Criminal Court for the Russian crime of aggression

The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine has prompted calls from various segments of society that call for the establishment of an Extraordinary International Court to address the crime of aggression committed by the Russian Federation either through an international treaty or by the United Nations General Assembly resolution. However, the legal basis of such a tribunal remains unclear.

Such a tribunal will aim to prosecute and judge the principal perpetrators of the crime of aggression and all those who contributed to its execution, including those who provided the funds, legal advice, and operational support to carry it out. According to them, the only option to overcome the hostile regime of Article 15 *bis* of the Rome Statute regarding the crime of aggression and the logistical, political, and legal problems of national prosecutions under universal jurisdiction would be to establish such a jurisdiction, especially to counter the functional immunities of Russian rulers and diplomats before foreign jurisdictions which is a must be given the violation of the non-use of force provisions under the UN Charter.

In this light, it needs to be reiterated again and again that Russia's invasion of Ukraine could be construed as a criminal act of aggression as it meets the two criteria, first being the use of force violating Art. 2(4) of the UN Charter and the second, that gives rise to Individual Criminal Liability which strengthens liability which strengthens the demand for such a Special Tribunal Or Hybrid Tribunal to be established, despite Russia's argument of self-defence as required by Art. 51 of the UN Charter (Heller, 2022). This argument fails to hold ground as Ukraine did not launch an armed attack against Russia prior to the invasion, nor was such an armed attack imminent for self-defence. Russia also tried to justify its actions under the supposed collective self-defence to defend the rights of the people of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR); however, Russia's argument is baseless as the first and most important aspect of self-defence, whether individual or collective, is that only states have a right to self-defence. Neither the DPR nor LPR satisfies the legal requirements for statehood. Consequently, Russia's premature recognition of the Ukrainian territories of DPR and LPR as states was a violation of international law, as noted by the General Assembly in its Resolution ES11/1.13 (Malksoo, 2023 : 601-604).

A. Hybrid Tribunal

In this context, it needs to be investigated how to hold those responsible for atrocities in Ukraine guilty of their Crimes, especially Crimes Of Aggression. One of the first options may be to establish a hybrid tribunal. The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia Offers a potential model for addressing Russian aggression against Ukraine as it was based in Cambodia's judicial system, prosecuted international crimes, and had international judges and prosecutors (Dittrich, 2016).

In the context of Russian aggression against Ukraine, the possible option may be for Ukraine to enter into an agreement with the Council of Europe to create a High Ukrainian Chamber for Aggression (HUCA), a specialised Chamber in the Ukrainian judicial system with jurisdiction over aggression. Ukraine should be primarily responsible for such a



tribunal, and the Chamber would consist of Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian judges to ensure impartiality and fairness.

However, constitutional challenges and issues of personal immunity pose significant obstacles to the creation and functioning of such a tribunal. To illustrate, under Art. 125 of the Ukrainian Constitution provides that the "establishment of extraordinary and special courts shall not be permitted". Nonetheless, in the past, the High Anti-Corruption Court of Ukraine (HACC) was established as a specialised court in Ukraine's judicial system in 2019 that possessed the power to seize the property of particular individuals and legal entities associated with the military aggression against Ukraine by Russia without offering any compensation. Another issue that the HUCA may face than the one highlighted above is that of personal immunity because it seems improbable that a hybrid tribunal like a HUCA would set aside personal immunity, given that the fact that the statute upon which it is based would not be binding on individuals like Lavrov and Putin for their criminal actions as held by the ICJ in the Arrest Warrant case (Orakhelashvili, 2002) that "certain holders of high-ranking office in a State, such as the Head of State, Head of Government, and Minister for Foreign Affairs, enjoy immunities from the jurisdiction in other States, both civil and criminal". The reason is that the authorisation has not been given by the Security Council, as Russia has vetoed the same.

B. Special Tribunal

Given the limitations of a hybrid tribunal, creating a Special Tribunal dedicated to investigating and prosecuting the Crime Of Aggression in Ukraine may be a more viable option. This tribunal, potentially named "A Special Tribunal for the Punishment of the Crime of Aggression Against Ukraine", would address the legal and political challenges of prosecuting High-Ranking Russian Officials.

Amidst the discussion on the feasibility of a Hybrid or Special Tribunal, the need for change in the approach to International Criminal Prosecution is felt, certainly in relation to the specific situation in Ukraine, but also generally to ensure a future in which the international community is governed equitably under the rule of Law. While ensuring that the ongoing war comes to an end and Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity are restored, it is of equal significance that accountability for the criminal acts that have been committed in Ukraine is ensured, especially the crime of aggression along with war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. At the same time, it would be ideal for the existing international criminal institution to prove its value here by bridging the accountability gap through the ICC system by establishing a special tribunal as an effective, accountable, and inclusive institution that ensures peace and security.

Furthermore, by setting an example of such a special tribunal that prosecutes individuals coming from Russia that has misused its position under the garb of falsely claiming self-defence under the UN Charter, an example would be set to simplify and ensure an accountable and responsive international criminal justice system. In the past, Russia violated the sovereignty of Georgia in 2008 and then in 2014 and 2022, the territorial integrity of Ukraine continues to be violated. In 2008, Russian troops supported the pro-Russian militias in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, within the territory of Georgia, which, despite being autonomous, are under the de facto control of Russia (Evans, 2009). Such



defiant behaviour of Russia undermines the international law framework, which has become one of the foremost concerns of the international community.

The UN as an organisation is dealing with the unique challenge posed by Russia's defiant behaviour, including the acts of claiming exclusive rights and privileges, the need to claim a higher position in the international social hierarchy due to diminished reputation and importance relative to other nations; and a belief that all these actions are necessary for national prestige, security and wealth. This has been coupled with the inaction by the UNSC as Russia abused its veto power as a permanent member by restricting the UNSC from taking any steps to prevent the humanitarian crisis that has unfolded in Ukraine. All this reflects that the international community is facing an accountability crisis, and the need to prosecute the individuals responsible for the heinous crimes is of paramount significance.

Situations like Ukraine clearly illustrate the dangers of a system dependent upon the willingness of a few powerful nations to take the necessary steps to ensure the peace and security of the international community.

6. International justice in the Post-Putin world

Faced with circumstances as complicated as the conflict in Ukraine, it is imperative to have substantial international justice first enacted domestically. Although it is evident that international jurisdictions, including the ICC, may occasionally be disappointing, it is also undeniable that this is primarily because these jurisdictions are founded without the resources necessary for their effective functioning.

The pursuit of international justice in the context of the Ukraine conflict requires substantial resources and state cooperation. The International Criminal Court (ICC) and other international jurisdictions must be adequately funded and supported to investigate and prosecute crimes effectively. The article emphasises the importance of robust international cooperation, particularly in facing challenges posed by Russia's non-cooperation.

In addition, as the ICC lacks its own police force, it will be crucial to acquire the complete participation of States at all levels of the proceedings. Without such state cooperation, we can anticipate that it will be conflictual or non-existent in the case of Russia. In addition to financial resources, acquiring the complete cooperation of States, particularly conflict-affected States, NGOs, and civil society, is crucial to establishing individual criminal responsibility to ensure non-recurrence of such events and maintain and restore international peace and security by establishing effective, accountable, and inclusive institution at both international and national levels.

7. Ukrainian Criminal Law and criminal procedure code

Coming to the municipal laws prevailing in Ukraine, even if the investigation takes place at the international level and those guilty of committing the crimes are prosecuted and punished, the question of restoring the rights of those who have suffered in Ukraine remains to be answered, i.e., how to remedy the mass violations at the domestic level?



This question assumes greater significance as the victim's right to compensation is of paramount importance (Martin and Fowle, 2020: 1015-1037). In Ukraine, the legal regulation of the victim's right to compensation is not in line with constitutional guarantees. Thus, there is a need for the state to ensure that the victim's compensation is provided and respected.

One possible approach for Ukraine is to look into the experience of other countries that have recovered from a conflict of such a nature faced by Ukraine. This mechanism can be implemented by creating a State Victim Assistance Fund and similar institutions to the one already existing at the ICC that can act as an essential benchmark for Ukraine. The composition of the ICC vis-a-vis the victim assumes significance as it places victims at the core of justice dispensation. Under the Rome Statute, the role of victims has been elaborately explained by not only giving them the right to participate in the proceedings but also putting in place a Victims and Witness Unit, Trust Fund for Victims, and Office of Public Counsel for Victims (McGonigle, 2012: 375-408).

Further, the need for Ukraine to establish such institutions can also be seen under the current Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) of Ukraine, where the right of the victim to repair (compensation) of harm caused by a criminal offence is recognised as an inalienable right of a citizen where the victim is entitled to compensation of moral and physical damage in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 9 of the CPC.

However, at the domestic level, Ukraine faces challenges in restoring the rights of victims of aggression and ensuring adequate compensation, which necessitates the need for institutions similar to those within the ICC, such as a State Victim Assistance Fund, to address the rights of victims under Ukrainian law.

From an international law perspective, the leading international legal acts in this area from which Ukraine could incorporate certain provisions are the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, which sets out specific provisions on access to justice, fair treatment, restitution, social assistance, etc. and, the European Convention on the Compensation of Victims of Violent Crimes which has been ratified by more than 25 states of the world. Still, Ukraine has not yet ratified the Convention (CoE, 1983: 1021-1024).

8. Universal jurisdiction over war crimes during Russian aggression

Since the road to the International Criminal Court seems impenetrable for the crime of aggression and riddled with traps for other crimes, there is a need to explore the potential for national courts to exercise universal jurisdiction over war crimes committed during the Russian aggression against Ukraine as well as their legal framework for such prosecutions and the challenges posed by issues of immunity and state sovereignty.

Under territorial jurisdiction, Ukrainian courts can prosecute suspected international crimes committed on Ukrainian soil, as discussed above. Under personal jurisdiction, the same rules apply to the courts of the States of the nationality of the suspects on both sides (active personal jurisdiction) or of the nationality of the victims (passive personal jurisdiction), provided that the suspected perpetrators can be arrested and tried in their presence and that they are not protected by immunity from criminal jurisdiction based



on their responsibilities. As the ICJ has noted, regardless of the nature of the alleged crimes, the immunities established by customary international law are intended to protect the senior officials of a State "against any act of authority on the part of another State that would impede the exercise of [their] functions". In addition, domestic courts recognising universal jurisdiction might trial anybody for crimes committed beyond the forum state's territory and against victims who do not have the forum state's nationality. However, the requirements for its application vary from country to country and often involve not only the defendant's presence on the national territory of the competent courts but also the absence of immunity.

These parameters may be made more flexible concerning international offences. On the one hand, certain national courts might trial individuals not on national territory but accused of committing a crime overseas. In that case, some national courts might put aside their immunity *ratione materiae* for actions committed during the execution of their powers after they have ended their functions. They are distinct from their functions, such as war crimes and crimes against humanity, since they do not fall within the typical operations of a state government.

All of these issues need a rethinking of the insufficient framework of the crime of aggression to make it more readily justiciable after the convictions for crimes against peace by the International Military Tribunals at Nuremberg and Tokyo in 1946 and 1948 that had laid the foundation of establishing individual criminal liability. Globally, the struggle against impunity necessitates continued consideration of the efficacy and validity of international criminal justice, which has a global mission concerning imprescriptible crimes and relies heavily on improving justice standards internally.

9. Conclusion

Since the beginning of the conflict, Ukraine has used substantial military, diplomatic, and political methods in response to the Russian army's invasion of its territory. Alongside these manoeuvres, it used international law mechanisms to further seek aid against Russia on the world stage to halt its military actions. Ukraine is fighting a legal war, or lawfare, against its Russian neighbour in addition to a military war. This approach is crucial to the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice. Ukraine may depend on the backing of many nations, especially Western nations, who, for the first time in the history of the International Criminal Court, massively backed a 'complaint' against another state and showed commitment to provide more resources to the Office of the Prosecutor. These activities also position the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC as a central figure in the dispute. This unexpected interest in the Court and its investigations is encouraging. It signals a new chapter in the history of the ICC, allowing it to engage with investigations more openly and transparently on the ground alongside other actors. It strengthens its validity and influence on the world stage. It must also be viewed with care since it indicates the potential for the Court to be used for political purposes.

The legitimacy of the Office of the Prosecutor and the ICC relies on the fact of punishing the perpetrators of the crimes committed against Ukraine by Russia. To achieve the said aim, other UN organs, like the ICJ and UNGA, need to play their part along with the ICC.



International recognition would provide further legitimacy to the ongoing investigations and prosecutions carried out by Ukraine. Prosecuting such war crimes may be a long-term process requiring sustained efforts and resources. Thus, the establishment of a special or hybrid tribunal, alongside robust support for the ICC and other international mechanisms, offers a potential pathway to accountability for the crime of aggression and other international crimes committed in Ukraine.

Despite all the obstacles, the ICC investigation in Ukraine holds significant promise as powerful aggressor states such as Russia cannot escape justice, and victims of such war crimes will be vindicated in the future, however distant that may be.

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NOTAS E REFLEXÕES

INTELIGÊNCIA ARTIFICIAL, UMA AMEAÇA À DEMOCRACIA

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Introdução

No presente texto, procurarei construir um percurso lógico, fundamentado quer nos avanços mais recentes da regulamentação, da evolução dos desenvolvimentos da Inteligência Artificial (AI), incluindo a questão da consciência, com vista a que, assim descobrindo ou antevendo, se possa concluir se tais caminhos irão ou não conflitar com a evidente constatação de Habermas, a democracia não existe sem ação comunicativa.

Desta forma poderemos concluir que a democracia necessita de ser pensada, a não ser que seja meramente um instrumento desenvolvido e agora datado, para a gestão mais racional do mundo, e, portanto, descartável face uma sociedade gerida autonomamente por sistemas mais evoluídos do que nós.

Irei procurar trazer apontamentos e questões que permitam esboçar as preocupações e desafios que hoje lhe são colocados como forma de, antevendo, podermos apontar como as fragilidades detetadas perante o avanço que inteligência artificial possa significar, uma disrupção da unidade da Humanidade, com a consequente ameaça aos direitos humanos enquanto nascidos da própria dignidade da individualidade e singularidade da existência de cada um de nós.

Será assim um percurso, com esforço na conexão das diferentes matérias abordadas que concorrem para a presente tese, com recurso a um pensamento lógico, de confronto dialético, essencialmente entre elementos, caracterizadores e basilares da democracia, e caminhos que se avistam no horizonte da inteligência artificial, no que respeita às capacidades que podem advir à espécie humana, da simbiose entre a máquina e a pessoa.



1. Introito

Não é de hoje, a preocupação em se obter uma inteligência, não orgânica, que concorra, auxilie ou até ultrapasse a do Homem. O desejo da automatização de objetos, colocando-os a desenvolver ações que exigem pelo menos uma simulação de inteligência humana é antiga como a Humanidade e deverá ter feito parte dos desejos mais coevos de uma mãe atarefada. O objeto é criado para satisfazer uma necessidade do Homem. E o mesmo acontece ao que é imaginado, num sucessivo derrubar de limites (Patrão Neves, 2020), tendo a sucessiva criação tecnológica obrigado ao próprio desenvolvimento de si, o melhoramento de si e a invenção de si (idem).

A inteligência artificial, tem o seu conceito criado em 1956¹ e basicamente significa a engenharia de criar máquinas inteligentes. E desde a máquina de Turing, até ao recente CHATGPT 4 um caminho tem sido percorrido em que, em vez de serem os Homens a construir artefactos, são agora os artefactos que constroem outros artefactos. (Domingos, 2017)

2. Façamos então o caminho da Inteligência Artificial, até ao encontro final com Habermas, onde verificaremos que a Democracia terá uma forte ameaça.

2.1 Quo Vadis?

Não se sabe para onde avançará o mundo, sempre incerto face às descobertas de amanhã que lhe ditarão o rumo, ou alterarão a trajetória, bem como à capacidade do Homem em desvendar ou criar este ou aquele caminho. No entanto, a vontade de hoje, permite-nos antever para onde vamos.

A inteligência Artificial tem merecido um interesse por parte de todos os sectores da sociedade: dos militares que a registam como capaz de dar novas ferramentas no campo de batalha alheias aos cansaços e desânimos de quem sofre e muitas vezes a ela se opõe², dos empregadores em busca de um automatismo capaz de compreender e responder, sem ceder ao cansaço, insatisfação e do absentismo dos trabalhadores, dos distribuidores mundiais, dos vanguardistas, quer da engenharia quer de conteúdos, pela capacidade de rapidamente criar.

E por todo o lado a mesma necessidade, de substituição ou de auxílio às empresas do Homem, incluindo as relativas à sua própria existência, com vista a uma organização do mundo mais automática, menos dependente das insuficiências físicas e cognitivas do estágio atual de evolução Humana, prevendo e precavendo, em grande parte, à necessidade de adaptação face à iminência de utilização de iguais meios pelos adversários ou competidores.

O estado atual da Inteligência Artificial encontra-se, utilizando um conceito de Aristóteles (Aristóteles, 2002), no domínio da Potência (dynamis), enquanto capacidade de vir a ser,

¹ John McCarthy na famosa conferência de Dartmouth.

² Como defendeu Almirante Gouveia e Melo acerca dos meios da Marinha, tendencialmente a serem divididos entre seres de carbono e seres de silício (Expresso, 28 de março de 2004).



por ação da vontade do Homem, transitando do atual estado de operação dentro de um conjunto de regras e procedimentos controlados externamente para o ato (energeia)³, com a capacidade de aprender, adaptar-se e agir sem intervenção Humana.

Pelo que sendo incerto o caminho até ao ato, podemos agir na potência atual, por forma a moldarmos o caminho que percorrerá, sendo certo que se tratando de uma questão de sobrevivência, o estar pelo menos a par, e se possível à frente do outro, é previsível que ocorra, nomeadamente pela via do militar que não está sujeito a controlo, a um escalar no seu desenvolvimento com vista ao automatismo pleno e cada vez menos dependente da ação Humana. E estando descoberto o Algoritmo para uma utilização estará igualmente para outras.

Subsistindo desta forma o avanço não controlado de sistemas de Inteligência Artificial, como AGI⁴ (Artificial General Intelligence), capazes de aprender por si e desenvolver descobertas nos vários campos da ciência, comportando-se como ser um humano, nas áreas militares e científicas, condensados no conceito de Algoritmo Mestre que nos propõe Pedro Domingos (Domingos, 2017).

No entanto, fora do que poderá ser, mas do que é, uma das questões basilares que se aponta à inteligência artificial é a possibilidade do seu duplo uso. Se por um lado permitirá a gestão racional do mundo por outro poderá ter efeitos nefastos (Parlamento Europeu, 2024. Art.º 3 e 4). E se bem que possa existir uma regulamentação, a abordagem passará pela imposição da transparência dos algoritmos e das bases de dados que estão na base do desenvolvimento dos modelos e da certeza para onde queremos caminhar, certos da consequência do passo seguinte, por forma a decidirmos atempadamente se o queremos dar.

E tal tem de ser feito a nível Global, pois sendo um assunto que alcança toda a Humanidade só pode ser resolvido através da cooperação, da Governança Global, envolvendo todos os atores.

2.2 O Caminho para o Sentir

Ensina-nos António Damásio que os sentimentos, base da consciência, nascem do mapeamento do corpo, como forma de manter a sobrevivência. Nesse sentido, redes neuronais sem corpo, ou sem relação com a consequência dos atos, não passariam de aglomerados de silício e metais nobres.

Ora tal tem vindo recentemente a ser alvo de estudos mais aprofundados (Man et al, 2022) que colocam a necessidade de a rede neurológica, ao tomar decisões, observar consequências no seu estado interno e desta forma readaptar as subseqüentes, como vista a restabelecer a sua homeostase, agindo assim, tendo igualmente em consideração as consequências das suas ações anteriores.

³ Este conceito não foi aleatório, tendo como referência a construção proposta pela Prof. Doutora Maria do Céu Patrão Neves (Patrão Neves, 2020). para (re) pensar o Humano. Aqui usado, no mesmo sentido, para a questão da IA.

⁴ No AI Act surge como GPAI – General Purpose AI.



Neste sentido, e tendo em conta os resultados obtidos, e as expectáveis evoluções futuras, sairá fora da ficção o ter-se de considerar, ainda que academicamente, o que fazer aquando da singularidade. Por forma eventualmente, até a se negar esse percurso.

António Damásio, surge hoje, consolidado pelas suas investigações quanto à consciência e sentimento e sua revelação no cérebro, como a autoridade mais avalizada para nos transmitir perspetivas quanto à possibilidade de tal ocorrer. E de facto, tem apresentado ele próprio propostas de trajeto para que tal ocorra, com base essencialmente na capacidade de memória e de mapeamento, tal como ocorre com o nosso cérebro, levando-nos a concluir que formas de emulação ou de proto consciência, poderão surgir, ainda que pela capacidade de as máquinas, através do mapeamento dos seus sistemas, possam tomar, a curto prazo, decisões com base na sua própria homeostasia, ou seja com noção de sobrevivência.

2.3 O Comunicar

A inteligência artificial, apresenta atualmente uma opacidade em relação à forma como são produzidos os outputs a partir dos inputs dados (Kinght, 2017). Apesar de conhecermos os algoritmos que enformam a estrutura do tratamento da informação com vista à produção do resultado, o certo é que o algoritmo formado para criar a resposta é-nos desconhecido, ainda que parcialmente possa ser entendido, naquilo que é chamada a black box das redes neuronais profundas.

E se assim o é atualmente, em que os resultados são entendidos pelos Seres Humanos, e em que os inputs são dados igualmente pelos Seres Humanos, permitindo de facto que se controle, como atualmente o IA Act da União Europeia preconiza, de futuro, tal não será possível.

Primeiramente pela constante evolução e complexificação, cuja compreensão e capacidade de domínio estará cada vez mais restrita a uma elite. Posteriormente, a intercomunicação entre sistemas, especialmente os AGI, em que os outputs são inputs de outros com vista à obtenção de resultados em outra área do saber, seja no campo militar, científico, médico, levará a que ocorra necessariamente ou uma autonomização do sistema, (ou em alternativa, uma limitação a que tal ocorra, colocando em causa o desenvolvimento da AI).

Desenvolvida, essa comunicação será algorítmica, com base num sistema de códigos não decifrável por nós, pois a nossa linguagem é para o pensamento humano, e dos quais apenas nos aperceberemos dos resultados que nos afetam e que compreendemos.

E nem todos os resultados compreenderemos visto a capacidade cognitiva ser muito maior do a nossa, tal como hoje acontece, entre Humanos e os outros animais que povoam o mundo. Ou seja, deixará de haver comunicação entre Humanos e Máquina, que se possa considerar como ocorrendo entre entidades com a mesma competência relacional. Primeiramente apenas entre alguns e depois entre nenhuns.

2.4 O Homem e a Inteligência Artificial

Existirá a possibilidade de uso tecnologia, pelo menos, de 3 formas.



Uma decorrente e derivada dos avanços biotecnológicos, deixaremos sem análise. A segunda após a nascença, integrando componentes biônicos no próprio corpo, com vista, não apenas ao acesso, mas a uma relação simbiótica entre ambos, que permitirá o auxílio no raciocínio, na compreensão, no acesso a uma rede de mentes, transformando radicalmente a capacidade do ser humano, que tornará os que o detêm em seres com uma capacidade de conhecimento incomparavelmente superior aos demais, tornando impossível o diálogo competente entre ambos. A terceira através do acesso, na decisão e no conhecimento, dos sistemas de Inteligência Artificial, e dos seus outputs que permitirão a tomada de decisão com base numa capacidade de análise mais complexa e rápida o que aos que não a têm.

Pelo que, não sendo tal acesso universal, pese embora o benefício de tal desenvolvimento possa a todos, em teoria abranger (cura cancro, longevidade, otimização de recursos) nem todos estarão no mesmo nível comunicacional.

Eis chegados a Habermas

Chegamos então à questão que nos leva a considerar, por aqui, não excluindo outros que foram levantados [Patrão Neves, 2020] em que as novas tecnologias, deixando de atuar apenas no exterior do humano, poderão também ir abandonando a sua função instrumental para conquistar outra, estruturante. No entanto, nessa situação, o ser humano, em vez de se desenvolver endogenamente, intensificando a pessoa que é, estaria a investir numa transformação exógena e artificial de si que, em vez de o fazer ser mais o faria ser outro.

Esta questão central do artefacto enquanto agente que molda o próprio Homem, encontramos igualmente em Heidegger (Heidegger, 2020) colocando a técnica como realidade instrumental que serve os fins do Homem, mas também antropológica, moldando-o.

A técnica, qualquer uma, é um meio e um fazer humano (Heidegger, 2020).

E de que forma tais considerandos afetam e colocam em perigo a Democracia? Partimos da reflexão que nos traz Estanqueiro Rocha (Rocha, 2014):

Segundo Habermas, o consenso democrático, aquele que dá legitimidade às instituições políticas, realiza-se no processo de comunicação e formação coletiva da vontade, elaborados dentro de critérios normativos da razão discursiva, isto é, onde existe ausência de coação e a participação de todos.

Ora como vimos, essa comunicação, mais do que uma alteração intrínseca do Homem, numa evolução da AI, fica impossibilitada, pelo menos nos termos em que Habermas (Habermas, 1999, p.71):

[Se] a linguagem natural é utilizada apenas como meio para a transmissão de informações ou também como fonte da integração social. No primeiro caso trata-se, no meu entender, de agir estratégico; no segundo, de agir comunicativo. No segundo caso, a força consensual do entendimento linguístico, (...) no primeiro caso o efeito de coordenação depende da influência dos atores uns sobre os outros e sobre a situação da ação.



Por outro lado, e reforçando, ainda que sob outro prisma, como nos ensina o Prof. Carlos Amaral Dias, é na Igualdade que reside a democracia, a possibilidade da escolha aleatória da colher, entre colheres, pois todas estão hábeis a desempenhar a mesma função. Ora neste futuro as colheres deixam de ser iguais. O que dito de outra forma, coloca a mesma questão. Haverá uns mais iguais do que outros.

E se atentarmos que hoje, a lógica da vantagem económica pura e dura, a urgência no acesso a bens naturais estratégicos cada vez mais escassos, parece substituir todas as outras considerações (Soromenho Marques, 2018), incluindo as dos direitos Humanos, então não podemos esperar que o mercado auto se regule no caminho da busca da felicidade Humana, mas no lucro, seja ele da indústria civil ou militar.

A democracia surge com a Filosofia das Luzes, em especial com o contributo de Immanuel Kant, sendo os direitos humanos reconhecidos como o fundamento da Democracia.

Ter-se-á de considerar que num futuro, mais ou menos próximo, à data não previsível, a fundamentação do n.º 1 da Declaração Universal dos Direitos Humanos, a Igualdade deixe de ser uma realidade. E quando assim for que rumo para os Direitos Humanos e para as Instituições criadas com base nessa igualdade na diferença, nomeadamente a Democracia?

A disrupção que poderá operar o avanço tecnológico, conforme vimos, terá, contudo, algo que nos remete para um período da história onde, previamente ao racionalismo, ao avanço da ciência, se aceitava que para além do Homem, num mundo visível e invisível, outros atores convivam na mentira, na ação, a par de nós, tal como deuses, árvores, ancestrais (Teubner, 2006). Conviver com esta realidade, de não-iguais conscientes entre nós, talvez nos remeta não tanto para o desconhecido, mas para algo enraizado na Tradição.

Mas coloca pressão sobre a Igualdade, e na consequente capacidade de comunicação.

E sem essa relação comunicacional, não pode existir uma democracia deliberativa, assente no consenso, entre entidades de carbono e de silício, nem entre seres que podem formar a sua perceção do mundo através dos resultados da IA e as que não podem, apresentando representações diferentes quanto ao mundo subjetivo, pois para elas o mundo é visto através dos seus cérebros, resultantes do estágio atual de evolução Humana.

4. E perguntamos concluindo

Qual o papel dos Estados perante uma separação entre duas existências diferentes? Encontraremos aqui paralelos com Barry e a questão do multiculturalismo, que nos trouxe Cardoso Rosas (Rosas, 2011, Cap. V): estaremos perante existências diferentes a habitar o mesmo espaço?

Poderemos e queremos regulamentar e tornar os benefícios da IA não proprietários, não permitindo que apenas parte da Humanidade possa escalar exponencialmente nos degraus da evolução, enquanto outra, necessariamente excluída, pobre, se afaste definitivamente?



É moralmente aceitável que uma elite económica e militar ponha em causa a própria soberania Humana sobre o mundo?

E se assim for, ao Homem será que lhe restará outra alternativa do que regressar à Caverna, onde vive rodeado de sombras e ilusões não conseguindo alcançar a verdadeira percepção da nova realidade que ele próprio criou?

Ou terá aqui a hipótese de viver o sonho do Prof. Agostinho da Silva, em que se libertando do trabalho, poderia assumir o seu papel de Poeta à Solta, na Utopia do Quinto Império?

Tudo depende da necessidade que procuramos satisfazer neste caminho e qual o fim que queremos dar à IA, arriscando a que:

A tecnologia não se mantém [nha] subordinada ao único fim em si mesmo, o homem. (Patrão Neves, 2020).

Porque caminha o Homem para algo que o substitua no papel que tem vindo a desempenhar na Terra? Porque caminha o Homem de artefacto em artefacto, que lhe aumentam a capacidade de agir e que o transformam, até ao ponto último, em que ele deixa de ser o fim desse mesmo objeto?

A inteligência artificial não extinga a Humanidade, talvez não crie ela própria, pela reorganização dos genomas, os seres que mais lhe servem, mas é certo que em perigo temos, a curto prazo, a possibilidade de uma razão comunicativa, como estando na base da organização social e consequentemente, resulta concluído, a ameaça à democracia.

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CRITICAL REVIEW

TÜFEKÇİ, ÖZGÜR & DAĞ, RAHMAN (ED) (2022). *TRENDS AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN WORLD POLITICS*. LANHAM: LEXINGTON BOOKS, ISBN: 9781793650238

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The book *Trends and Transformations in World Politics*, edited by Özgür Tüfekçi, Associate Professor in the Department of International Relations at Karadeniz Technical University in Türkiye, and Rahman Dağ, Associate Professor in the Department of Economy Politics of the Middle East at Marmara University in Türkiye, examines the fundamental changes in the post-Cold War international system. The book discusses these transformations in the context of unilateralism, multilateralism and the new world order and analyses their impacts on states, international organizations and regional dynamics (pp. 1-4).

The book consists of introduction and two main parts. The first part includes six chapter: structural changes in the post-Cold War era, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) need for transformation, the complex relationship between national sovereignty and intervention, Russian foreign policy, China's contribution to the multipolar world order through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and global governance issues. The second part examines the fundamental trends and transformations in world politics from the perspectives of prominent International Relations (IR) scholars.

Richard Sakwa opens the first section by arguing that the post-Cold War period initially manifested as a *cold peace*, before transitioning into what he terms a *Second Cold War* from 2014 onwards (pp. 30-33, 41-43). According to Sakwa, this new era began with the challenge posed by neorevisionist states such as Russia and China to the liberal international order led by the United States. Furthermore, Sakwa predicts that this period will continue for a long time in a more complex and multipolar structure (pp. 31-33).

The second chapter, entitled *NATO–The Urgent Need for Adaptation (Again) in a Changing World: Revitalization of Political Dimension, Southern Flank, and China Factor*, Luis Tomé analyses the necessity for NATO to adapt to evolving geopolitical



circumstances and emerging strategic threats. Tomé asserts that for NATO to respond effectively to the complex geopolitical and security challenges of the present era, it must revitalise its political dimension (pp. 48–57). Tomé posits that while NATO has successfully adapted to threats on its eastern flank, primarily focused on Russia, it has exhibited strategic weakness on its southern flank (pp. 57–63). In particular, the ascendance of China, as evidenced by initiatives such as the BRI, is identified as a novel and substantial challenge for NATO, underscoring the necessity for the alliance to adapt to the dynamics of global competition (pp. 63–66, 71).

The third chapter, entitled *Effect of Cases on the Rivalry Between National Sovereignty and Intervention* addresses the equilibrium between state sovereignty and interventions undertaken for the protection of human rights within the context of international law and norms (pp. 81–82). In order to examine this topic further, Ekrem Ok and Tüfekçi analyse three case studies: Libya, Syria and Iraq (pp. 88–90, 91–92). Ekrem Ok and Tüfekçi illustrate that the legitimacy of humanitarian intervention is contingent upon the outcomes achieved. The success of intervention efforts tends to validate the policies of intervention, whereas unsuccessful operations serve to reinforce arguments against such actions (pp. 82–84; 89–91). Ok and Tüfekçi observe that the developments in Iraq and Libya have considerably eroded confidence in the concept of humanitarian intervention. Nevertheless, they contend that it cannot be wholly condemned as unlawful or illegitimate and that each instance must be assessed on its own merits (pp. 85–87).

The fourth chapter, entitled *The Bear has Taken the Honey: Predictability of Putin's Russia* examines the role of Russia under Vladimir Putin's leadership in world politics and its predictability (p. 99). Sónia Sénica's analysis focuses on the relationship between Russia's domestic political dynamics and its foreign policy, examining the manner in which Putin's personal leadership style contributes to this predictability. Sénica posits that foreign policy is shaped not only by the pressures of the international system but also by domestic political structures, national interests and the perceptions of leaders. Sénica presents the Ukraine crisis and the intervention in Syria as concrete examples of Russia's efforts to assert itself on the international stage by using its military and diplomatic power, while also securing domestic political legitimacy (p. 101). The chapter concludes that Putin's foreign policy decisions, fundamentally driven by the ambition to restore Russia's great power status, follow a largely predictable trajectory (p. 100).

The fifth chapter, entitled *How Eurasian Integration of China's Belt and Road Initiative Defends a Multipolar World Order*, examines the ways in which China's involvement in Eurasia through the BRI is employed to establish and safeguard a multipolar world order (p. 117). Andrew K.P. Leung posits that BRI represents a component of China's strategy to consolidate its economic and geopolitical power and accelerate the transition to a multipolar world order (p. 123). This initiative enables China to assume a pivotal role in global supply chains while simultaneously deepening its collaboration with Eurasian partners, particularly Russia. This serves to counterbalance the influence of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region (pp. 117, 123, 131). Furthermore, Leung asserts that through this initiative, China aims to enhance its global influence and attract developing countries to its side, thereby contributing to global economic growth. However, it is also emphasised that China's initiative has prompted a counterreaction in the West,



particularly in the United States, manifested as the *China scare*, which could potentially have a detrimental impact on China's global image in the future (pp. 117-119).

The sixth chapter, entitled *Whither Global Governance? An Approach to the World Politics*, the concept of global governance and its role in world politics are addressed. Tüfekçi and Dağ examine the role of global governance in world politics and evaluate the efficacy of international cooperation mechanisms in addressing global issues. Although Tüfekçi and Dağ recognise the value of global governance as a means of addressing international issues, they highlight the limitations of the current system, in which states, reluctant to relinquish their sovereignty, continue to exert significant influence (pp. 137, 140-141). Consequently, Tüfekçi and Dağ posit that in order to more effectively address international issues through mechanisms that are more inclusive, transparent and cooperative, it is necessary for states to reassess their understanding of sovereignty and for international organisations to undergo reform (pp. 145-148).

The second part of the book, entitled *Trends and Transformation in World Politics through the Eyes of the Leading IR Scholars*, comprises interviews with seventeen distinguished scholars in the field of IR. The interviews provide invaluable insights into the manner in which contemporary global events, including the advent of the COVID-19, the resurgence of populism and the movement of refugees, are influencing the evolution of IR theories. This section is notable for its presentation of multiple theoretical perspectives, its exploration of the relationship between theory and practice and its focus on current global issues. In terms of the multiple theoretical perspectives, Andrew Linklater draws on Norbert Elias' analysis of the civilising process to discuss the ethical foundations of the post-Westphalian era and the potential transformation of international society. This enables him to highlight the complex relationship between normative ideals and power dynamics (p. 154). From a realist perspective, Michael C. Williams reevaluates the concept of security, emphasising the commonalities between classical realism and constructivism (pp. 206-207). Andrew Moravcsik, from the perspective of liberal intergovernmentalism, emphasises the success of the European Union (EU) and the importance of economic interaction in international politics (pp. 157-158). Anssi Paasi's geographical perspective explores different interpretations of regionalism and the shift of power from the West to the East (pp. 163, 165). The relationship between IR theories and practical occurrences is clearly discernible in Katharyne Mitchell's interview. Mitchell addresses the rise of populism and its impact on both local and international politics, integrating concepts of space, identity and neoliberal citizenship to derive more concrete conclusions (p. 185). From a constructivist perspective, Knud Erik Jørgensen examines the EU's external relations and the future of multilateralism (pp. 191-192), while Nicholas Onuf emphasises the importance of rules and rule-making processes, elucidating how these processes shape the behaviour of states and other actors (pp. 213-214). In Peter M. Haas's interview, the role of epistemic communities in international politics and the United States' approach to environmental issues are discussed (p. 222). This section also assesses the efficacy of IR theories in explaining contemporary global developments. Ira William Zartman employs the concepts of hurting stalemates and ripe moments to highlight the difficulties inherent in conflict resolution in a multipolar world (p. 175). In his study of post-Soviet conflicts, Gerard Toal analyses Russia's interventions in neighbouring countries and the impact of these interventions on regional dynamics (p. 179). Joseph Nye, through the concept of soft power, examines the changing nature of



the United States' influence in the international arena and the importance of multilateralism (p. 183).

The conclusion chapter, the perspectives of IR theorists are presented, with a particular focus on the transformation process of world politics and the inherent complexity of international relations (p. 269). The chapter commences with Nardin's argument concerning the shortcomings of the discipline of IR, which is then followed by Weiss's analysis of the multipolar world system and the dynamics of power struggles (pp. 269–270). At this point, Onuf underscores the significance of rules and institutions, highlighting the shortcomings of capitalism and the rise in social unrest. Moravcsik's underestimation of the impact of populist movements is offset by Mitchell's cautionary note regarding the ascendance of such movements (pp. 271, 275). This is reinforced by Linklater's examination of normative domains and power relations, as well as Haggard's emphasis on institutional stability for economic development. In the subsequent analysis, Sakwa presents an examination of China's distinctive worldview and its cooperation with other developing countries (p. 272). This is followed by a discussion by Zartman, Toal and Jervis, who highlight the rise of political disorder and conflicts. Dalby's environmental security analysis emphasises the environmental impact of human-state relations, while Paasi examines the relationships between borders, regions and identity (pp. 273–274). The perspectives of Moravčik and Nye on the importance of interdependence and multilateralism (p. 275) are reinforced by Jervis and Haggard's analyses on nuclear proliferation (pp. 276–277). Jørgensen and Haas's evaluations of the role of international institutions and epistemic communities in global governance (p. 277) expand the scope of the study. In conclusion, Williams identifies the challenges facing the liberal international order, while Onuf emphasises the need for alternative rules and institutions, and Sakwa highlights the potential of alternative models of international politics (pp. 278–279), thereby demonstrating the complex and multidimensional structure of contemporary world politics.

Trends and Transformations in World Politics represents a noteworthy addition to the field of IR, particularly in terms of its emphasis on contemporary political developments. The book presents a more nuanced analysis of the post-Cold War world order than is typically found in existing literature, offering a reconsideration of concepts such as the multipolar world order and regionalism. It is noteworthy that the remainder of concepts, including *the second and multipolar Cold War* and *the age of regionalism* (pp. 1, 29–42), offer novel insights for understanding the changes in world politics. In this context, the book can be situated within the existing literature on similar topics. To illustrate, a comparison with Shannon L. Blanton and Charles W. Kegley's *World Politics: Trend and Transformation*: In their book, Blanton and Kegley provide a comprehensive examination of traditional topics within the field of IR, including world politics, relations between great powers, globalisation, human rights and the environment. However, Tüfekçi and Dağ extend beyond a more analysis of the current state of IR, combining the insights of numerous scholars to investigate prospective future developments and transformations. This distinguishes their work from the static approach characteristic of the aforementioned book. Furthermore, *Trends and Transformations in World Politics* is more comprehensive than the traditional approaches found in other works such as *The Globalization of World Politics* and *The Global Transformation*, which address the core concepts and historical development of the IR discipline in a thorough manner. In



contrast, this book concentrates on contemporary developments and systemic transformations. In addition, it examines the role of rising powers and the transition to a multipolar world order, offering a global perspective that diverges from traditional Western-centric approaches and filling gaps in the existing literature. In conclusion, the section of the book that features the views of distinguished scholars in the field of IR offers a distinctive perspective that synthesises theoretical discourse with contemporary developments. This approach reflects an endeavour to bridge the gap between academic literature and practical politics.

The analyses presented in the book are regarded as a valuable reference for policymakers, academics and students. In particular, topics such as the revitalisation of NATO, China's geopolitical manoeuvres and Russia's foreign policy have the potential to significantly impact future policy decisions for those working in the fields of international security and diplomacy.

Trends and Transformations in World Politics has the potential to become a significant reference point for future research. In particular, areas such as the role of international organisations in world politics and the impact of new technologies like cybersecurity and artificial intelligence on international relations require further investigation. Furthermore, a comprehensive examination of alternative IR theories, such as social constructivism, critical theory and postcolonial approaches, in conjunction with the utilisation of empirical data, can facilitate a more holistic understanding of the transformations in world politics.

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CRITICAL REVIEW

SHECAIRA, FÁBIO PERIN (2024). LEGAL SCHOLARSHIP AS A SOURCE OF LAW. SPRINGER. SECOND EDITION. [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.1007/978-3-031-60369-3_978-1-5266-0518-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-60369-3_978-1-5266-0518-4)

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The book presents a conceptual framework for analysing the application of precedent in civil law and common law systems. The suggested paradigm emphasises the differentiation between legal sources (e.g., precedents) and the legal norms that can be extracted from these sources through legal interpretation. Standard arguments from authority possess the subsequent structure: A asserts p; A possesses authority on such matters; hence, p is valid. Legal practitioners employ such arguments when they base their decisions only on the assertions of lawmakers, judges, professors, expert witnesses, and similar authorities. This paper examines arguments that invoke the authority of scholars, namely 'doctrinal' or 'dogmatic' legal scholars. The reliance on doctrinal authority is a perplexing aspect of legal reasoning. The tripartite distinction of 'source-interpretation-norm' (referred to in the title as the 'source-norm' distinction) elucidates the diverse methods by which historical instances can be cited, interpreted, and applied by the courts of various legal systems. The proposed framework aims to elucidate the function of precedent in legal systems with limited international discourse, while also re-examining the practices of legal systems where the doctrine of precedent is ostensibly well-established and comprehended.

The book substantially enhances the comprehension of legal scholarship's significance as a source of law. The author methodically deconstructs the case using theoretical foundations in Part I, thereafter examining practical consequences in Part II. The transition from fundamental legal sources to intricate analyses of scholarly authority and jurisprudence illustrates advanced academic rigour. The examination of formalism and its connection to legal scholarship is especially significant, as it contests conventional beliefs on the function of academic endeavours in legal reasoning.



The framework advances systematically from theoretical underpinnings to practical applications, with each chapter enhancing prior notions while ensuring consistent references throughout. The organisation of the book embodies a comprehensive scholarly analysis of the function of legal scholarship within legal systems.

This introduction examines the theoretical foundations upon which this study of legal scholarship as a legal source is based. The fundamental intellectual apparatus employed in discussing sources of law broadly and legal scholarship specifically is a Hartian conceptual framework. The author does not approve every particular aspect of H. L. A. Hart's jurisprudence but supports the fundamental principles of Hart's legal positivism.

A Hartian perspective, assumed in this book, entails a conceptual link between legal sources and what Hart referred to as "content-independent" grounds for action. Chapters 2 and 3 elaborates on these elliptical statements, clarifying the concept of a criterion of legal validity and its relationship to the notion of a source of law, while also offering a comprehensive explanation of the sometimes misconstrued concept of content-independence.

The judicial application of legal scholarship is among the most complex and ambiguous facets of judicial reasoning. Generating a credible explanation of this phenomena through a Hartian conceptual framework could effectively demonstrate the framework's explanatory capacity. Considering the current impasse in the discourse between Hartians and their non-positivist adversaries, it may be beneficial to use an arguing approach that, while not innovative, has not been employed as frequently or as methodically as warranted. The author contends that the assertion of analogous practices among these many courts may lead the reader to perceive a preference for a simplistic functionalist perspective on comparative law. Nevertheless, the author concedes that the majority of jurists possess differing views regarding the influence of legal scholarship on judicial decision-making. The author expresses concern that an overemphasis on doctrinal distinctions among jurisdictions may hide functional similarities. Decisions from their courts of appeal are often given significant deference by subordinate courts, notwithstanding the formal rejection of stare decisis. The doctrinal distinction is crucial, as precedent frequently serves analogous functions in the thinking of common law and civil law courts.

In a comparative analysis of judicial reliance on legal scholarship undertaken in chapter 4, the author contends that in many jurisdictions, courts regard legal scholarship as a source of content-independent justifications for action. Nonetheless, that chapter has minimal discourse on doctrinal discrepancies, as such variations are likely to cause confusion to the reader. The primary role of legal theorists, which underpins their significant impact on the evolution of law in Continental European nations, has consistently been to offer direction for the administration of justice. In nations within the "common law" sphere, where legal scholarship holds minimal significance, the role of offering guidance for judicial determinations is infrequently realised, and legal authors and academics typically confine themselves to delineating and organising the established statutory and case law. Historically, England distinguished itself from other jurisdictions by adhering to a rule that prohibited the citation of live authors. Even during the convention's enforcement, certain prominent living writers' opinions appeared to



influence court thinking in a manner scarcely dissimilar from the impact of academic opinions in nations where jurists are explicitly acknowledged as sources of law.

Chapter 5 contests the presumption that judges' inclination to utilise legal knowledge varies based on their willingness to limit their discretionary powers. The exact relationship between the absence of judicial reliance on legal scholarship and the desire to eliminate personal judgement necessitates an examination of the complex interrelations among the utilisation of research, substantive argumentation, and discretionary authority.

Chapter 6 examines normative enquiries on the appropriate circumstances and methods for judges to utilise legal literature. The author offers broad observations on errors to be avoided by individuals exploring normative enquiries, specifically advising that judges in democratic nations should engage with legal scholarship transparently. The assertion that they might neglect to do so is exemplified by two rulings rendered by the Supreme Court of Canada.

In conclusion, Chapter 7 encapsulates the content of Chapters 1-6 and responds to criticisms posed against the characterisation of legal research as a source of law. These criticisms are based on a fundamental error: conflating general issues regarding sources of law with specific challenges pertaining to the concept of legal research as a source of law.

Part II comprises five supplementary chapters that enhance and elaborate on the narrative presented in Part I, corresponding to the chapters in Part I. Chapter 8 offers further justification for differentiating between sources of law and legal norms, whilst Chapter 9 elaborates on key concepts by elucidating the circumstances and mechanisms through which legal research serves as a practical authority in judicial reasoning. Chapter 10 ascends the hierarchy of abstraction by examining the interplay between legal theory and conventional legal studies, positing that modern legal theory might gain from a more intimate engagement with traditional legal scholarship. Chapter 11 synthesises and consolidates the principal concepts from Chapters 8-10 for enhanced clarity.

The book's approach for the source-interpretation-norm distinction may overly simplify the complexity and variability of precedent application in practice. Various courts, even within the same jurisdiction, may apply precedents with differing levels of rigidity, a matter that is inadequately addressed. Secondly, the book predominantly embraces a formalist viewpoint on legal reasoning, potentially marginalising critical legal theories or alternative techniques, such as feminist legal theory, postcolonial studies, or critical race theory. These viewpoints may enhance the analysis's depth. Third, while the book endeavours to reconcile common law and civil law traditions, its examination of the interplay between two systems is somewhat superficial. An in-depth examination of the cross-pollination of ideas across these traditions could augment their significance for comparative legal studies.

Notwithstanding these constraints, the book is a significant contribution to legal study by offering a systematic framework for comprehending the function of precedents and doctrinal knowledge in legal reasoning. Mitigating these constraints could augment the book's scholarly and practical value.



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